

IEMA ES Review Criteria

Structure of the Criteria

The criteria are split into three sections and a review report is structured accordingly:

Section 1 addresses all of the information contained within an Environmental Statement (ES) with the exception of the assessment of the impacts.

Section 2 addresses the assessment of the impacts on the environment. The section covers the information relating to:

the baseline conditions;
the prediction of the magnitude of impacts;
the evaluation of significance and mitigation measures; and
follow-up.

In order to aid decision makers, this section is structured in accordance with the environmental issues referred to in the ES. In order to ensure that a report remains concise and focused any comments usually focus on those areas where the ES could be strengthened to provide an improved basis for decision-making.

This section of the report provides an overview of the treatment of the above topics within the ES. This is followed by a review of those aspects of each environmental issue that would benefit from additional details being provided to fill gaps in the information or to provide clarification.

Section 3 addresses the presentation and communication of the information. This includes a brief review of the non-technical summary.

IEMA ES REVIEW CRITERIA

1. General Criteria

1.1. Description of the Development

The ES should describe the purpose and objectives for the development. The proposal and its need should be placed in the context of local/regional/national plans / objectives / strategies. The anticipated timescales of construction, operation and (where appropriate) decommissioning of the proposal should be given. The likely methods of construction (techniques and equipment to be used) should be given where construction could give rise to significant impacts. In instances where the likely methods of construction are unknown the ES should indicate possible methods and adopt the worst-case scenario approach in prediction of related impacts. The description should include the physical characteristics of the proposal, including its location; the design and size of the development and the area of land take during construction and operation. The ES should describe the main characteristics of any production processes, for instance the nature and quantity of materials to be used. The description should be illustrated by the use of maps and/or diagrams. A brief outline of the experience of the operator and the operational process(es) that will be employed should be included within the ES. The ES should provide reasoned estimates for the quantities and type of traffic that will arise during construction and operation. Where materials are considered to be an important resource, the ES should describe and quantify the materials to be used. The quantities and types of residues and emissions generated at each of the above phases should also be estimated.

1.2. Site Description

The area of proposed land take should be clearly described and indicated on an appropriate map or diagram. The land uses on the site and the surrounding area should be described and illustrated. The ES should describe any policies, plans or designations that are relevant to the site and its surroundings. The study area should be consistent with the area potentially affected by the development. The description should place the affected land in the context of its surroundings. The ES should also describe how the affected land would be expected to develop without the proposal and the future status of the land in the absence of the project (e.g. is the site allocated for development or how would the conservation status change over time).

1.3 Scoping

The ES should describe the scoping process that has been undertaken to identify key impacts. The description should include details of consultation with appropriate statutory and non-statutory consultees, including the public. The ES should identify those parties consulted and provide a summary of their responses. Where issues raised by the consultees are not to be addressed in detail in the ES, a reasoned justification for their exclusion should be given. The scoping process should identify those aspects of the environment that are likely to be significantly affected by the development (including in particular, population, fauna, flora, geology and soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, including the architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the inter-relationship between the above factors). The ES should also evaluate any direct effects and any indirect, secondary, cumulative, short, medium and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects, resulting from the existence of the development, the use of natural resources and the emission of pollutants, the creation of nuisances and the elimination of waste. The ES should clearly state what effects will, and what effects will not, be addressed and how this decision was reached, together with the spatial and temporal scope of the assessment. The ES should identify the regulations under which the EIA is required, and indicate whether it is also to be used to address other regulatory requirements (e.g. Appropriate Assessment under the

requirements of the Habitats Directive, or as part of a Pollution Prevention and Control Application).

1.4 Consideration of Alternatives

The ES should describe the main alternatives to the proposal that have been considered. For example, alternative sites, construction practices, plant and equipment, operating processes and site layouts should be considered (where appropriate). The advantages and disadvantages of each option should be clearly stated. The main reasons for the selection of the preferred option should be described in outline, taking into account the environmental effects. Other factors influencing the choice of alternative should be noted, e.g. feasibility, cost-effectiveness and reasonableness of each option. If a formal option appraisal has been carried out it should be described and the relevant decision factors noted.

2. Issue Specific Criteria¹

2.1 Baseline Conditions

The ES should describe the current condition of those aspects of the environment that are likely to be significantly affected by the development. An indication of how these aspects could be expected to develop if the project were not to proceed should also be given. Where existing data has been used to establish the baseline the source of the data should be identified in the ES. The ES should provide a clear description of the methods used to supplement existing information. Where possible, the data gathered should be expressed quantitatively. The baseline environment should be evaluated, for example in relation to its sensitivity and importance. This could be achieved by comparison to relevant threshold limits (WHO Limits, EU Quality Standards, etc.) or by reference to appropriate environmental designations. Any limitations of baseline surveys should be recognised.

2.2 Prediction of Impact Magnitude

The predictions for the magnitude of the likely significant effects of the development should be identified in the ES. The magnitude of the impact should be predicted as a deviation from the established baseline conditions, for each phase of the proposal. The information and data used to predict the magnitude of impact should be clearly described. Where there are any gaps or uncertainty, these should be identified. The methods used to establish magnitude should be clearly described and be appropriate and reasonable in relation to the importance of the impact. Where assumptions or unsupported data has been used in the predictions these should be highlighted and accompanied by an indication of the reliability/confidence of those assumptions or data. The data given should be quantified and levels of confidence in the estimates given. The ES should identify quantitatively the impacts that remain following mitigation. The ES should evaluate any direct effects and any indirect, secondary, cumulative, short, medium and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects, resulting from the existence of the development, the use of natural resources and the emission of pollutants, the creation of nuisances and the elimination of waste.

2.3 Impact Significance

The significance of all impacts should be assessed using the appropriate national and international quality standards limits (WHO Limits, EU Quality Standards, etc). Where no such standards exist, the ES should describe the judgements (assumptions and value systems) that underpin the attribution of significance. The assessment of significance should consider the impact's deviation from the established baseline condition, the sensitivity of the

¹ See 'Structure of the Report' in the Introduction for advice regarding the structure of this section.

environment and the extent to which the impact will be mitigated or is reversible. The range of factors, which are likely to influence the assessment of significance, should be clearly identified. The ES should also detail how these variables will affect the significance of the impacts over the life of the development. The ES should identify the significance of impacts that remain following mitigation.

2.4 Mitigation

The ES should describe the measures proposed to avoid, reduce, and if possible, remedy significant adverse impacts. The ES should provide an indication of the effectiveness of the stated measures. The ES should demonstrate a clear commitment to implementing the mitigation measures and indicate how and when these measures will be implemented. Where there is uncertainty over the effectiveness, or it is dependent on assumptions, justification should be provided for the acceptance of the assumptions.

2.5 Follow-Up

The ES should provide details of any management plans that are to be implemented to deliver mitigation measures and to monitor the environmental impact of the project. These should also provide details of the time scales of the management plans and their geographical extent. Where a management plan is to be integrated into an environmental management system, the ES should describe how this would be implemented. The ES should identify those responsible for the follow-up programme and describe how the results of such a programme will affect the proposal's operation.

3. Presentation of Results

3.1 Presentation

The ES should be clear and logical in its layout and presentation and be capable of being understood by the non-specialist. The use of technical terms should be kept to a minimum, with a glossary provided. A full list of references should be provided. The inclusion of information not directly relevant to the nature of the proposal and its associated impacts should be avoided. Plans should be provided to assist in understanding the locations of impacts and should be labelled with all places mentioned in the text.

3.2 Objectivity

The ES should be a balanced document, providing an unbiased account of the environmental effects with reasoned and justifiable arguments. The ES should give appropriate prominence to both positive and negative effects relative to their importance. The ES should summarise the issues raised by consultees. The ES should be explicit in recognising areas of limitations within the ES, any difficulties that have been encountered and assumptions on which the assessment is based. How these have affected the ES and what measures were taken to limit them should be detailed.

3.3 Non-Technical Summary (NTS)

The NTS should provide sufficient information for the non-specialist reader to understand the main environmental impacts of the proposal without reference to the main ES. The NTS should include a summary of the description of the development, the main alternatives considered, the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the development, the likely significant impacts and the mitigation measures to be implemented. The NTS should include or make appropriate reference to maps and diagrams which, at a

minimum, illustrate the location of the application site, the footprint of the proposed development, and the location of relevant key features. The NTS should be provided as a separate, stand alone document to facilitate a wider readership.

4. Areas of Originality / Innovation

Any areas of innovation or originality will be noted in this section. If the ES does not merit comment in this section, it will be deleted from the review. This section will be not be graded.

APPENDIX 2 - INSTITUTE REVIEW GRADES

A	Excellent, no tasks left incomplete
B	Good, only minor omissions and inadequacies
C	Satisfactory despite omissions and inadequacies
D	Parts well attempted, but must as a whole be considered unsatisfactory because of omissions and/or inadequacies
E	Poor, significant omissions or inadequacies
F	Very poor, most tasks left incomplete
N/A	Not applicable. The review topic is not applicable or relevant in the context of this statement

REFERENCES

1. Lee N & Colley R (1990), *Reviewing the Quality of Environmental Statements*, Occasional Paper No. 24, EIA Centre, University of Manchester; and as updated by Lee N, Colley R, Bonde R & Simpson J (1999), *Reviewing the Quality of Environmental Statements and Environmental Appraisals*, Occasional Paper No. 55, EIA Centre, University of Manchester.
2. Commission of the European Communities (1985), *Directive on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment*, (85/337/EEC), Official Journal of the European Communities, 175, Brussels; and as amended by the Directive 97/11/EC.
3. Department of the Environment (1994), *PPG23 - Planning and Pollution Control*, HMSO, London.

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