Before Your Site Screening

Before you visit a site, please make these preparations:

Step 1: Coordinate your site screening with your Country Coordinator to make sure your plans are consistent with the regional priorities, budget, and timeline. Discuss any potential health and safety issues at the site.

Step 2: Research your site. Look for sampling data from other research projects. Examine available maps, such as from Google Maps, Google Earth or government sources, to familiarize yourself with the area and key features such as the locations of roads, residential areas, industrial or mining areas and water bodies. Try to make sure the site is within the Toxic Site Identification Program scope of interest. The TSIP is primarily focused on legacy pollution and therefore does not normally include sites which involve ongoing operations and which should be controlled by the relevant Regulator (i.e. the owner or entity that controls the site). We are only interested in site that have:

1. Toxic pollution (including heavy metals, POPs, radionuclides, dioxins, PCBs, POPs, VOCs, among others—not biological pollution, such as from poor sewage treatment)
2. In concentrations above the health standards
3. From a "point source" (not cars and trucks, or multi-source contamination in an entire river system)
4. With migration to areas occupied or used by people
5. With an exposure pathway to humans

Step 3: Identify a local contact or guide. Call local people to schedule interviews, including interviews to take place at the field site on the day of testing. Try to meet with:

1. Local authorities (mayor, environmental agency, health agency)
2. Local organizations and community groups
3. Local health professionals
4. Local residents affected by the problem

Step 4: Prepare your equipment. You will need:

1. **A camera.** Please check your batteries and set your camera to take large, high-resolution photos.
2. **Program Summary.** Bring information about the TSIP project to share with local officials and residents.
3. **A notepad and pen.** Please take detailed notes.
4. **A map** of the site (try printing from Google Earth or a local map)
5. **GPS** device (if you have access to one)

6. **Personal protective equipment.** Protective equipment is necessary if the investigator could be exposed to the pollutant. If you need to purchase protective equipment, please contact the Country Coordinator or Regional Director in New York. Safety is very important. Please be careful and avoid potentially dangerous situations. See the Health and Safety section for further information.

Step 5: Identify Laboratories and Prepare for Sampling

1. **Identify likely contaminates** for which samples will be taken and analysis will be required.
2. **Identify the laboratory to be used.** In general, the Country Coordinator should advise investigators on laboratories that should be used. Where possible these will be certified laboratories. If no certified lab is available, the labs should be the best environmental lab readily available, which may be connected to government health or environmental departments or universities.
3. **Obtain prices for sample analyses and alert the laboratory that they may be receiving samples**. Confirm that they can do the desired analysis. Ask about and record the method they intend to use. When you receive the price quote from the lab, contact your Country Coordinator and Regional Director in New York to see if the price is acceptable.
4. **Ask the laboratory about any specific requirements** regarding sampling containers, quantities needed and sample preservation requirements. Also ask the laboratory about labeling or packaging requirements for the samples.
5. **Prepare Sampling equipment.** The equipment will depend on the pollutant and the type of sampling (soil, water, food, etc.). Follow the laboratory instructions. Generally, you will need:
   - Something to collect samples (shovel, spoon, bottle)
   - A permanent pen to mark samples (like a Sharpie)
   - Storage containers for samples (bags for soil, bottles for water)

See the Sampling Protocol Guidance for further information.

If there are multiple sites in an area, plan to visit all of the sites in one trip to the extent possible.