Phase 4: On-site assessment

Step 4.2: Things to consider during on-site consultations

What needs to be considered during consultations with local communities?

Selection of interview participants

Be aware that communities do not always speak with one voice. Different groups within affected communities may have different views about tourism activities. Similarly, one community may be opposed to tourism, whereas a neighbouring community may support it. When conducting your interviews and consultations, you should meet with as many community representatives as possible to get a broad range of views. It is important to show cultural sensitivity and understanding when conducting interviews. For example, in some communities, women might not want to be interviewed by men and vice versa. Furthermore, women and men can be affected differently by the same business activities. While conducting your consultations, you should always try to meet separately with women from the community in order to obtain their views and learn more about the specificity of their situations with regard to each right.[1] Further information about what needs to be considered when consulting female interview participants can be found here.

When consulting with indigenous communities it is also important to understand the cultural and organisational characteristics of indigenous peoples and the hierarchy of authorities in order to engage with the right people at the right time.[2]

Interview process

In order to avoid misunderstandings, assessors should be clear about what the assessment can and cannot do for the community (expectation management). When engaging with affected communities, the impact that the research might have on them should always be kept in mind. All interviews should include a brief explanation of the tourism value chain linking your business to the impacts it might have on the local communities.[3]

Important topics for the interview could be:

- Resettlement and relocation
- Land rights and land titles
- Rights of indigenous people
- Economic inclusion: to which extent can the community benefit from tourism development?
- Special connection of local communities to land, water, and other natural resources, which might be polluted/changed by business activities

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[1] International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development (2011): Human Rights Impact Assessment Guide. Step 15: Diversity among and within affected communities, http://hria.equalit.ie/en/phases/index.html#/phase/d/etape/15/; Ibd.: Step 15: Capturing women's perspective, http://hria.equalit.ie/en/phases/index.html#/phase/d/etape/15/.

[2] Danish Institute for Human Rights (2016): Human Rights Impact Assessment. Guidance and Toolbox, https://www.humanrights.dk/sites/humanrights.dk/files/media/dokumenter/business/hria_toolbox/hria_guidance_and_toolbox_final_may22016.pdf_223795_1_1.pdf, p. 102.

[3] International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development (2011): Human Rights Impact Assessment Guide. Step 15: The community and human rights, http://hria.equalit.ie/en/phases/index.html#/phase/d/etape/15/; Kuoni (2012): Assessing Human Rights Impacts. Kenya Pilot Project Report, http://cr.kuoni.com/docs/assessing_human_rights_impacts_0.pdf, p. 13.

- Destruction of tangible and intangible cultural heritage[4]

The HRIA Tool provides you with a stakeholder-specific questionnaire for consultations with local communities.

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[4] Danish Institute for Human Rights (2016): Human Rights Impact Assessment. Guidance and Toolbox, https://www.humanrights.dk/sites/humanrights.dk/files/media/dokumenter/business/hria_toolbox/hria_guidance_and_toolbox_final_may22016.pdf_223795_1_1.pdf, p. 118-119.