



Reviewing Environmental Impact Assessment

10th October 2023



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Often this process can lead to a requirement for additional information on potential impacts, mitigation measures or other aspects.

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- Assess the adequacy and quality of the ES;
- Take account of public comment;
- Determine if the information is sufficient for a final decision to be made;
- Identify the deficiencies that must be addressed.

Reviewing an EIA

Review Area 1:

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

Review Area 1

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.	Rating
1.1.1	The purposes and objectives of the development are adequately explained.	
1.1.2	The design, size or scale of the development, and nature and duration of the construction and operation activities are adequately described. Diagrams, plans, charts and/or maps are effective for this purpose.	
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.	
1.1.4	Important design features, especially those for environmental planning and socio-economic management are highlighted.	
1.1.5	There is adequate indication of the physical presence or appearance on the completed development within the receiving environment.	
1.1.6	The nature and quantities of materials needed during both the construction and operational phases are described as well as, where appropriate, the nature of the production processes.	
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Review Area 1

1.2	Site description: the on-site land requirements of the development are described , as well as the duration of each land use.	Rating
1.2.1	The land area taken up by the development site is well defined and its location clearly shown on a map.	
1.2.2	The uses to which this land will be put are described and the different land use areas demarcated.	
1.2.3	Where alternate plans, designs or sites are being considered each is adequate discussed according to the criteria above.	

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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.	Rating
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	
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.	

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1.4	Bounding the study: appropriate boundaries to the study area and time horizon are identified.	Rating
1.4.1	The environment expected to be affected by the development is delimited with the aid of a suitable scale map(s)	
1.4.2	The affected environment is defined broadly enough to include any potentially significant effects occurring away from the immediate project site(s).	
1.4.3	The time horizon of the study is long enough to account for delayed effects.	

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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.	Rating
1.5.1	The important components of the affected environments are adequately identified and described. The method 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.	
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.	
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.	

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Reviewing an EIA

Review Area 1:

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

Review Area 2:

- Identification, analysis and assessment of impacts.

Review Area 2

2.1	Identification of impact: all potentially significant impacts are identified. Key impacts are also identified and the main investigation centred on these.	Rating
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.	
2.1.2	Direct and indirect impacts are identified using a systematic methodology. A brief description of the impact identification methods is given along with the rationale for using them.	
2.1.3	Due attention is paid to environmentally sensitive areas, to off-site, time delay or recurring impacts to cumulative or synergistic effects with existing and anticipated developments.	
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.	
2.1.5	All phases of the project are considered.	
2.1.6	Key impacts were identified and selected for more intense investigation. The scoping methods are described and their use justified.	

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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.	Rating
2.2.1	Impacts are analysed as the deviation from baseline conditions.	
2.2.2.	The data used to estimate the severity of the impacts is sufficient for the task and clearly described. Any gaps in the required data are indicated and accounted for.	
2.2.3	The methods used to predict the 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.	
2.2.4	Descriptions of the impact severity encompass the appropriate characteristics of the impact.	
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.	

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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 assessed significance are fully described.	Rating
2.3.1	The significance of all impacts which will remain after mitigation are described and clearly distinguished from impact severity.	
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.	
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 is acknowledged.	
2.3.4	Wherever possible, economic values are attributed to environmental costs and benefits.	
2.3.5	Individuals, groups, communities and government agencies affected by the project are clearly identified.	

Review Area 2

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 assessed significance are fully described.	Rating
2.3.1	The significance of all impacts which will remain after mitigation are described and clearly distinguished from impact severity.	
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.	
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 is acknowledged.	
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Reviewing an EIA

Review Area 1:

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

Review Area 2:

- Identification, analysis and assessment of impacts.

Review Area 3:

- Alternatives and mitigation.

Review Area 3

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.	Rating
3.1.1.	Alternative sites, processes, designs and operating conditions are considered where these are practicable and available to the developer. The min environmental advantages and disadvantages of these are discussed and the reasons for the final choice given.	
3.1.2	Where possible, alternative construction strategies are considered and assessed for their environmental and socio-economic implications.	
3.1.3	For public section proposals, alternative means of achieving project goals are considered. If not, the report discusses why this was not done.	

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Review Area 3

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.	Rating
3.2.1	Concerned stakeholders have been adequately consulted and their views accounted for in the development of mitigation measures.	
3.2.2	The mitigation of all significant adverse impacts is considered. Where possible, specific mitigation measures are defined in practical terms.	
3.2.3	Any residual or unmitigated impact are discussed and justification offered as to why these impacts should not or cannot be mitigated.	
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.	
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 cost of the programme are estimated. Developer and government responsibilities are distinguished, reporting and review procedures are specified.	

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Review Area 3

3.3	Commitment to mitigation: the project proponent clearly expresses a commitment to, and capability of, carrying out the mitigation measures.	Rating
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Reviewing an EIA

Review Area 1:

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

Review Area 2:

- Identification, analysis and assessment of impacts.

Review Area 3:

- Alternatives and mitigation.

Review Area 4:

- Communication

Review Area 4

4.1	Project 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.	Rating
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Review Area 4

4.2	Layout: the layout of the report enables the reader to find and assimilate information easily and quickly. External data sources are acknowledged.	Rating
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.	
4.2.2	Information is logically arranged in sections or chapters and the whereabouts of important data is indicated in the table of contents or index. Terms of reference and data used in assessment are included in appendices. The study team members are identified.	
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.	

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Review Area 4

4.3	Presentation: care is taken in the presentation of information to make sure that it is accessible to the non-specialist.	Rating
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.	
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.	

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Review Area 4

4.4	Emphasis: information is presented without bias and receives the emphasis appropriate to its importance in the context of the project.	Rating
4.4.1	Prominence and emphasis is given to all potentially significant impacts, both adverse and beneficial, in a balance manner.	
4.4.2	The statement is unbiased and does not lobby for any particular point of view.	

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4.5	Non-technical summary: there is an adequate non-technical summary outlining the main conclusions and how they were reached.	Rating
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.	
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.	

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