

**Atma S. Khalsa**  
Consultant

Mr. Khalsa is an environmental consultant with Acorn International who focuses on international environmental, social and health impact assessment, sustainable development, capacity building and partnering.

Atma recently rejoined Acorn International after earning his Master's Degree in December of 2007 through an innovative program in International Environmental Assessment, jointly managed by McGill University and the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP). In completing his degree, Atma worked directly with experts and representatives from national and multilateral organizations such as UNEP, Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA), European Bank for Development and Reconstruction (EBRD), Secretariat for the Conservation of Biodiversity (CBD), and Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). His studies focused on:

- Environmental assessment including: strategic, sectoral, and regional environmental assessment
- Sustainable development
- Environmental policy and regulations
- Stakeholder engagement
- Project finance and environmental assessment
- Corporate Social Responsibility

The training delivered in the Program has provided a strong, up to date awareness of current trends, issues, and best practices in international impact assessment.

## **Professional Experience**

### Environmental, Health, Safety and Social Impact Assessments

- Participated in an environmental and social impact assessment for a 2D seismic survey onshore Colombia for BHP Billiton
- Led health, safety, environment and community impact assessment screenings for exploration and production activities in sensitive marine environments offshore:
  - Vietnam
  - Philippines and Malaysia
  - India
- Led a health, safety, environment and community impact assessment screening for onshore exploration and production activities adjacent to indigenous reserves on the Colombia / Venezuela border
- Participated in two environmental impact assessments of offshore oil and gas developments near a marine protected area in Colombia
- Participated in an environmental and social impact assessment of an offshore oil and gas development for BP Colombia
- Performed environmental, social and health impact assessment screening and scoping for two oil industry production projects offshore Angola and Republic of Congo
- Participated in an environmental, social and health impact assessment for an onshore oil and gas development in Kazakhstan
- Collaborated on the development of a risk identification tool to help identify and characterize environmental, health, safety and social risks early in the project lifecycle
- Established a baseline for the independent environmental and sociocultural review of an EIA being performed for the expansion of the Panama Canal

## EHSS Management

- Participated in the review of environmental and social management covenants of project finance lenders for a major capital project in the Caspian Sea
- Assisted Chevron in consolidating, processing and analyzing the outputs of risk assessments under their Operational Excellence Risk Management Process
- Participated in a benchmarking of oil and gas industry environmental management systems to support the organizational restructuring of a major national energy company's corporate Environmental, Health, and Safety program
- Supported a United States Department of Justice case involving environmental management system best practices

## Capacity Building and Partnering

- Conducted research and interviews with consulting firms abroad to expand Acorn International partnerships in 5 new countries
- Enhanced existing Acorn International partnerships with local environmental and social experts in more than 35 developing countries and coordinated capacity building actions
- Facilitated a web-based forum with Acorn International partners around the world to share information and identify emerging trends and market opportunities
- On-going development of an enterprise development program for the environmental services sector in post-conflict/developing nations based on a partnership/mentor model

## **Prior Professional Experience**

Acorn International – Environmental, Health, Safety and Social Impact Assessment work on international oil industry projects, Boxborough, MA 2007

The Rainforest Preserve- Lead Researcher, Dominical, Costa Rica, 2003-2006

Atma independently researched, designed, and implemented a baseline wildlife study of a 200 acre nature reserve in Costa Rica. He led a small team of local experts to document mammals using pressure activated cameras and line transects. All fieldwork was performed in Spanish.

## **Education**

McGill University - Masters of Science- Environmental Assessment, 2007, (3.96/4.0 GPA)  
Course work included impact assessment methodologies, theory, and process. The program also focused on the integration of impact assessment into international development and strategic planning. Program managed jointly by UNEP and McGill.

University of Massachusetts Amherst - Bachelor of Science- Wildlife and Fisheries Conservation, 2004 (Cum Laude)  
Course work included sciences, policy, field techniques and resource management.

## **Awards and Recognition**

Outstanding Senior in Wildlife Conservation Award - University of Massachusetts 2004

Louis Stokes Award - National Science Foundation grant for independent field studies

## Conference Presentations

International Association of Impact Assessment (IAIA), Calgary, AB, Canada. November 6-9, 2008. Technical presentation entitled, *Management of Cumulative Impacts and Associated Business Risks: An Example from the Oil and Gas Industry*

Society of Petroleum Engineers (SPE), Nice, France, April 27-29, 2008  
Social group technical presentation entitled, *Next Generation Stakeholder Engagement: Balancing International Best Practices and Local Leadership*

International Petroleum Environmental Conference (IPEC), Houston, TX, November 6-9, 2007  
Poster Session

## Professional Training

- United States Agency for International Development (USAID) – Global Development Alliance Program Implementer Training (October 24, 2008: Washington D.C.)

## Professional Memberships

International Association for Impact Assessment

Society for International Development – Washington Chapter

## Languages

Intermediate Spanish