

# A Guide to Commissioning Environmental Impact Assessment

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) must be undertaken for new development proposals that are likely to have significant environmental effects.

Consenting bodies, such as local planning authorities, are required to identify whether your proposed development will require an EIA. If the need for an EIA is not identified early, or if the assessment fails to include sufficient environmental information to satisfy the consenting authority, then delays are likely to occur costing you time and money.

Effective EIA practice minimises such delays by identifying where assessments are required, developing a pragmatic focus for the work and optimising the outputs so they provide the required information in a transparent manner. Further to this, proposals that require an EIA can prove controversial amongst the local community and wider groups due to their potentially significant environmental effects. However, a well run EIA provides you as the developer with justified evidence about a proposal's likely (positive and negative) environmental effects. This will ultimately allow you to provide a true representation of the development, which can be used to inform and engage with stakeholders and the local community.

## Commissioning an EIA

Many organisations offer EIA services including;

- environmental and planning consultancies
- engineering firms
- architects
- surveyors.

However, identifying which organisation will provide the most appropriate service for your needs can prove tricky when faced with a pile of tender documents, especially if you are not an expert in EIA. Ideally there would be a quick way of identifying a shortlist of organisations that you knew you could rely on to deliver a sound, reliable, verified EIA service; **and now there is...**

**...The EIA Quality Mark! Look out for this logo on EIA tenders:**



As the UK's leading body for environmental professionals the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) is an expert body in the EIA field. Because of this status, we have been able to develop the EIA Quality Mark to identify organisations that are capable of producing high quality EIA on a consistent basis.

Organisations that hold the EIA Quality Mark have made a voluntary commitment to excellence in their EIA activities from managing the process and maintaining staff capabilities, to effective presentation of the assessments findings and taking action to improve practice.

The commitments are independently reviewed on an annual basis by IEMA to ensure registered organisations continue to deliver added value for their clients.

# Registrants and Their Commitments

Each registrant has made seven commitments to delivering you, as the client, effective action related to:

- EIA Management
- EIA Regulatory Compliance
- EIA Presentation
- EIA Context & Influence
- Improving EIA practice
- EIA Team Capabilities
- EIA Content

To find out more about these Commitments, or to find out which organisations are registered to the EIA Quality Mark simply visit [www.iema.net/qmark](http://www.iema.net/qmark).

## Benefits of Using EIA Quality Mark Registrants

By commissioning an EIA Quality Mark registrant to lead the environmental work on your proposed development you gain:

- **Confidence** that the organisation you commission will deliver an efficient and effective assessment based on their commitment to quality EIA.
- **Cost effectiveness** as registrants to the scheme have access to resources including a library of hundreds of existing assessments, case studies, presentations and guidance allowing them to keep up-to-date with the latest developments in EIA.
- **Credibility** in the eyes of consenting authorities, stakeholders and local communities as your assessment is led by an organisation that is willing to voluntarily have its EIA activities independently reviewed
- **Technical Capability** the annual review process assesses on-going staff training and development as well as the quality of the organisation's EIA processes and outputs.

## Find out more...

If your development requires an EIA and you need to contract an organisation to co-ordinate the assessment process, IEMA recommends that you select an EIA Quality Mark registrant.

The scheme register includes a wider range of organisations from large multi-disciplinary organisations to small specialist environmental consultancies. The registrant organisations are united through their commitment to excellence in EIA practice and a readiness to have this commitment independently reviewed on a regular basis.

Further details about the EIA Quality Mark and the registrant organisations can be found online at [www.iema.net/qmark](http://www.iema.net/qmark), by calling IEMA on 01522 540069 or by contacting an organisation displaying the EIA Quality Mark logo.

# [www.iema.net/qmark](http://www.iema.net/qmark)