

## **ACTION NEEDED TO ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS ARE PROPERLY CONSIDERED DURING DEVELOPMENT OF HEATHROW'S 3<sup>RD</sup> RUNWAY SAY ENVIRONMENTAL BODY**

**The UK's leading professional organisation in the field of environmental assessment urges Government to ensure the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC) has the capacity to ensure major developments, like the 3<sup>rd</sup> runway at Heathrow, consider communities and the environment effectively.**

The Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) advocates a robust and resilient approach to the Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) that will be undertaken for nationally significant infrastructure projects (NSIP), which potentially include new nuclear power stations and Heathrow's 3<sup>rd</sup> runway. Given the scale, complexity and potentially controversial nature of major infrastructure developments, the IEMA foresees the need for an approach to EIA based on UK and International good practice.

The IEMA's Deputy Chief Executive Martin Baxter said *"The IPC must be sufficiently skilled and equipped to oversee the environmental assessment process and understand the content of its outputs related to applications for major infrastructure projects.*

*"The EIA process must be allowed to operate effectively to ensure environmental and community concerns are clearly and objectively stated to ensure they are given full consideration during decision-making."*

The IEMA questions whether the EIA process applied to a new major runway, rail project, or power station should only be required to meet the same standards applied to a housing estate or theatre development. Complying with the requirements of the law is essential for all development. Whether development of a more significant scale should be required to adopt good practice, such as carrying out early and effective public participation to identify environmental, social, and community issues, is still to be decided by the Government.

The IEMA have issued a paper to Government setting out options to enhance the EIA process applied to major infrastructure projects. By adopting approaches, such as those set out below, the right environmental and social information will get to the right people at the right time, leading to better decisions. Options available to the Government to ensure the EIA of nationally significant infrastructure projects are effective include:

- Appointing a dedicated EIA Commissioner, to lead a team of supporting staff, with responsibilities over the quality of the whole EIA process applied to NSIP.
- Ensuring the IPC are actively involved in identifying, and setting standards, related to the environmental and social issues to be addressed in the assessment.
- Ensuring the output of the EIA process is objective and includes the information needed to allow environmental and social issues to be truly taken into account and safeguarded during the decision-making process.

For more information on the IEMA, its events, services, products, membership, training and publications, visit [www.iema.net](http://www.iema.net).

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Notes:

1. The Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) is a not-for-profit membership organisation established to promote best practice standards in environmental management, auditing and assessment. The Institute offers support to environmental professionals and aims to promote sustainability through improved environmental practice and performance. With over 14,000 individual and corporate members, the IEMA is now a leading international membership-based organisation, dedicated to the promotion of sustainable development and to the professional development of individuals involved in the environmental sectors across many industrial sectors. For more information on the IEMA, its events, services, membership, training and publications, please visit [www.iema.net](http://www.iema.net).

2. Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is an assessment required by European law, which identifies and evaluates the significant environmental effects of certain projects, providing decision-makers and the public with the environmental information needed to make sustainable development decisions. The legal basis for EIA lies in European Community Directive 85/337/EEC (as amended by Directive 97/11/EC and 2003/35/EC) 'on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment'. Since the requirements of the first EIA Directive were implemented into UK law in 1988, EIA has become the most important environmental management tool for predicting and managing the environmental effects of new development. In 2005, approximately 700 Environmental Statements (the document prepared by developers to accompany their applications) were prepared and submitted to accompany applications for planning permission and other development consents in the UK.

3. The output from an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process is a document entitled an Environmental Statement. Environmental Statements are the first part of the EIA process that is legally required to be publicly available. The minimum content of an Environmental Statement is set out in Schedule 4 of the Town and Country Planning (EIA) Regulations see: [www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1999/99029306.htm#sch4](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1999/99029306.htm#sch4)

4. The IEMA and the Ireland & UK Branch of the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA) produced joint responses to the Government consultation processes that have led to the Planning Act establishing the Infrastructure Planning Commission. These included the Barker Review of Land Use Planning (2006), the Planning White Paper (2007), and the Planning Bill (2008). Our responses can be found at [www.iaia.org/modx/index.php?id=354](http://www.iaia.org/modx/index.php?id=354).

5. The IEMA's paper - *The Infrastructure Planning Commission & Environmental Impact Assessment EMA and the Ireland* – was submitted to the Department for Communities and Local Government in December 2008. The complete paper is available on-line at: [www.iema.net/download/consultation/IPC\\_EIA/IEMA\\_Indicative%20Options%20paper\\_The%20IPC%20and%20EIA\\_Dec08.pdf](http://www.iema.net/download/consultation/IPC_EIA/IEMA_Indicative%20Options%20paper_The%20IPC%20and%20EIA_Dec08.pdf)

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