Environmental Assessment and Environmental Law

Water development projects often have (unintended) negative environment and social impacts and costs (externalities) that often fall on the vulnerable groups of society. This require knowledge on laws and legal instruments that can protect the environment and vulnerable groups, and in particular environmental impact assessment (EIA) which has emerged as a key sustainability tool that uses a systematic and interdisciplinary process to support planning and decision-making. This module will discuss main legal principles and instruments to protect the environment and vulnerable groups in society. After that the module will zoom in to EIA as a possible tool for sustainable development. Among others students will use systematic processes and clear criteria to support professional judgments on the significance of benefits, impacts and trade-offs. Moreover, students will learn to evaluate complex water developments, compare realistic alternatives and recommend actions to minimize their impacts and/or enhance their benefits. Students will also critically examine the EIA process including its limitations.