



**Pre-meeting IAIA Training Course on
Mainstreaming Biodiversity in EIA and SEA for Improved Environmental
Decision Making**

***An initiative under the CBBIA- IAIA Project
IAIA'06, NORWAY***

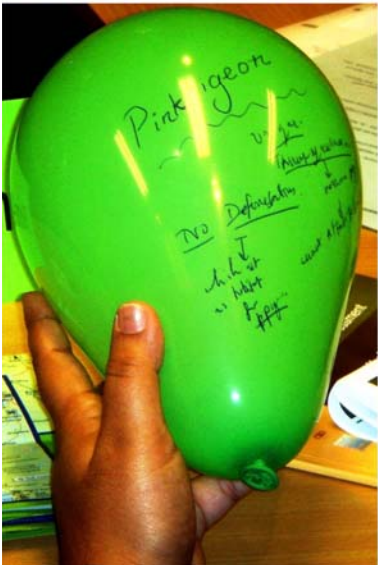
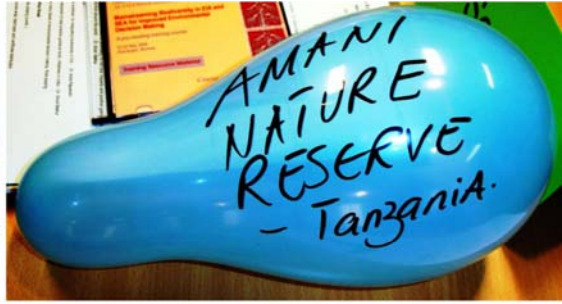
**Trainers: Asha Rajvanshi, Vinod Mathur and Jo Treweek
Facilitators: Orlando Venn and Collin Snow**

IAIA's Capacity Building for Biodiversity and Impact Assessment (CBBIA) programme organized two days training course on Mainstreaming Biodiversity in EIA and SEA for Improved Environmental Decision-Making prior to IAIA '06 meeting in, Norway. One of the interesting features of the course was the inclusion of group exercises and role plays as tools for making learning both, enjoyable and participatory. The group work encouraged excellent involvement and participation and was very well received by all participants. The purpose of the exercises and role play was to explore ways of valuing biodiversity and ecosystem services for scoping in EIA and understand the process and dynamics of decision-making at a project level.

Group Exercise I

Objective - Prioritization of biodiversity values

The semblance was drawn of a hot air balloon (representing the globe and carrying a range of biodiversity resources) that was sinking because of the increasing load and falling gas pressure. In order to prevent the balloon from collapsing, a quick decision was to be taken to retain only five most important biodiversity resources in the balloon. The elimination process was planned to remove the less important elements representing the biodiversity resources. All the participants were given a balloon each and were asked to list one biodiversity resource or its function that they considered worth retaining among the five most valued resources or functions in the hot air balloon. The balloons had listings of very diverse and interesting options (e.g., bacteria, the pink pigeon, fish, nature reserve, wetland, endemic species 'the wow factor', and the connectivity function) that reflected the group's ideas of biodiversity importance. The participants were then asked to justify the reasons for retaining their preferred options in the hot air balloon. Finally the group decided on the five most important biodiversity values that were to be retained in the hot air balloon. The exercise that had lot of fun element proved useful in building arguments for prioritizing the importance of biodiversity values.



Group Exercise II - Environmental appraisal of Elixir Nuclear power project

Objective: To illustrate the process, dynamics and many facets of decision-making at a project level.

Materials: The profile of a hypothetical nuclear power project and the details of the land use within 10 km radius of the project site.

The Elixir Nuclear Project is a joint venture of the Weird County Nuclear Corporation and the Atomic Energy Board of Dimland.

The decision with regard to the setting up of the nuclear project is to be based on the statement of significance provided for each of the following sites that are located within 25 km radius of the proposed site.

Unique Tiger Reserve

- Tiger conservation is at stake as out of 9 sub-species of tigers, six have already gone extinct from this planet and out of the remaining three, two are on the verge of extinction.
- Less than 200 individuals of one sub-species exist in the wild and Weird County is the only country in the world that holds this population.
- The Unique Tiger Reserve hold 50 tigers that is 25% of the worlds' population and therefore this area has to be treated as 'No go area' for development.

Crocodile Conservation Programme

- There are twenty one species of crocodilians distributed in the warm sub tropical and tropical waters of the world.
- The Weird County holds two of the twenty one species of crocodiles.
- Due to rampant hunting in the recent past, their numbers have come down to less than fifty.
- The Weird County has initiated a Captive Breeding Programme which has shown early signs of success.
- The eggs are being collected in the wild, reared in the hatchery and released in the Worldsend Waterfalls.
- Local people have provided great support as their livelihoods are dependent on egg collection, hatchery maintenance and monitoring of released crocodiles.

Pleasant Valley Village

- Pleasant Valley village, on account of its location in the productive flood plains is a prosperous area.
- People predominantly grow cotton, which feeds the power looms in the area. The cotton rich textiles are exported for which the Government of Dimland has set up an export promotion zone.

- Other than cotton, it is also a potato growing area, the storage of which requires 'Cold Chains', for which the local banks have provided soft loans
- The power looms and the cold chains require uninterrupted power supply, which has become very erratic leading to decline in production

The participants were divided into 7 groups to represent the various stake holders

- Weir County Development Board
- Pleasant Valley Welfare Society
- Management of the Crocodile Conservation programme
- Management of the Unique Tiger Reserve
- Grandeur Bank
- Mystic Consultants
- Minister of Environment, Dimland

The exercise involved building arguments for influencing the decision that should be based on the conservation values of the surrounding land use, justifications for promoting the development of nuclear power and review of alternatives sources of energy. Each group was allowed ½ hour to discuss between themselves the strategy that they would adopt in order to influence the decision-making through their representatives who would make a case before the Minister of Environment and her advisors, who also invited Mystic Consultants to share the findings of their EIA report. It was an interesting experience to see how different stakeholders presented their arguments and negotiations, alliances and lobbying between stakeholder groups truly 'mimicked' the dynamics of decision-making for a project.

