Exploring stakeholder expectations from Impact Assessment literature

EIANZ Symposium
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Background

‘The objectives of EIA depend on the lens through which it is viewed’ (Noble, 2015; p.5)

A plurality of views exists on what EIA is expected to provide to different stakeholders.

Despite this, explicit research on stakeholders’ expectations of IA has been limited.

This potentially results in expectations being implicitly assumed.
Conceptualising expectations

Definition of expectations are numerous and diverse (Huron, 2008; Sitzia & Wood, 1997).

An expectation is ‘a belief that something should happen in a particular way, or that someone or something should have particular qualities or behaviour’ (Macmillan Dictionary, 2017).
Conceptualising expectations

- Social
- Context
- Personal

belief
### Basic EIA process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Screening</strong></td>
<td>Referral - decision to require EIA (By assessing authority)</td>
<td>Proponent, regulator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scoping</strong></td>
<td>Identify the important issues (Proponent and assessing authority)</td>
<td>Proponent, consultants, regulator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EIS</strong></td>
<td>Environmental impact statement (By Proponent)</td>
<td>Proponent, regulator, consultants, researchers, community, non-government organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public Review</strong></td>
<td>Of EIS (Proponent must respond to public comment)</td>
<td>Regulator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reporting</strong></td>
<td>Advice (By assessing authority)</td>
<td>Proponent, regulator, consultants, researchers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Approval</strong></td>
<td>Decision (By Minister)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implementation</strong></td>
<td>Of project (+ follow-up) (By proponent - checked by assessing authority)</td>
<td>Proponent, regulator, consultants, researchers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure Source: Adapted from Sadler, 1996*
Literature review process

1. Traditional literature review to draw out stakeholder expectations
   • Following useful citations back and forward in time.
   • Focus on EIA, but incorporating studies from the wider IA literature where appropriate.

2. Systematic review of methodology of empirical research methods
Professional expertise

12 key references identified:
• 9 x book chapters
• 2 x reports
• 1 x training manual

Publication dates range from 1984 – 2015

Identify stakeholder types and typical roles

Provide generalisations and hypotheticals
Table 8.1 Objectives of different participants in EIA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developer</th>
<th>Decision-authority</th>
<th>Local resident</th>
<th>Local environmental group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speed decision process</td>
<td>Resolve conflict so as to reduce appeals</td>
<td>Stop or delay an unwelcome proposal</td>
<td>Stop or delay an unwelcome proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure a focus on significant issues</td>
<td>Speed implementation process</td>
<td>Input local knowledge to the decision process</td>
<td>Input detailed knowledge to decision process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce or eliminate protest</td>
<td>Add to professional knowledge</td>
<td>Ensure personal interests are protected</td>
<td>Ensure alternative knowledge and expertise is input to decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bring people onto their side</td>
<td>Introduce additional information and knowledge to the decision process</td>
<td>Change proposals to minimize personal and community disbenefits</td>
<td>Protect local environmental objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure control over the information process</td>
<td>Provide an additional check on project proponents</td>
<td>Provide a check on local decision authority</td>
<td>Provide a check on local decision authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhance company/ organisational image</td>
<td>Enhance confidence of politicians to take a decision</td>
<td>Ensure people are listened to</td>
<td>Protect broader environmental objectives of the group and affiliated groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure a permission to develop</td>
<td>Inform and educate people about the development/ planning process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table source: Petts, 1999; p.150*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A proponent (developer)</th>
<th>Decision- authority</th>
<th>Members of a local community (local resident)</th>
<th>Environmental NGO (local environmental group)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time-consuming and expensive</td>
<td>A tool for planning and decision-making</td>
<td>A public relations tool used by developers and politicians to justify decisions</td>
<td>A tool to improve stakeholder involvement in development decision-making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulatory hurdle that must be overcome in order to receive development approval</td>
<td>A participative and deliberative process designed to facilitate public debate about development priorities.</td>
<td>A way to ensure the accountability of developers</td>
<td>A means of preventing development from proceeding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A means of improving project design</td>
<td>A means for the public to influence government decisions.</td>
<td>A means of local concerns being taken into account during the development process</td>
<td>A &quot;rubber stamp&quot; when it is unsuccessful in doing so</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table source:* Adapted from Noble, 2015; p.5
Empirical research

35 research studies identified:
• 32 x articles
• 3 x reports

Publication dates range from 1983 – 2018

Sub-categories:

i. Third-party perceptions

ii. Specific stakeholder perceptions within a particular jurisdiction and

iii. Specific stakeholder group perceptions within a particular phase of IA.
## (i) Third-party perceptions

**International Summit on Environmental Assessment: Final Report, 1994**

Series of workshops with EA managers from 25 countries and 6 international organisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decision-makers</th>
<th>Managers and practitioners</th>
<th>Members of the public</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Process takes too long</td>
<td>Results of their work are not always taken into account in the final decisions</td>
<td>Process excludes them from participating in decisions that affect them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appears to cost too much and is unnecessarily complicated</td>
<td>Lack of time and resources to do an adequate job</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not always give them the kind of information needed to make a sound decision</td>
<td></td>
<td>Large amounts of complex scientific data but few straightforward explanations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Federal Environmental Assessment Review Office, & IAIA, 1994
(ii) Specific stakeholder group perceptions within a particular jurisdiction

A number of research studies in this category

Utilise case studies, questionnaires and interviews

Often concentrate on decision-makers and practitioners perceptions

Often make a determination on how effectiveness the EIA process is procedurally
(iii) Specific stakeholder group perceptions within a particular phase of IA.

A number of research studies in this category, primarily associated with public participation phase

Utilise case studies, questionnaires and interviews

Often concentrate on local residents (the public)

Often make a determination how the public participation process was perceived by those involved
Contribution to strategic engagement with the community and stakeholders

All phases of the process, stakeholders and levels of IA are of interest.

To fully understand stakeholder expectations further research is required by engaging with number of different stakeholders at different levels of IA.

Utilising the dimensions of effectiveness (Bond et al. 2015; Pope et al., submitted) to explore potential expectation types of different stakeholders.
Thank you, any questions?

References

References


• Stake, R. E. (2010). *Qualitative research: Studying how things work*: Guilford Press.
