
Procedures for Reviewing EIA Reports

These procedures are based on the work of

Lee, N. and Colley, R. (1990) *Reviewing the Quality of Environmental Statements*.
Occasional Paper Number 24. EIA Centre. University of Manchester

and

Boyle, J. and Mubvami, T. (1995) *Training Manual for Environmental Impact Assessment in Zimbabwe*. Department of Natural Resources Ministry of Environment and Tourism,
Zimbabwe

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Instructions for Reviewing EIA Reports

Background

The following tables provide one approach to reviewing the basic adequacy of the standard of an EIA report. **These tables are not sufficient on their own to fully review a report.** It is recommended that the following steps should also be carried out:

- a check for compliance with legal or donor requirements;
- an assessment of the scientific and technical adequacy of the work; and
- a public review of the work.

This review should be able to be carried out by a person who is familiar with the environmental impact assessment process and the requirements of any local regulations.

Instructions

The review process is outlined on the flowchart on the following page.

There are four review areas, each with a series of review categories.

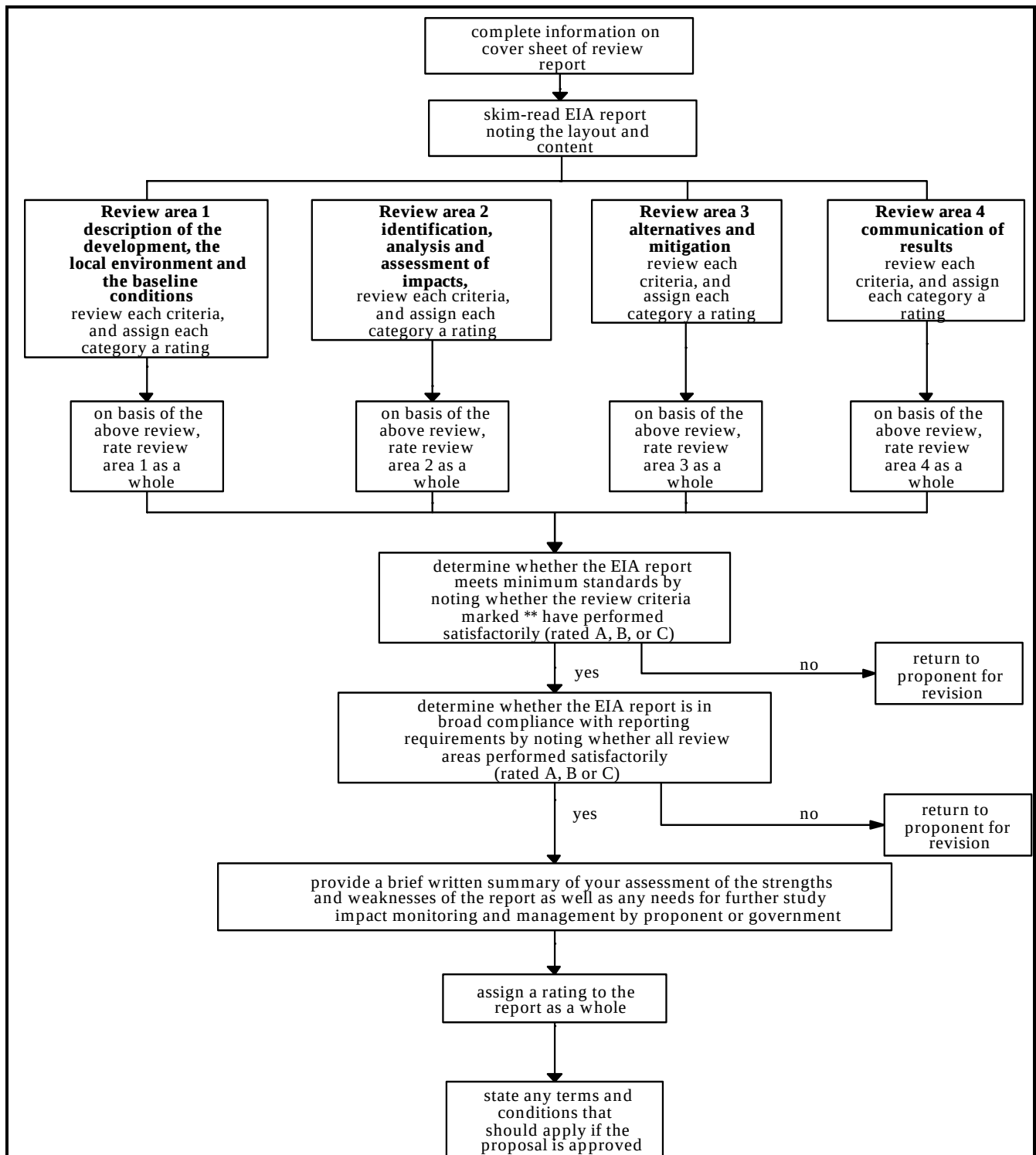
For each review category, the reviewer is asked to rate the EIA report for its performance in addressing a list of issues. The reviewer gives each issue a rating between A and F (see table of review criteria for details). The overall rating for a category is then determined by the reviewer on the basis of the results of the individual ratings, weighted according to their relative importance by the reviewer.

Some issues and categories (marked **) are essential to the overall adequacy of the EIA report. If they do not achieve a minimum rating of C the report should be returned to the proponent for improvement, or, if this is not feasible, other remedial action should be taken as appropriate.

The evaluation of the overall report is determined by the reviewer, based on the ratings of the review categories, again weighted according to their relative importance. Added to this evaluation should be:

- a brief summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the report;
- any needs for further study;
- any impact monitoring and management required to be undertaken by the proponent or the government; and
- any terms and conditions that should apply if approval of the proposal is granted.

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Review of EIA Report**EIA report title and date:**

EIA report reviewed by:

Dates of review:

Review criteria:

Rating	Explanation
A	generally well performed, no important tasks left incomplete
B	generally satisfactory and complete, only minor omissions and inadequacies
C	just satisfactory despite omissions and/or inadequacies
D	parts well attempted but must, on the whole be considered just unsatisfactory because of omissions and/or inadequacies
E	unsatisfactory, significant omissions or inadequacies
F	very unsatisfactory, important task(s) poorly done or not attempted
N/A	not applicable, the review topic is not applicable in the context of the project

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Review of EIA Report

Using the review criteria from the previous page, complete the tables on the following pages and then answer the following questions.

1 Minimum requirements

Did **all** the review criteria marked ** in the EIA review tables perform satisfactorily, i.e. rate A, B or C?

YES NO

(If not the report should be returned to the proponent for revision.)

2 Broad compliance

Were **all** four review areas rated satisfactory or better ,i.e. rate A, B, or C?

YES NO

(If not the report should be returned to the proponent for revision.)

3 Overall quality

Overall rating for report	A	B	C	D	E	F
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Provide a brief summary of the key factors which determined your overall rating. Include your assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the report as well as any needs for further study and impact monitoring and management by the proponent or the Government. Pay particular attention to the adequacy of the report based on the requirements of your discipline or agency.

4 Approval terms and conditions

If EIA acceptance of the proposal is granted on the basis of this EIA report what terms and conditions should govern the manner in which the activity proceeds? These can refer to responsibilities of either the Government or the proponent.

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Review Area 1

Description of the development, the local environment and the baseline conditions

1.1	Description of the development: the purpose(s) of the development is adequately described as well as its physical characteristics, scale and design. Quantities of material needed during construction and operation are included and, where appropriate, a description is given of the production processes.	
1.1.1	The purposes and objectives of the development are adequately explained.	rating**
1.1.2	The design, size or scale of the development, and the nature and duration of construction and operation activities, are adequately described. Diagrams, plans, charts and/or maps are used effectively for this purpose	rating**
1.1.3	The report adequately describes the environmental planning that went into the design of the project to minimise negative environmental effects and capture potential benefits.	rating**
1.1.4	Important design features, especially those for environmental planning and socio-economic management (eg pollution control, waste management, erosion control, handling of toxic or hazardous materials, worker services) are highlighted.	rating
1.1.5	There is an adequate indication of the physical presence or appearance of the completed development within the receiving environment.	rating
1.1.6	The nature and quantities of material need during both the construction and operational phases are described as well as, where appropriate, the nature of the production processes.	rating
1.1.7	The numbers of workers involved with the project during both construction and operation are estimated.	rating**
Overall grade for category 1.1 A B C D E F <i>(Note criteria marked ** must be rated A, B or C for the category to be satisfactory, if not, return report to proponent for revision)</i>		
Comments		
1.2	Site description: the on-site land requirements of the development are described, as well as the duration of each land use.	
1.2.1	The land area taken up by the development site is well defined and its location clearly shown on a map.	rating**
1.2.2	The uses to which this land will be put are described and the different land use areas demarcated.	rating
1.2.3	Where alternate plans, designs or sites are being considered each is adequately discussed according to Criteria 1.2.1 and 1.2.2	rating
Overall grade for category 1.2 A B C D E F <i>(Note criteria marked ** must be rated A, B or C for the category to be satisfactory, if not, return report to proponent for revision)</i>		
Comments		

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1.3	Residuals: the types and quantities of residual and/or waste matter and energy created are adequately estimated, the expected rate of production given, and the proposed disposal routes to the environment identified.				
1.3.1	The types and quantities of waste matter, energy and residual materials and the rate at which these will be produced, are adequately estimated. Uncertainties are acknowledged and ranges or confidence limits given where possible.				rating**
1.3.2	The ways in which it is proposed to handle and/or treat these wastes and residuals is indicated, together with the routes by which they will eventually be disposed of to the environment.				rating**
Overall grade for category 1.3 A B C D E F (Note criteria marked ** must be rated A, B or C for the category to be satisfactory, if not, return report to proponent for revision)					
Comments					
1.4	Bounding the study: appropriate boundaries to the study area and time horizon are identified.				
1.4.1	The environment expected to be affected by the development is delimited with the aid of suitable scale map(s).				rating**
1.4.2	The affected environment is defined broadly enough to include any potentially significant effects occurring away from the immediate project site(s). These may be caused by, for example, the dispersion of pollutants, off-site infrastructure requirements, traffic, etc.				rating**
1.4.3	The time horizon of the study is long enough to account for delayed effects.				rating
Overall grade for category 1.4 A B C D E F (Note criteria marked ** must be rated A, B or C for the category to be satisfactory, if not, return report to proponent for revision)					
Comments					
1.5	Baseline condition: an adequate description of the affected environment as it is currently, and as it could be expected to develop if the project were not to proceed, is presented.				
1.5.1	The important components of the affected environments are adequately identified and described. The methods and investigation undertaken for this purpose are disclosed and are appropriate to the size and complexity of the assessment task. An appropriate amount of fieldwork was done. Uncertainties are indicated.				rating**
1.5.2	Existing data sources were searched and, where relevant, used. These include local authority records and studies carried out by, or on behalf of, government and private sector organisations.				rating
1.5.3	Local land use and development plans were consulted and other data collected as necessary to assist in the determination of the probable future state of the environment, in the absence of the project, taking into account natural fluctuations and human activities.				rating
Overall grade for category 1.5 A B C D E F (Note criteria marked ** must be rated A, B or C for the category to be satisfactory, if not, return report to proponent for revision)					
Comments					
Overall evaluation of Review Area 1 A B C D E F					
Comments					

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Review Area 2

Identification, Analysis and Assessment of Impacts

2.1	Identification of impacts: all potentially significant impacts are identified. Key impact are also identified and the main investigation centred on these.	
2.1.1	All important issues identified in the EIA terms of reference are included in the report. Deviations and exclusions are adequately accounted for.	rating* *
2.1.2	Direct and indirect impacts are identified using a systematic methodology (e.g. project-specific checklists, matrices, impact networks, expert judgement, extensive consultations). A brief description of the impact identification methods is given along with the rationale for using them.	rating* *
2.1.3	Due attention is paid to environmentally sensitive areas, to off-site, time delayed or recurring (e.g. seasonal) impacts and to cumulative or synergistic effects with existing and anticipated developments.	rating
2.1.4	Consideration is not limited to effects which will occur under design operating conditions. Where appropriate, impacts which might arise from non-standard operating conditions, or due to accidents, are also included.	rating
2.1.5	All phases of the project are considered e.g. pre-construction, construction, operation and decommissioning.	rating* *
2.1.6	Key impacts were identified and selected for more intense investigation. The scoping methods are described and their use justified.	rating* *
Overall grade for category 2.1 A B C D E F <i>(Note criteria marked ** must be rated A, B or C for the category to be satisfactory, if not, return report to proponent for revision)</i>		
Comments		
2.2	Analysis of impact severity: the likely impacts of the development on the environment are analysed and described in as precise terms as possible.	
2.2.1	Impacts are analysed as the deviation from baseline conditions, i.e. the difference between environmental conditions expected if the development were not to proceed and those expected as a consequence of it.	rating* *
2.2.2	The data used to estimate the severity of impacts is sufficient for the task and clearly described. Any gaps in the required data are indicated and accounted for.	rating* *
2.2.3	The methods used to predict impact severity are described and are appropriate to the size and importance of the projected disturbance. The assumptions and limitations of the methods are explicitly discussed.	rating* *
2.2.4	Descriptions of impact severity encompass the appropriate characteristics of impact (e.g. magnitude, areal extent, duration, frequency, reversibility, likelihood of occurrence).	rating
2.2.5	Where possible, estimates of impacts are recorded in measurable quantities with ranges and/or confidence limits as appropriate. Qualitative descriptions, where necessary, are as fully defined as possible (e.g. 'minor' means not perceptible from more than 100m distance).	rating
Overall grade for category 2.2 A B C D E F <i>(Note criteria marked ** must be rated A, B or C for the category to be satisfactory, if not, return report to proponent for revision)</i>		
Comments		

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2.3	Assessment of impact significance: the expected significance that the projected impacts will have for society are adequately assessed. The sources of quality standards plus the rationale, assumptions and value judgements used in assessing significance are fully described.	
2.3.1	The significance of all impacts which will remain after mitigation are described and clearly distinguished from impact severity.	rating*
2.3.2	The significance of impacts is assessed using appropriate national and international quality standards where available. Explicit account is taken of the values placed on affected environmental features locally, nationally and (where appropriate) internationally.	rating
2.3.3	The choice of standards, assumptions and value systems used to assess significance are justified and the existence of opposing or contrary opinions acknowledged.	rating
2.3.4	Wherever possible, economic values are attributed to environmental costs and benefits.	rating
2.3.5	Individuals, groups, communities and government agencies affected by the project are clearly identified.	rating*
Overall grade for category 2.3 A B C D E F <i>(Note criteria marked ** must be rated A, B or C for the category to be satisfactory, if not, return report to proponent for revision)</i>		
Comments		
Overall evaluation of Review Area 2 A B C D E F		
Comments		

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Review Area 3

Alternatives and Mitigation

3.1	Alternatives: project alternatives are considered. These are outlined, the environmental implications of each presented and the reasons for their adoption or rejection briefly discussed.													
3.1.1	Alternative sites, processes, designs and operating conditions are considered where these are practicable and available to the developer. The main environmental advantages and disadvantages of these are discussed and the reasons for the final choice given.	rating*												
3.1.2	Where possible, alternative construction strategies (e.g. timing, local versus imported labour) are considered and assessed for their environmental and socio-economic implications.	rating												
3.1.3	For public sector proposals, alternative means of achieving project goals are considered (e.g. energy efficiency investments versus dams for energy supply). If not, the report discusses why this was not done.	rating												
Overall grade for category 3.1 A B C D E F (Note criteria marked ** must be rated A, B or C for the category to be satisfactory, if not, return report to proponent for revision)														
Comments														
3.2	Scope and effectiveness of mitigation measures: all significant adverse impacts are considered for mitigation. Evidence is presented to show that proposed impact management measures will be appropriate and effective.													
3.2.1	Concerned stakeholders (e.g individuals, groups, communities, government agencies) have been adequately consulted and their views accounted for in the development of mitigation measures.	rating*												
3.2.2	The mitigation of all significant adverse impacts is considered. Wherever possible, specific mitigation measures are defined in practical terms (e.g. costs, manpower, equipment and technology needs, timing).	rating*												
3.2.3	Any residual or unmitigated impact are discussed and justification offered as to why these impacts should not or cannot be mitigated.	rating												
3.2.4	It is clear to what extent the mitigation methods will be effective. Where effectiveness is uncertain or depends on assumptions about operating procedures, climatic conditions, etc data is introduced to justify the acceptance of these assumptions.	rating												
3.2.5	An effective environmental monitoring and management plan is presented to deal with expected; possible but uncertain; and unforeseen impacts caused by the project. Training needs are identified. The costs of the programme are estimated. Developer and government responsibilities are distinguished, reporting and review procedures are specified.	rating*												
Overall grade for category 3.2 A B C D E F (Note criteria marked ** must be rated A, B or C for the category to be satisfactory, if not, return report to proponent for revision)														
Comments														
3.3	Commitment to mitigation: the project proponent clearly expresses a commitment to, and capability of, carrying out the mitigation measures.													
Overall grade for category 3.3 A B C D E F (Note criteria marked ** must be rated A, B or C for the category to be satisfactory, if not, return report to proponent for revision)														
Comments														
Overall evaluation of Review Area 3 A B C D E F														

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Comments

Review Area 4

Communication

4.1	Public involvement: there were genuine and adequate consultations with concerned project stakeholders to inform them of the project and its implications and to obtain their views on key issues to be investigated and managed. The scope and results of the public involvement program are adequately documented in the report.					
Overall grade for category 4.1		A B C D E F				
(Note criteria marked ** must be rated A, B or C for the category to be satisfactory, if not, return report to proponent for revision)						
Comments						
4.2	Layout: the layout of the report enables the reader to find and assimilate information easily and quickly. External data sources are acknowledged.					
4.2.1	There is an introduction briefly describing the project, the aims of the environmental assessment and how those aims are to be achieved.					rating
4.2.2	Information is logically arranged in sections or chapters and the whereabouts of important data is indicated in a table of contents or index. Terms of reference and data used in the assessment are included in appendices. The study team members are identified.					rating*
4.2.3	When data, conclusions or quality standards from external source are introduced, the original source is acknowledged at that point in the text. A full reference is included in a footnote or in a list of references.					rating
Overall grade for category 4.2		A B C D E F				
(Note criteria marked ** must be rated A, B or C for the category to be satisfactory, if not, return report to proponent for revision)						
Comments						
4.3	Presentation: care is taken in the presentation of information to make sure that it is accessible to the non-specialist.					
4.3.1	Information is comprehensible to the non-specialist. Tables, graphs and other graphics are used as appropriate. Unnecessarily technical or obscure language is avoided. Technical terms, acronyms and initials are defined, either when first introduced in the text or in a glossary.					rating*
4.3.2	The report is presented as an integrated whole. Data presented in appendices is fully discussed in the main body of the text.					rating
Overall grade for category 4.3		A B C D E F				
(note criteria marked ** must be rated A, B or C for the category to be satisfactory, if not, return report to proponent for revision)						
Comments						

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4.4	Emphasis: information is presented without bias and receives the emphasis appropriate to its importance in the context of the project.	
4.4.1	Prominence and emphasis is given to all potentially significant impacts, both adverse and beneficial, in a balanced manner.	rating*
4.2.2	The statement is unbiased and does not lobby for any particular point of view.	rating
Overall grade for category 4.4 A B C D E F <i>(note criteria marked ** must be rated A, B or C for the category to be satisfactory, if not, return report to proponent for revision)</i>		
Comments		
4.5	Non-technical summary: there is an adequate non-technical summary outlining the main conclusions and how they were reached.	
4.5.1	There is an adequate non-technical summary of the analysis and main findings of the study. Technical terms, lists of data and detailed explanations of scientific reasoning are avoided.	rating*
4.5.2	The summary is comprehensive, containing at least a brief description of the project and the environment, an account of the main impacts and mitigation measures to be undertaken by the developer, and a description of any remaining or residual impacts. A brief explanation of the methods by which information and data were obtained, and an indication of the confidence that can be placed in them, is also included.	rating
Overall grade for category 4.5 A B C D E F <i>(Note criteria marked ** must be rated A, B or C for the category to be satisfactory, if not, return report to proponent for revision)</i>		
Comments		
Overall evaluation of Review Area 4 A B C D E F		
Comments		