

# Remote Technology and Web-based Innovations Make Impact Assessment Possible During a Pandemic

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*IAIA survey indicates that 40% of impact assessment professionals believe that COVID-19 will be used as a reason to reduce or limit impact assessment.*

WASHINGTON, DC, USA, July 1, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- While COVID-19 travel restrictions and social distancing pose a significant challenge to conducting impact assessments, essential components of the practice like monitoring and public participation are made possible by practitioners employing innovative technologies and developing new ways to continue their work. The International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA) conducted a survey of impact assessment professionals from around the world in May 2020 to determine the [impact of COVID-19 on impact assessment and its practitioners](#). The survey indicated that 40% of impact assessment professionals believe that COVID-19 will be used as a reason to temporarily relax or permanently limit or dilute environmental monitoring and management procedures. Eighteen percent acknowledge that there will need to be changes in future monitoring and management techniques.

The survey found that 68% of respondents have developed innovative ways of working remotely. Of that 68%, 29% are employing local organizations to collect information, 15% are using aerial/satellite photography, and 23% have deployed community groups or individual citizens to accomplish fieldwork. The survey also found that 29% were continuing to hold consultations, public meetings, and hearings using methods like video conferencing, email, social media, online surveys, and a local consultant hired to conduct them. Some were conducting consultations themselves as usual.

Political leaders within [Brazil, Canada, India, and other nations are pursuing the relaxation](#) or permanent dilution of environmental monitoring and management procedures, citing COVID-19 as the primary justification. "Our survey demonstrates that impact assessment practitioners have successfully used remote technologies to monitor conditions in the field, and others have engaged web-based applications to engage the community," said IAIA Executive Director David Bancroft, "so there is [no need for political leaders to use the excuse of COVID-19 to reduce](#) monitoring and public participation requirements. Impact assessment professionals are resilient and creative."

Impact assessment professionals who have experience with field technologies and tools that

allow them to continue to work remotely will be even more important during future waves of COVID-19. "IAIA wishes to support and cooperate with political leaders and government agencies around the world to maintain strong and robust impact assessment during this unprecedented period," said IAIA President-Elect Marla Orenstein. "Rather than being a roadblock, impact assessment is a key feature of ensuring we 'build back better' after the pandemic."

Full results from IAIA's survey, "Impact of COVID-19 on IA and its Practitioners," will be made available to the general public in August 2020. In May, IAIA distributed the 56-question survey to 10,000+ impact assessment (IA) practitioners and received 927 responses. Some preliminary survey results, including demographic data as well as information about how COVID-19 has directly affected IA practitioners, are also available on IAIA's website. IAIA has 1,100 members around the world from over 70 nations who work in multiple disciplines and on various types of development projects.

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David Bancroft's blog post with expanded quotes and thoughts on the topics is available on our website: <https://www.iaia.org/news-details.php?ID=123>

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Preliminary survey results, including demographic data, are available on our website: [https://www.iaia.org/uploads/pdf/COVID SURVEY\\_Section 1.pdf](https://www.iaia.org/uploads/pdf/COVID_SURVEY_Section%201.pdf)

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The International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA) is the premier international network for impact assessment professionals. Its vision is "a just and sustainable world for people and the environment." Impact assessment, simply defined, is the process of identifying the future consequences of a current or proposed action. IAIA has a membership of 1100, and has 17 international chapters with an additional 3,500 members. IAIA convenes 900 impact assessment professionals at its annual international conference and has its own academic journal, Impact

Assessment and Project Appraisal.

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