



# 4. IMPACT ASSESSMENT WORLD CAFÉ: CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

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Location · Month Year



GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL  
MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

# CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

- Impacts that result from the successive, incremental, and/or combined effects of actions, projects, or activities, including the proposed action, planned, and/or reasonably anticipated future actions on a similar resource and receptor
  - Accumulate over time from one or more sources
  - May be beneficial or adverse
  - Impact on environmental and social systems
  - Impact geographically and temporally

Individual minor actions that are insignificant on their own can collectively result in significant impacts over a period of time.

# EXAMPLES OF CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

- Cumulative impacts can be both additive and interactive
  - Additive example: Habitat fragmentation
  - Interactive example: Biomagnification



# KEY NOTES ON CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

- Limited information or knowledge is a major challenge in cumulative impact assessment
- Cumulative impacts assessment should be adapted to the context.
- Uncertainty is part of the process.



# WHY CONSIDER CUMULATIVE IMPACTS?

- Required under NEPA *and thus in 22 CFR 216 documents*
- Required element of multilateral development bank environmental and social impact assessment (ESIA) studies
- Required under most host country ESIA laws and regulations
- Well-established element of ESIA good practice
- Not doing so can lead to serious failures of development *even at small scales*

