Topic 3—Public involvement

Objectives

To understand the role, scope and contribution of public involvement in the EIA and decision-making processes.

To recognise the options by which the public can be involved at different stages of the EIA process.

To identify the principles and requirements for meaningful consultation with stakeholders and the tools and techniques that can be used for this purpose.

Relevance

Public involvement is a fundamental principle of EIA. The inclusion of the views of the affected and interested public helps to ensure the decision making process is equitable and fair and leads to more informed choice and better environmental outcomes.

Timing

Three to four hours (not including training activity).

Important note to trainers

You should design your presentation with the needs and background of participants in mind, and concentrate on those sections most relevant to your audience. The session presentation timings are indicative only.

Time taken for the training activities can vary enormously depending on the depth of treatment, the existing skills and knowledge of participants and the size of the group.

☑ Information checklist

Obtain or develop the following, as appropriate:

- ❑ sections of EIA legislation and procedure that make provision for public involvement;
- ❑ any guidance relevant to the application of public involvement locally;
- ❑ examples of involvement techniques that have been used or are relevant locally;
- ❑ case examples of public involvement programmes which demonstrate good and bad practice;
- ❑ estimates of the resources necessary to support a public involvement programme, in terms of time, people and money;
- ❑ examples of comments and submissions by the public on EIA studies and reports;
- ❑ other supporting documentation or research on public involvement;
- ❑ contact names and telephone numbers of people, agencies, organisations and environmental information/data centres able to provide assistance in relation to public involvement; and
- ❑ other resources that may be available such as videos, journal articles, computer programmes, lists of speakers, and case studies.

Session outline

Briefly introduce the role and contribution of public involvement in the EIA and decision-making processes and note the different levels and types of approach. Ask the participants to consider why public involvement is important locally.

Public involvement is a fundamental principle of the EIA process. Timely, well planned and appropriately implemented public involvement programmes will contribute to EIA studies and to the successful design, implementation, operation and management of proposals. Specifically public involvement is a valuable source of information on key impacts, potential mitigation measures and the identification and selection of alternatives. It also ensures the EIA process is open, transparent and robust, characterised by defensible analysis.

Nearly all EIA systems make provision for some type of public involvement. This term includes public consultation (or dialogue) and public participation, which is a more interactive and intensive process of stakeholder engagement. Most EIA processes are undertaken through consultation rather than participation. At a minimum, public involvement must provide an opportunity for those directly affected by a proposal to express their views regarding the proposal and its environmental and social impacts.

Discuss the objectives and benefits of public involvement and consider how they apply to local situations.

1

The purpose of public involvement is to:

- inform the stakeholders about the proposal and its likely effects;
- canvass their inputs, views and concerns; and
- take account of the information and views of the public in the EIA and decision making.

The key objectives of public involvement are to:

- obtain local and traditional knowledge that may be useful for decision-making;
- facilitate consideration of alternatives, mitigation measures and trade-offs;

- ensure that important impacts are not overlooked and benefits are maximised;
- reduce conflict through the early identification of contentious issues;
- provide an opportunity for the public to influence project design in a positive manner (thereby creating a sense of ownership of the proposal);
- improve transparency and accountability of decision-making; and
- increase public confidence in the EIA process.

Experience indicates that public involvement in the EIA process can and does meet these aims and objectives. Many benefits are concrete such as improvements to project design (see Box 1). Other benefits are intangible and incidental and flow from taking part in the process. For example, as participants see their ideas are helping to improve proposals, they gain confidence and self-esteem by exchanging ideas and information with others who have different values and views.

Box 1: Examples of the contribution of public involvement to project design

Ghana Environmental Resource Management Project

This project seeks to improve natural resource management. Public consultations drove the entire project design process from the very beginning. Investments under the village-level land and water resource management component were entirely designed by the local communities, which diagnosed problems, developed action plans and are now responsible for implementation. A coastal wetlands component was also largely designed through local consultation. Affected communities and user groups participated in the demarcation of ecologically sensitive areas and in determining the levels of resource use and conservation in coastal wetlands.

Brasil Espirito Santo Water Project

The original design would have had a negative impact on two communities. By including these communities in the EIA process through information disclosure and consultation, satisfactory mitigation measures were achieved that counterbalanced the impacts and improved local living conditions.

Adapted from The World Bank (1995)

Discuss briefly the different terms and definitions that are used when referring to public involvement. Consider the relative advantages and disadvantages of different types and levels of public involvement.

Key terms and definitions of public involvement are described in Box 2. The basic types of public involvement are organised as a 'ladder' of steps of increasing intensity and interaction. When reviewing them, note their

different requirements with regard to planning and designing a public involvement programme.

2

Information and notification, strictly speaking, are preconditions of meaningful public involvement. On its own, information disclosure is not a sufficient provision in public involvement for an EIA of a major proposal. *Consultation* denotes an exchange of information designed to canvass the views of stakeholders on a proposal and its impacts. *Participation* is a more interactive process of engaging the public in addressing the issues, establishing areas of agreement and disagreement and trying to reach common positions. *Negotiation* among stakeholders is an *alternative dispute resolution* (ADR) mechanism, which is based on joint fact-finding, consensus building and mutual accommodation of different interests.

In practice, public involvement in EIA largely corresponds to consultation. However, participation will be appropriate in many circumstances, for example, where a local population is displaced or relocated as a result of a project. A few countries also make provision for mediation or negotiation facilitated by a neutral third party. In principle, these approaches to public involvement in EIA are distinctive and relatively separate. However, they may be used in combination; for example, consultation and participation can be appropriate at different stages of the same EIA process.

Box 2: Levels and forms of public involvement

- **informing** – one way flow of information from the proponent to the public;
- **consulting –** two way flow of information between the proponent and the public with opportunities for the public to express views on the proposal;
- **participating** – interactive exchange between the proponent and the public encompassing shared analysis and agenda setting and the development of understood and agreed positions on the proposal and its impacts; and
- **negotiating –** face to face discussion between the proponent and key stakeholders to build consensus and reach a mutually acceptable resolution of issues, for example on a package of impact mitigation and compensation measures.

Adapted from Bass et al (1995)

Consider who should be involved in the EIA process. Ask the participants to identify which parties might have a stakeholder interest in being involved in an EIA and why they might wish to be involved.

The range of stakeholders involved in an EIA typically includes:

- the people – individuals, groups and communities – who are affected by the proposal;
- the proponent and other project beneficiaries;

- government agencies;
- NGOs and interest groups; and
- others, such as donors, the private sector, academics etc.

Local people

Individuals or groups in the affected community will want to know what is proposed; what the likely impacts are; and how their concerns will be understood and taken into account. They will want assurances that their views will be carefully listened to and considered on their merits. They will want proponents to address their concerns. They will also have knowledge of the local environment and community that can be tapped and incorporated into baseline data.

Proponents

Understandably, proponents will wish to shape the proposal to give it the best chance of success. Often, this involves trying to create public understanding and acceptance of the proposal through the provision of basic information. More creatively, project design can be improved through using public inputs on alternatives and mitigation and understanding local knowledge and values.

Government agencies

The government agencies involved in the EIA process will want to have their policy and regulatory responsibilities addressed in impact analysis and mitigation consideration. For the competent authority, an effective public involvement programme can mean the proposal may be less likely to become controversial in the later stages of the process. For the responsible EIA agency, the concern will be whether or not the public involvement process conforms to requirements and procedures.

NGOs/Interest groups

Comments from NGOs can provide a useful policy perspective on a proposal; for example, the relationship of the proposal to sustainability objectives and strategy. Their views may also be helpful when there are difficulties with involving local people. However, this surrogate approach should be considered as exceptional; it cannot substitute for or replace views which should be solicited directly.

Other interested groups

Other interested groups include those who are experts in particular fields and can make a significant contribution to the EIA study. The advice and knowledge of government agencies and the industry sector most directly concerned with the proposal should always be sought. However, in many

cases, substantive information about the environmental setting and effects will come from outside sources.

The different benefits provided for key groups by effective public participation are described in Table 1. However, these benefits may not be always realised or acknowledged by participants. Each of the above groups may perceive the benefits gained from public involvement in the EIA process through the lens of their own experience and interests.

Table 1: The benefits of effective participation for different groups

The proponent	The decision-maker	Affected communities
Raises the proponent's awareness of the potential impacts of a proposal on the environment and the affected community	Achieves more informed and accountable decision-making	Provides an opportunity to raise concerns and influence the decision-making process
Legitimises proposals and ensures greater acceptance and support	Provides increased assurance that all issues of legitimate concern have been addressed	Provides an opportunity to gain a better understanding and knowledge about the environmental impacts and risks that may arise
Improves public trust and confidence	Demonstrates fairness and transparency, avoiding accusations of decisions being made 'behind closed doors'	Increases awareness of how decision-making processes work, who makes decisions and on what basis
Assists by obtaining local information/data	Promotes good relations with the proponent and third parties	Empowers people, providing the knowledge that they can influence decision making and creating a greater sense of social responsibility
Avoids potentially costly delays later in the process by resolving conflict early	Avoids potentially costly delays later in the process by resolving conflict early	Ensures all relevant issues and concerns are dealt with prior to the decision

Source: Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (1999).

Discuss how the people and groups who should be involved in a particular EIA can be identified. Ask participants to consider their application to the local situation.

3

People who may be directly or indirectly affected by a proposal will be a focus for public involvement. First and foremost are the individuals and groups who are likely to be directly and adversely affected. Usually, their identification is relatively straightforward. The intended beneficiaries of the proposal are often more difficult to identify because the benefits of the proposal may be generalised across a large population (which may be regional or national). In some cases, the interest of beneficiaries may be represented by government agencies, private sector groups and NGOs, which support the proposal on economic and social grounds.

A variety of other individuals and groups may be indirectly affected by a proposal or have some interest in its outcome. Often, the representation of the interests of indirectly affected parties will coincide with those of other stakeholders, such as local community, private sector and environmental organisations. However, this relationship cannot be assumed automatically. For example, certain major projects may affect such an extensive area that identifying a representative and manageable range of participants is difficult. In such cases, it may be helpful to systematically 'map' the stakeholders and differentiate among their interests.

Every effort should be made to seek a fair and balanced representation of views. Often, an inclusive approach to public involvement is taken. A common rule of thumb is to include any person or group who expresses an interest in the proposal. However, particular attention should be given to those 'at risk' from the impact of a proposal. World Bank guidance indicates this group should have the most active involvement.

Briefly review the provisions made for public involvement in the EIA system of a given country or an international development agency. Ask the group to consider any requirements of applicable international legal and policy instruments and the precedents set by the Aarhus Convention.

Most EIA systems make some type of provision for public involvement. The legal and procedural requirements for this purpose vary. In developing countries, the EIA procedure established by the development banks will take precedence for projects carried out with their assistance. All of the major development banks consult the public during the EIA process carried out on their operations.

Their specific requirements differ regarding timing and scope of consultation and the type and amount of information disclosed.

For example, World Bank Operational Policy (4.01) specifies that consultation with affected communities is a key to the identification of impacts and the design of mitigation measures. It strongly recommends consultation with affected groups and NGOs during at least the scoping and EIA review stage (see below). In projects with major social components, such as those requiring voluntary resettlement or affecting indigenous peoples, the process should involve active public participation in the EIA and project development process.

The provision made for public involvement should be consistent with principles established by international law and policy (see Box 3). The most comprehensive treaty in this regard is the Aarhus Convention, although this applies only to UNECE countries and only entered into force in 2001 (by ratification by a sufficient number of signatory countries). However, it is likely to set important new precedents for standards of public involvement. Key principles for public involvement, which are widely agreed, are outlined in Box 4.

Box 3: Reference to public participation in international law and the Aarhus Convention

Reference to public participation is made in a number of international legal instruments including:

- *UNECE Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context* (Espoo, 1991) which provides for the participation of the public in the areas likely to be affected by a proposal (article 2, paras 2 and 6, and article 4, para 2);
- the *Framework Convention on Climate Change* (1992), which requires Parties to promote and facilitate public participation in addressing climate change and its effects and developing adequate responses (article 6 (a) (iii));
- *Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development* (1992) which states that each individual shall have the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes, facilitated by the widespread availability of information; and
- *UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision Making and Access to Justice in International Environmental Matters (Aarhus)* (1998) is the most comprehensive legal instrument relating to public involvement. It describes how public participation should work in cases of decision-making. The main text indicates that public participation should be effective, adequate, formal, and provide for information, notification, dialogue, consideration and response.

Source: adapted from Stec and Casey-Lefkowitz (2000)

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Box 4:Principles of public involvement

The process should be:

- inclusive – covers all stakeholders
- open and transparent – steps and activities are understood
- relevant – focused on the issues that matter
- fair – conducted impartially and without bias toward any stakeholder
- responsive – to stakeholder requirements and inputs
- credible – builds confidence and trust

Relate public involvement to the stages of the EIA process. Ask the group to consider whether and how these apply in a given EIA system. Develop their responses to show how public involvement can be used throughout the EIA process.

5

The scope of public involvement and its relationship to the EIA process should be commensurate with the significance of the environmental and social impacts for local people. Ideally, public involvement should commence during the preparatory stage of project development and continue throughout the EIA process. This is particularly important for major projects that affect people's livelihood and culture. Five main steps at which public involvement can occur in the EIA process are discussed below.

Screening

For certain categories of proposal, the responsible authority may consult with people likely to be affected in order to gain a better understanding of the nature and significance of the likely impacts. This information can assist in determining if an EIA is required and at what level (see Topic 4 – *Screening*). In addition, the early identification of affected parties and their concerns provides information that can be incorporated into the scoping stage of EIA and assists future planning for public involvement.

Scoping

Public involvement is commonly undertaken at the scoping stage. This is critical to ensure that all the significant issues are identified, local information about the project area is gathered, and alternative ways of achieving the project objectives are considered. Terms of Reference for an EIA provide a means of responding to and checking against these inputs (see Topic 5 – *Scoping)*. They should also outline any specific requirements for public involvement in EIA preparation, review, and follow up.

Impact analysis and mitigation

The further involvement of the public in these phases of EIA preparation (see Topics 6 – *Impact analysis* and 7– *Mitigation and impact management*) can help to:

- avoid biases and inaccuracies in analysis;
- identify local values and preferences;
- assist in the consideration of mitigation measures; and
- select a best practicable alternative.

Review of EIA quality

A major opportunity for public involvement occurs when EIA reports are exhibited for comment (see Topics 8 – *Reporting* and 9 – *Review of EIA quality*). However, making written comments is daunting to all but the educated and literate. Other means of achieving responses should be provided where proposals are controversial. Public hearings or meetings may be held as part of EIA review. They can be formal or informal but should be structured in a way which best allows those affected to have their say. Many people are not comfortable in speaking in public and other or additional mechanisms may be needed.

Implementation and follow up

The environmental impacts of major projects will be monitored during construction and operational start up, with corrective action taken where necessary (see Topic 11 – *Implementation and follow up)*. Local representatives should scrutinise and participate in the follow up process. This arrangement can assist proponents and approval agencies to respond to problems as they arise. It can also help to promote good relations with local communities that are affected by a development.

Public involvement in practice

In many EIA systems, public involvement centres on the scoping and review stages. This can be a response to procedural requirements or reflect accepted practice. More extended forms of public involvement occur when:

- proposals are formally referred to public review, hearings or inquiries;
- proposals seek to apply a 'best practice' process to their proposal;
- proposals depend upon gaining the consent or support of local stakeholders; and
- proposals have major social impacts and consequences, such as the relocation of displaced people.

Emphasise the importance of systematic, timely planning for a public involvement programme. Discuss different ways in which the programme, including the engagement of participants, could be funded.

Planning by the proponent for a public involvement programme needs to begin early before other EIA work. Following scoping, the terms of reference for an EIA study should include specifications for the proposed programme, including its scope, timing, techniques and resources. If there are none, a separate document should be prepared by the EIA project team with advice and input from a social scientist who is knowledgeable about the local community and participation techniques.

The plan should describe the means of notifying and informing the public about the proposals and the EIA process, beginning at an early stage and continuing with updates on the progress of the EIA study and feedback on community concerns. Specific reference should be made to the ways in which the public will be engaged, how their inputs (knowledge, values and concerns) will be taken into account and what resources (people and money) are available to assist their involvement. Wherever possible, meetings and inquiries should be held within the local community, especially if there are basic constraints on its involvement (see next section).

A systematic approach to planning a public involvement programme typically involves addressing the following key issues:

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- *Who should be involved?* – identify the interested and affected public (stakeholders), noting any major constraints on their involvement.
- *What type and scope of public involvement is appropriate?* – ensure this is commensurate with the issues and objectives of EIA.
- *How should the public be involved?* – identify the techniques which are appropriate for this purpose.
- *When and where should opportunities for public involvement be provided* – establish a plan and schedule in relation to the EIA process and the number, type and distribution of stakeholders.
- *How will the results of public involvement be used in the EIA and decision-making processes?* – describe the mechanisms for analysing and taking account of public inputs and providing feeding back to stakeholders.
- *What resources are necessary or available to implement the public involvement programme?* – relate the above considerations to budgetary, time and staff requirements.

Briefly, review the underlying factors that may constrain public involvement. Ask the group whether or not they apply locally and, if so, how they could overcome them.

In certain cases, some basic constraints on public involvement may need to be overcome. Particular attention should be given to disadvantaged groups, ethnic minorities and others who may be inhibited from taking part or may have difficulty in voicing their concerns. Often, special provision may need to be made to inform and involve these groups. Except in unusual or extenuating circumstances, others should not speak for them, although knowledgeable NGOs may help in ensuring they represent their views directly and in a way that is meaningful to them.

Some of the underlying factors that may constrain meaningful public involvement include:


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Poverty – involvement means time spent away from income-producing tasks, and favours the wealthy**.**

Remote and rural settings – increased or dispersed settlement distances make communication more difficult and expensive.

Illiteracy – involvement will not occur if print media is used.

Local values/culture – behavioural norms or cultural traditions can act as a barrier to public involvement or exclude those who do not want to disagree publicly with dominant groups.

Languages – in some countries a number of different languages or dialects may be spoken, making communication difficult.

Legal systems – may be in conflict with traditional systems and cause confusion about rights and responsibilities over resource use and access.

Interest groups – bring conflicting and divergent views and vested interests.

Confidentiality – may be important for the proponent, and may weigh against early involvement and consideration of alternatives.


3–1

Ask the group to identify some techniques and methods of public involvement and suggest where each of these could be most suitably used. List these techniques and provide participants with Handout 3–1. Work through the different techniques and their relative advantages.

Table 2 outlines some of the techniques that are commonly used for communicating and involving the public and illustrates their strengths and weaknesses in relation to key requirements and objectives (see Handout 3–1 for further information).

For example, various methods of public involvement can be rated in terms of the level of interaction promoted. However, it should not be inferred that methods with a high level of involvement are the preferred

approach – a mix of methods is usually necessary as part of a systematic process of public involvement.

The methods of public involvement should be tailored to suit the social environment and, wherever possible, targeted specifically at particular groups. Limitations and constraints (identified previously) should be taken into account. For instance, although people want to be consulted, they may not have the time, resources or ability to locate EIA information and report their views to the relevant authorities. Traditional local decision-making institutions and the use of the mass media (such as television, radio and papers) may be far more appropriate than placing reports in local libraries (which is the normal approach in a number of EIA systems).

When selecting public involvement techniques, the following points should be considered:

- the degree of interaction required between participants;
- the extent to which participants are able to influence decisions;
- the stage(s) of the EIA at which public involvement will occur;
- the time available for involvement;
- the likely number of participants and their interests;
- the complexity and controversy of the issues under consideration; and
- the consideration of cultural norms which may influence the content of discussions, for example relating to gender, religion, etc.

When using public involvement techniques, the following principles can help to achieve a successful outcome:


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- provide sufficient, relevant information in a form that is easily understood by non-experts (without being simplistic or insulting);
- allow enough time for stakeholders to review, consider and respond to the information and its implications;
- provide appropriate means and opportunities for them to express their views;
- select venues and time events to encourage maximum attendance and a free exchange of views by all stakeholders (including those that may feel less confident about expressing their views); and
- respond to all questions, issues raised or comments made by stakeholders. This fosters public confidence and trust in the EIA process.

Table 2: Techniques for communicating with the public

Communication Characteristics				Public Information and Participation Objectives					
Level of Public Contact Achieved	Ability to Handle Specific Interest	Degree of 2-way Communication	Public Participation / Communication Techniques	Inform/Educate	Identify Problems/Values	Get Ideas/Solve Problems	Feedback	Evaluate	Resolve Conflict/ Consensus
2	1	1	Public Hearings		X		X		
2	1	2	Public Meetings	X	X		X		
1	2	3	Informal Small Group Meetings	X	X	X	X	X	X
2	1	2	General Public Information Meetings	X					
1	2	2	Presentations to Community Organization	X	X		X		
1	3	3	Information Coordination Seminars	X			X		
1	2	1	Operating Field Offices		X	X	X	X	
1	3	3	Local Planning Visits		X		X	X	
2	2	1	Information Brochures and Pamphlets	X					
1	3	3	Field Trips and Site Visits	X	X				
3	1	2	Public Displays	X		X	X		
2	1	2	Model Demonstration Projects	X			X	X	X
3	1	1	Material for Mass Media	X					
1	3	2	Response to Public Inquiries	X					
3	1	1	Press Releases Inviting Comments	X			X		
1	3	1	Letter Requests for Comments			X	X		
1	3	3	Workshops		X	X	X	X	X
1	3	3	Advisory Committees		X	X	X	X	
1	3	3	Task Forces		X	X		X	
1	3	3	Employment of Community Residents		X	X			X
1	3	3	Community Interest Advocates			X		X	X
1	3	3	Ombudsman or Representative		X	X	X	X	X
2	3	1	Public Review of Initial Assessment Decision Document	X	X	X	X	X	X

Level of participation: 1 = low, 2 = medium, 3 = high.

Discuss consensus building and dispute resolution mechanisms and consider whether and how they may be applied locally.

Conflict management and dispute resolution approaches are beginning to be applied in a number of EIA processes. As recognised by the World Bank and other international agencies, the use of these approaches in developing countries must be consistent with local practices:

The objective is to define traditional mechanisms for making agreements, for negotiations, and for managing conflict in affected communities. Understanding and working within cultural expectations and practices may enhance consultation and participation processes, especially in projects

where there are multiple and competing stakeholders or where disputes or conflict are evident. *(The World Bank, 1995)*

Negotiation, mediation and other alternative means of dispute resolution have different rules compared to more traditional 'open door' forms of public consultation and participation. These processes are carried out by a small number of representatives who are nominated by the major stakeholders (some of them may form coalitions for this purpose). Stakeholder dialogue is a more informal version of this process and focuses on sharing views and information to find win-win solutions to issues. As shown in Table 3, the approach differs in kind rather than degree from more traditional forms of public involvement.

However, there may be opportunities to reduce or resolve conflict in more traditional forms of public participation, providing all stakeholders are involved at the earliest stage of the proposal and sufficient time and appropriate opportunities are provided. A skilled facilitator may be able to assist stakeholders in finding common ground. In most cases, however, the range of interests and the different values of the participants will mean that consensus is unlikely. The focus of attention then should be on minimising the areas of dispute, and narrowing it to those key issues that cannot be resolved and leaving it to the decision-making process to arbitrate among the different positions (i.e. determining the 'winners' and 'losers').

Principles which will help minimise conflict, particularly if applied consistently from the earliest stages of the planning of the proposal, include:

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- involving all those likely to be affected, or with a stake in the matter;
- communicating the need for and objectives of the proposal, and how it is planned to achieve them;
- actively listening to the concerns of affected people, and the interests which lie behind them;
- treating people honestly and fairly, establishing trust through a consistency of behaviour;
- being empathetic, putting yourself in the shoes of the other party, and looking at the area of dispute from their perspective;
- being flexible in the way alternatives are considered, and amending the proposal wherever possible to better suit the interests of other parties;
- when others' interests cannot be accommodated, mitigating impacts to the greatest extent possible and looking for ways to compensate for loss and damage;
- establishing and maintaining open two-way channels of communication throughout the planning and implementation phase; and
- acknowledging the concerns and suggestions of others, and providing feed-back on the way these matters have been addressed.

When conflict arises, try to defuse it at the earliest possible time. The use of an independent, mutually acceptable third party as the convenor of discussions between disputants can improve the chances of a satisfactory outcome. It is desirable for that third party to be trained in the principles of negotiation or mediation, and to be able to assist the parties in dealing with the feelings, facts and process issues associated with the dispute.

Table 3: Comparing the characteristics of ' traditional consultation' and ' stakeholder dialogue'

Traditional consultation tends to:	Stakeholder dialogue tends to:
Assume win/lose outcomes	Search actively for win/win results and ways to add value for all parties
Focus on differences and polarise rival positions	Explore shared and different interests, values, needs and fears, and build on common ground while trying to resolve specific disputes
Focus on issues and results	Focus on processes as well as issues and results in order to build long-term ownership of and commitment to mutually agreed solutions
Produce results that are perceived as inequitable, reflecting the traditional distribution of power and resources	Produce results which can be judged on their merits and which seem fair and reasonable to a broad spectrum of stakeholders
Stick to the facts and positions	Take into account, as well, feelings, values, perceptions, vulnerabilities
Ignore the importance of building relationships and bridging differences	Strengthen existing relationships and build new ones where they are most needed
Offer no learning	Invest in mutual learning as a starting point for future processes and projects

Source: Ackland et al. (1999).

Many arguments are put forward to avoid public involvement. Discuss whether these misconceptions are accepted locally and how they may be countered.

Public involvement can be a time-consuming and costly exercise. This issue can be best addressed by sound planning. A proposal may be subject to delay and added expense if public consultation is non-existent or inadequate. Various arguments have been and still are advanced to justify avoiding public involvement. Some of the commonly used 'reasons' and answers follow:

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It's too early; we haven't yet got a firm proposal

The early provision of information to the public will minimise the risk of untrue and damaging rumours about the proposals. Even though the proponent may not have a clear idea of project details, communicating the objectives of the proposals can start to build trust with the community, allow useful public input on site constraints and alternatives and can help the proponent devise a robust scheme.

It will take too long and will cost too much

Public involvement can be expensive and time-consuming. If integrated into the project planning process, excessive timelines can be avoided. The costs of not involving the public are likely to be even greater in terms of costs arising from delays.

It will stir up opposition, and the process will be taken over by activists

Those who are likely to oppose a project will not be dissuaded by the lack of a public involvement programme. Rather such a programme can ensure that all sides of the debate are heard. Importantly, the issues raised by opponents should be thoroughly examined and treated on their merits. If the impacts cannot be avoided, public involvement can help demonstrate that the concerns of all segments of the community have been fairly addressed.

We will only hear from the articulate

Those who are articulate, knowledgeable and powerful find it easier to use the opportunities provided through public involvement. Those preparing and managing such programmes must be aware of this, and incorporate measures to ensure that the views of 'the silent majority' are expressed and understood.

We'll raise expectations we can't satisfy

Great care must be taken in the first phases of a public involvement programme to ensure that unreasonable expectations are not raised. The purpose of public involvement in EIA and decision-making should be clearly communicated, together with decisions which have been made already.

The local community won't

Lack of technical education does not negate intelligence and the understanding people have of their own surroundings. Often people's knowledge of their

understand the issues involved. environment and how it will be changed can be more accurate than that predicted by models.

Briefly conclude with a reference to the spirit of openness required by proponents if public involvement is to be beneficial.

No public involvement programme will be effective unless the proponent is serious in engaging with the community in a two-way dialogue and is open minded to what it can contribute to the proposal. Key prerequisites are a willingness to listen to the information, values and concerns of the community, to amend the proposal so as to minimise community concerns, and to acknowledge the value of community input.

Include a training activity to reinforce the topic (if desired).

Summarise the presentation, emphasising those key aspects of the topic that apply locally

Reference list

The following references have been quoted directly, adapted or used as a primary source for parts of this topic.

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Participatory Learning and Action Notes are issued by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) to review themes and approaches to involving people in defining their needs and opportunities and taking action to realise them. The series has particular focus on the experience of developing countries. See also the website of the Resource Centre for Participatory Learning at: http://www.rcpla.org/

Training activities

Training activities will be more instructive if they are framed around a local proposal. Consider inviting prospective course participants to make a presentation if they have expertise in this area of EIA.

Discussion themes

3–1 A large dam is proposed in a rural setting. What public involvement techniques might be used to support the EIA for the project? How would the approach change if the project concerns a major chemical plant in a large city?

3–2 How would you go about identifying the range of people affected directly or indirectly by a proposal? If necessary, how would representatives of the groups identified be selected?

3–3 What are the needs and interests of the affected community that make their involvement so important to them? Is their involvement as important for the proponent?

3–4 'Public involvement should take place at the scoping stage of a proposal, and when the EIA document is completed.' Does this statement satisfy the requirements for community involvement?

3–5 People feel more comfortable in familiar surroundings. Where should the venues and locations for discussions, small group meetings, public meetings and displays be located? How will the setting and other meeting arrangements contribute to the success of public involvement?

3–6 What are the objectives of public involvement? What value will it bring to the successful implementation of the proposal?

3–7 What criticisms of public involvement can you expect, and how can these criticisms be answered?

3–8 How would you attempt to manage conflict when it arises? If you were looking for someone to help, what qualities would you seek in that person?

Speaker theme

3–1 Invite a speaker who is expert in the field to talk about their personal experience in public involvement on major projects and to focus on certain questions. How much did a typical involvement programme cost, what techniques were used, how effective were they? Did people respond positively, were there changes made to the proposal? Was the proponent supportive of the public involvement programme? What lessons were learnt from the experience?

Group Activity 3–1: Public involvement

Title: **Preparing a public involvement programme**

Aim: To reinforce the training material presented through the preparation of a public involvement programme, and consideration of the associated issues.

Group size: Four to six people

Duration: One day

Resources required:

- ❑ Case study description of a proposal, with some details of its likely impacts and setting. Refer to Handout 3-1

Description of activity:

Participants will be required to think through the various issues, and relate the tasks involved to the objectives of the public involvement programme.

Using the case study and referring to Handout 3–1:

- ❑ prepare a public involvement programme, showing the objectives of the programme, and the stages of the EIA process at which public involvement will be sought;
- ❑ indicate how the various stakeholders will be identified;
- ❑ advise when the public involvement should commence, and what level of information should be provided;
- ❑ list the methods which might be used to:
  - inform people
  - identify their concerns, attitudes and knowledge
  - enable them to participate in developing the proposal;
- ❑ prepare a timetable for the programme, indicating the resources (people and money) which will be needed;
- ❑ outline ways to ensure that information gained from the involvement of the public is used constructively to improve the proposal;
- ❑ identify problems which are likely to occur, and ways of managing them; and
- ❑ prepare a framework to evaluate the success of the programme.

Group Activity 3–2: Public Involvement

Title: **Site location decisions — what are the facts?**

Aim: To show how public involvement can assist in deciding between alternative sites and in achieving public acceptance of a proposal.

Group size: Four to six people

Duration: Three hours

Resources required:

- ❑ Brief description of a facility with two possible alternative locations, a short statement of need for the project, a list of the likely impacts, and a description of the surrounding communities.

Description of activity:

The alternative sites for a facility affect different communities, and will involve some land acquisition. Get each group to:

- ❑ discuss how they would structure the public involvement to minimise conflict, while allowing informed debate on the respective merits of the proposals;
- ❑ propose steps that could be taken to pre-empt rumours and distortions about what may be proposed;
- ❑ outline ways in which a shared view of the basic facts could be reached, given that opponents often appear to have a biased view of the basic facts relating to the proposal and the need for action;
- ❑ detail the sort of information that would be required by the decision-maker before a decision could be made; and
- ❑ discuss the way in which the public involvement would assist the project.

1

Purpose and objectives of public involvement

- informing stakeholders
- gaining their views, concerns and values
- taking account of public inputs in decision making
- influencing project design
- obtaining local knowledge
- increasing public confidence
- improving transparency and accountability in decision-making
- reducing conflict

2

Levels of public involvement

- information
  – (one way flow from proponent to public)
- consultation
  – (two way exchange of information)
- participation
  – (interaction with the public)
- negotiation
  – (face to face discussion)

3

Key stakeholders

- local people affected by a proposal
- proponent and project beneficiaries
- government agencies
- NGOs
- others, e.g. donors, the private sector, academics

4

Principles of public involvement

The process should be:

- inclusive – covers all stakeholders
- open and transparent – steps and activities are understood
- relevant – focussed on the issues that matter
- fair – conducted impartially and without bias toward any stakeholder
- responsive – to stakeholder requirements and inputs
- credible – builds confidence and trust


5

Public involvement in key stages of the EIA process

- screening
  – determining the need for, and level, of the EIA process
- scoping
  – identifying the key issues and alternatives to be considered
- impact analysis
  – identifying the significant impacts and mitigating measures
- review
  – commenting on/responding to the EIA report
- implementation and monitoring
  – checking EIA follow up


6

Developing a public involvement program typically involves:

- determining its scope
- identifying interested and affected public
- selecting appropriate techniques
- considering the relationship to decision-making
- providing feedback to stakeholders
- undertaking the analysis of stakeholder inputs
- keeping to budget and timelines
- confidentiality


7

Factors affecting the effectiveness of public involvement

- poverty
- remote and rural settings
- illiteracy
- culture/local values
- language
- legal systems override traditional ones
- dominance of interest groups
- proponent confidentiality

8

Principles for successful application of public involvement techniques

- provide the right information
- allow sufficient time to review and respond
- provide appropriate opportunities/means for stakeholder involvement
- respond to issues and concerns raised
- feed back the results of public input
- choose venues and times of events to suit stakeholders

9

Principles for minimising conflict

- involve all stakeholders
- establish communication channels
- describe the proposal and its objectives
- listen to the concerns and interests of affected people
- treat people fairly and impartially
- be empathetic and flexible
- mitigate impacts and compensate for loss and damage
- acknowledge concerns and provide feed-back

10

Common reasons given for avoiding public involvement

- it's too early
- it will take too long and will cost too much
- it will stir up opposition
- we will only hear from the articulate
- we'll raise expectations
- people won't understand

Tools and techniques for public involvement

Technique	Description and use	Advantages	Disadvantages
Level 1. Education & information provision			
Leaflets/ Brochures	Used to convey information. Care should be taken in distribution.	Can reach a wide audience, or be targeted.	Information may not be understood or be misinterpreted.
Newsletters	May involve a series of publications. Care should be taken in distribution.	Ongoing contact, flexible format, can address changing needs and audiences.	Not everyone will read a newsletter.
Unstaffed Exhibits/Displays	Set up in public areas to convey information.	Can be viewed at a convenient time and at leisure. Graphics can help visualise proposals.	Information may not be understood or be misinterpreted.
Local Newspaper Article	Conveys information about a proposed activity.	Potentially cheap form of publicity. A means of reaching a local audience.	Circulation may be limited.
National Newspaper Article	Conveys information about a proposed activity.	Potential to reach a very large audience.	Unless an activity has gained a national profile, it will be of limited interest.
Site Visits	Provides first hand experience of an activity and related issues.	Issues brought to life through real examples.	Difficult to identify a site which replicates all issues.
Level 2. Information feedback			
Staffed Exhibits/Displays	Set up in public areas to convey information. Staff available.	Can be viewed at a convenient time and at leisure. Graphics can help visualise proposals. Groups can be targeted.	Requires a major commitment of staff time.
Staffed telephone lines	Can phone to obtain information, ask questions or make comments about proposals or issues	Easy for people to participate and provide comments. Promotes a feeling of accessibility.	May not be as good as face-to-face discussions. Staff may not have knowledge to respond to all questions.
Internet	Used to provide information or invite feedback. On-line forums and discussion groups can be set up.	Potential global audience. Convenient method for those with internet access.	Not all parties will have access to the Internet.
Public Meetings	Used to exchange	Can meet with other	Can be complex, unpredictable

	information and views.	stakeholders. Demonstrates proponent is willing to meet with other interested parties.	and intimidating. May be hijacked by interest groups.
Surveys, Interviews and Questionnaires	Used for obtaining information and opinions. May be self-administered, conducted face-to-face, by post or telephone.	Confidential surveys may result in more candid responses. Can identify existing knowledge and concerns.	Response rate can be poor. Responses may not be representative and opinions change.
Level 3. Involvement & consultation			
Workshops	Used to provide background information, discuss issues in detail and solve problems.	Provides an open exchange of ideas. Can deal with complex issues and consider issues in-depth. Can be targeted.	Only a small number of individuals can participate. Full range of interests not represented.
Open-House	Location provided, e.g. at a site or operational building, for people to visit, learn about a proposal and provide feedback.	Can be visited at a convenient time and at leisure.	Preparation for and staffing of the open house may require considerable time and money.
Level 4. Extended involvement			
Community Advisory/Liaison Groups	People representing particular interests or areas of expertise, e.g. community leaders, meet to discuss issues.	Can consider issues in detail and highlight the decision-making process and the complexities involved.	Not all interests may be represented. Requires on-going commitment from participants.
Citizen Juries	Group of citizens brought together to consider an issue. Evidence received from expert witnesses. Report produced, setting out the views of the jury.	Can consider issues in detail and in a relatively short period of time.	Not all interests may be represented. Limited time may be available for participants to fully consider information received.
Visioning	Used to develop a shared vision of the future.	Develops a common view of future needs.	Lack of control over the outcome. Needs to be used early in the decision-making process.

Source: Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (1999)

Topic 4

Screening

Introduction

Checklist

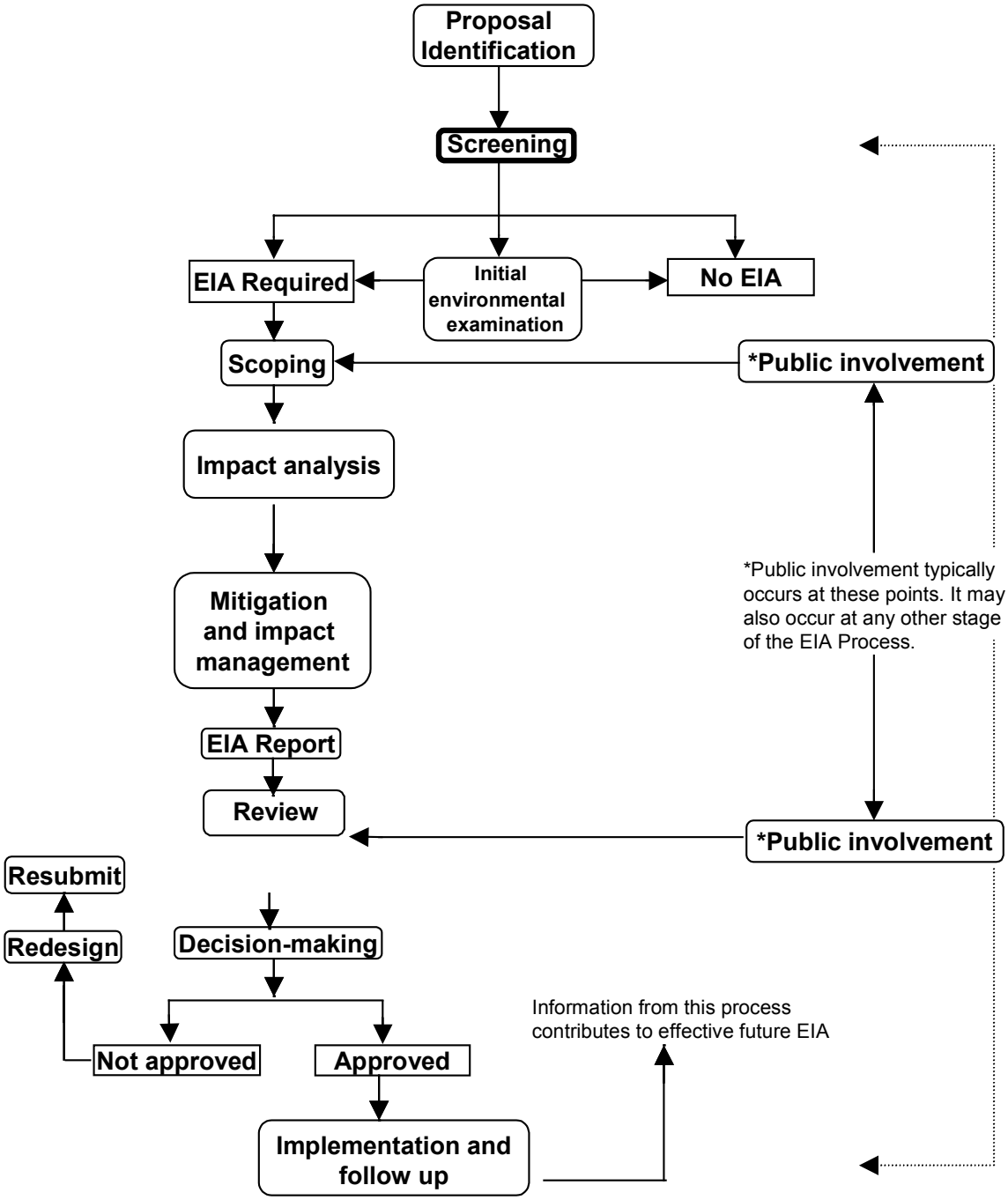
Session outline

Reference list and further reading

Training activities

Support materials

Screening in the EIA process



Topic 4—Screening

Objectives

To introduce the concept of screening.

To describe different procedures and methods for the conduct of screening, and to compare their strengths and weaknesses.

To emphasise the importance of 'significance' in screening.

Relevance

Screening determines whether or not a proposal requires an EIA and, if so, what level of analysis is necessary. This process brings clarity and certainty to the implementation of EIA, ensuring that it neither entails excessive review nor overlooks proposals that warrant examination.

Timing

Two hours (not including training activity)

Important note to trainers

You should design your presentation with the needs and background of participants in mind, and concentrate on those sections most relevant to your audience. The session presentation timings are indicative only.

Time taken for the training activities can vary enormously depending on the depth of treatment, the existing skills and knowledge of participants and the size of the group.

☑ Information checklist

Obtain or develop the following, as appropriate:

- ❑ a description of current screening practice (where it exists) and how it fits into the whole EIA process;
- ❑ the responsibilities and roles of the various parties in screening;
- ❑ legal requirements, lists of included (and excluded) projects, threshold criteria, environmental overviews, guidelines for assessing significance, etc. used during screening;
- ❑ examples of the conduct of screening (locally if possible), application of mechanisms, completed reports etc. along with the final screening decision;
- ❑ contact list of people, agencies, organisations and environmental information/ data systems able to provide assistance in relation to screening; and
- ❑ other resources that may be available such as videos, journal articles, computer programmes, lists of speakers, and case studies.

Session outline

Welcome participants to the session by introducing yourself and getting them to introduce themselves. Outline the overall coverage of the session, its objectives, and why they are important.

This topic introduces the different procedures and methods for identifying whether or not an EIA is required for a proposal. It examines their relative strengths and weaknesses, and allows participants to gain initial familiarity with the concept of impact 'significance' and its importance in triggering the right level of EIA review.

Introduce the purpose of screening. Outline the characteristics and outcomes of the screening process, noting that full EIA is required only for certain types of major projects. Mention that in some EIA systems there is an overlap between the screening and the scoping stages of the EIA process (see also Topic *5 – Scoping*).

1

Screening is the first stage of the EIA process. Some type of screening procedure is necessary because of the large number of projects and activities that are potentially subject to EIA. The purpose of screening is to identify the proposals that require an EIA and exclude those that do not. It is intended to ensure that the form or level of any EIA review is commensurate with the importance of the issues raised by a proposal.

The conduct of screening thus involves making a preliminary determination of the expected impact of a proposal on the environment and of its relative significance. A certain level of basic information about the proposal and its location is required for this purpose. The time taken to complete the screening process will depend upon the type of proposal, the environmental setting and the degree of experience or understanding of its potential effects. Most proposals can be screened very quickly (in an hour or less) but some will take longer and a few will require an extended screening or initial assessment.

Similarly, the majority of proposals may have few or no impacts and will be screened out of the EIA process. A smaller number of proposals will require further assessment. Only a limited number of proposals, usually major projects, will warrant a full EIA because they are known or considered to have potentially significant adverse impacts on the environment; for example, on human health and safety, rare or endangered species, protected areas, fragile or valued ecosystems, biological diversity, air and water quality, or the lifestyle and livelihood of local communities.


2

The screening process can have one of four outcomes:

- no further level of EIA is required;
- a full and comprehensive EIA is required;
- a more limited EIA is required (often called preliminary or initial assessment); or
- further study is necessary to determine the level of EIA required (often called an initial environmental evaluation or examination [IEE]).


3

Screening establishes the basis for scoping, which identifies the key impacts to be studied and establishes terms of reference for an EIA. Many EIA systems have formal screening and scoping procedures. In some cases, however, these terms may be used differently or applied at the discretion of the proponent (as with scoping in the European EIA Directive). Also, on occasion, the screening and scoping stages may overlap, for example, when a further study (or IEE) is undertaken to determine whether or not the potential impacts are significant enough to warrant a full EIA.

Discuss the different procedures and methods used to screen proposals, highlighting their advantages and disadvantages. Indicate how they might be combined into a comprehensive approach to screening or extended as part of an initial assessment.

The requirements for screening and the procedure to be followed are often defined in the applicable EIA law or regulations. In many cases, the proposals to which EIA applies are listed in an annex. Usually, the proponent is responsible for carrying out screening, although this is done by the competent authority in some EIA systems. Whatever the requirements, screening should occur as early as possible in the development of the proposal so that the proponent and other participants are aware of the EIA obligations. It should be applied systematically and consistently (so that the same decisions would be reached if others conducted the screening process).

The screening procedures employed for this purpose can be classified into two broad, overlapping approaches:

- *prescriptive or standardised approach* – proposals subject to or exempt from EIA are defined or listed in legislation and regulations; and
- *discretionary or customised approach* – proposals are screened on an individual or case-by-case base, using indicative guidance.


4

Specific methods used in screening include:

- legal (or policy) definition of proposals to which EIA does or does not apply;
- inclusion list of projects (with or without thresholds) for which an EIA is automatically required;

- exclusion list of activities which do not require EIA because they are insignificant or are exempt by law (e.g. national security or emergency activities); and
- criteria for case-by-case screening of proposals to identify those requiring an EIA because of their potentially significant environmental effects.

Both prescriptive and discretionary approaches have a place and their specific procedures can be combined into a comprehensive procedure (as shown in Figure 1). Where inclusive project lists are used, the disposition of most proposals will be immediately apparent. However, some proposals will be on the borderline in relation to a listed threshold and for others, the environmental impacts may be unclear or uncertain. In these situations, case-by-case screening should be undertaken, applying any indicative guidelines and criteria established for this purpose. This process gives the proponent or competent authority greater discretion than mandatory lists in determining the requirement for EIA.

5

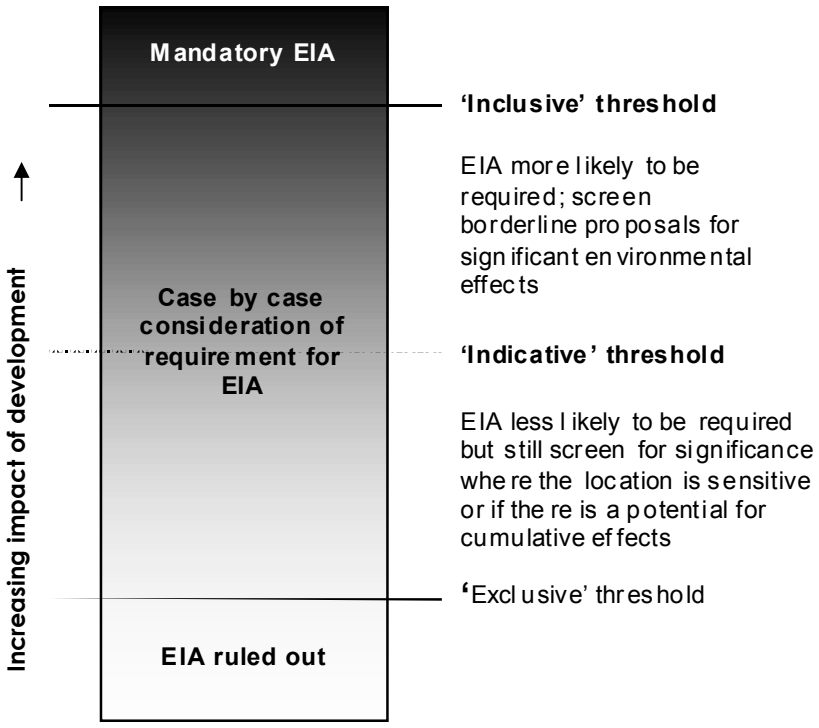


Figure 1: A framework for screening

6

In this context, screening is a flexible process and can be extended into preliminary forms of EIA study. These 'extended screening' procedures include:

- initial environmental examination – carried out in cases where the environmental impacts of a proposal are uncertain or unknown (e.g. new technologies or undeveloped areas);
- environmental overview – carried out as a rapid assessment of the environmental issues and impacts of a proposal; and
- class screening – carried out for a family of small projects or repetitive activities, where the environmental effects and means of mitigation are known but there is potential for cumulative impacts (e.g. dredging, road realignment, bank stabilisation).

Discuss the use of project lists and thresholds, noting their strengths and weaknesses. Consider if these are locally applicable.

Project lists are widely used to screen proposals. These lists are of two types. Most are 'inclusion' lists, which describe the project types and size thresholds that are known or considered to have significant or serious environmental impacts. Usually, listed projects that fall within these predetermined thresholds will be subject automatically to full and comprehensive EIA. Some EIA systems also maintain 'exclusion' lists of activities that are exempt because they are known to have little or no environmental impact.

The inclusion lists used by countries and international organisations differ in content, comprehensiveness, threshold levels and requirements for mandatory application. In certain EIA systems, scale thresholds are specified for each type of listed project for which an EIA is mandatory. Other projects that may require an EIA are screened individually against environmental significance criteria, such as emission levels or proximity to sensitive and protected areas. Internationally, reference is often made to:

- Annexes 1 and 11 of the European EIA Directive, which respectively list projects subject to mandatory EIA and non-mandatory EIA; and
- Annex E of the World Bank Operational Directive on EA, which is illustrative and provides a framework for screening.

Use of these lists is reported by the World Bank to be a reliable aid to the classification of proposals into one of three categories (see Box 1):

- projects requiring a full EIA because of their likely environmental effects (see Box 2);

- projects not requiring a full EIA but warranting a further level of assessment (see Box 3); and
- projects not requiring further environmental analysis (for example health and nutrition, institutional and human resource development and technical assistance).

Listed projects provide a standardised framework for screening proposals. This approach is simple to apply, at least in its most basic form of identifying the type and size of project for which EIA is mandatory or almost certainly required. However, project lists should be used cautiously and with due regard to their weaknesses, especially if they are the sole basis for screening. The automatic application of EIA to proposals may be avoided by staying just below the predetermined size threshold; for example building a major road in 19 km sections when the threshold for inclusion is 20 km. Secondary project lists or other screening procedures should be in place to ensure such proposals are subject to the appropriate level of EIA.

World Bank and international experience indicates that project lists should be used flexibly in screening proposals. Reference should be made to the location and setting of the proposal, as well as its scale. A low-head hydropower dam or small-scale quarry (<100 ha) normally would not merit full EIA (e.g. by reference to the World Bank Annex E lists). However, the proposal may need to be reclassified if it is located in or near sensitive and valued ecosystems, or heritage resources, displaces people who are particularly vulnerable and difficult to resettle or has evident cumulative impacts (e.g. one of a series of quarries or dams). The methods available for this purpose are discussed below.

As necessary, project lists should be revised and updated over time to incorporate increasing experience and to respond to new demands. The reform of project lists and thresholds preferably should take place through a consultative process, involving government agencies, industry and the public. When developing project lists from scratch, care should be taken not to adopt those established elsewhere without adequate review of their suitability. Project lists are drawn up with reference to the developmental and physical characteristics that are particular to a country or jurisdiction, and it is unlikely they will to be directly transferable without alteration.

Box 1: Environmental screening – World Bank classification

- Category A: for projects likely to have significant adverse environmental impacts that are serious (i.e., irreversible, affect vulnerable ethnic minorities, involve involuntary resettlement, or affect cultural heritage sites), diverse, or unprecedented, or that affect an area broader than the sites of facilities subject to physical works. A full EIA is required.

- Category B: for projects likely to have adverse environmental impacts that are less significant that those of Category A projects, meaning that few if any of the impacts are likely to be irreversible, that they are site-specific, and that mitigation measures can be designed more readily than for Category A projects. Normally, a limited EIA will be undertaken to identify suitable mitigation and management measures, and incorporate them into the project.
- Category C: for projects that are likely to have minimal or no adverse environmental impacts. No EIA is required.

Source: World Bank (1993)

Box 2: World Bank Category A projects/components

The projects or components included in this list are likely to have adverse impacts that normally warrant classification in Category A

- dams and reservoirs
- forestry and production projects
- industrial plants (large scale)
- irrigation, drainage, and flood control (large scale)
- land clearance and levelling (large scale)
- mineral development (including oil and gas)
- port and harbour development
- reclamation and new land development
- resettlement and new land development
- river basin development
- thermal and hydropower development
- manufacture, transportation, and use of pesticides
- other hazardous and/or toxic materials

Source: World Bank (1993)

Box 3: World Bank Category B projects/components

The following projects and components may have environmental impacts for which more limited analysis is appropriate.

- agro-industries
- electrical transmission
- aquaculture and drainage (small-scale)
- irrigation and drainage (small-scale)
- renewable energy
- rural electrification

- tourism
- rural water supply and sanitation
- watershed projects (management or rehabilitation)
- rehabilitation, maintenance, and upgrading projects (small-scale)

Source: World Bank (1993)


4-1

An example of a project list for screening can be found in the resource material at the end of this topic (Handout 4-1).

Discuss the use of indicative guidance and criteria for case-by-case screening, noting any constraints and issues that might need to be addressed. Consider if these are locally applicable.

Case-by-case screening is carried out when the significance of the potential environmental impact of a proposal is unclear or uncertain. This process typically applies to proposals that fall just below or close to the thresholds established for listed projects. In addition, non-borderline proposals may be subject to screening if they are located in sensitive areas or there is a potential for cumulative effects in combination with other current and foreseeable activities. The framework outlined in Figure 1 contains a sieve of screening applications with a progressively finer mesh for including proposals. It has gained a degree of international acceptance as a standard of good practice.


7

The specific criteria for case-by-case screening differ from country to country. Typically, however, they are based on a number of common factors related to the consideration of the significance of environmental impacts. These include the location of proposals, environmental sensitivity and any likely health and social effects on the local population. In this context, reference may be made to the screening criteria listed in the European Directive, which apply to the selection of listed projects for which EIA is not mandatory.

These criteria may be adapted to wider use in case-by-case screening. A proposal can be tested for significance by taking account of:


8

- location near to protected or designated areas or within landscapes of special heritage value;
- existing land use(s) and commitments;
- the relative abundance, quality and *regenerative capacity* of natural resources;
- the *absorption capacity* of the natural environment, paying particular attention to wetlands, coastal zones, mountain and forest areas; and
- areas in which the *environmental quality standards laid down in law have been exceeded already*.

Using the emphasised aspects above, consideration can be given to sustainability criteria when carrying out case-by-case screening. However, this approach demands considerable information about the environment, which is unlikely to be available at a relatively early stage in project development. In these circumstances, only a qualified determination of the environmental significance of a proposal may be possible and screening decisions must be open to change if new information indicates the advisability of reclassification. (One means of doing so is to incorporate a 'bump-up' or 'bump-down' provision into the screening procedure.)

Discuss the use of extended screening and initial assessment, noting any constraints and issues that may need to be addressed. Consider if this approach is locally applicable.

Certain proposals may be subject to an extended screening or initial assessment (also called a preliminary EIA). Such an approach can be used when the requirement for EIA could not be reasonably determined by the application of the screening procedures described previously; for example when a proposal involves use of a new technology or is located in an near-natural or frontier area or involves discharges into a water body that may exceed health or environmental standards. Often, this process, itself, may be sufficient to complete the requirement for EIA established by a particular country. In this case, a screening report should describe the results and identify any mitigation measures or actions that need to be taken.

9

When undertaking this type of preliminary EIA study, the proponent or competent authority may need to assemble considerable information. A checklist of the types of information that could be relevant for such a study are summarised in Box 4. This is accompanied by a framework of criteria and questions that can help in the conduct of a preliminary EIA (see Annex 1). It is based upon Australian and New Zealand EIA practice and provides a detailed procedure for undertaking an extended screening or initial assessment. As and where necessary, it could be adapted to wider application in conjunction with the methods described below.

Box 4: Information that may be required for a preliminary EIA study

- a description of the proposal
- applicable policies, plans and regulations, including environmental standards and objectives
- the characteristics of the environment, including land use, significant resources, critical ecological functions, pollution and emission levels etc.
- the potential impacts of the proposal and their likely significance
- the degree of public concern and interest about the proposal.

Initial environmental evaluation or examination (IEE)

In some EIA systems, an IEE is required when the potential environmental impacts of a proposal cannot be established by the application of standard screening procedures. Typically, an IEE is a relatively low-cost analysis that makes use of information already available. It is carried out using EIA procedures and methods, which are scaled to purpose. (Further information on the various steps involved can be found in the topics that follow.)

For example, key issues can be identified by a rapid scoping exercise, based on consultation with local people and agencies. A site or area visit should take place to survey the current situation and obtain 'baseline' information. Simple methods, such as a checklist or matrix, are used in impact identification and often focus on appropriate mitigation measures. Depending on its findings, the IEE report can be used either as a scoping document when a proposal is referred to a full EIA or to support environmentally sound planning and design when a proposal does not require further review.

10

An IEE is a preliminary EIA study that:

- describes the proposal and the environmental setting;
- considers alternatives to improve the environmental benefits;
- addresses the concerns of the local community;
- identifies the potential environmental effects;
- identifies measures to mitigate adverse impacts; and
- describes, as necessary, environmental monitoring and management plans.

Environmental Overview

The *Environmental Overview* was developed by UNDP as an in-house tool to integrate environmental considerations into its proposed activities at either the project or strategic level (see Topic 15 – *Future directions*). Strictly speaking, the Environmental Overview is not equivalent to a preliminary EIA study. However, it is based on similar steps, involves key stakeholders and leads toward the same ends. An Environmental Overview can be completed quickly through the interaction of a mix of specialists. It follows a structured sequence of questions, draws primarily on the more important data sources and conforms to strict guidelines on the organisation and length of the final document.

The Environmental Overview is used by UNDP in the stage of formulating proposals. It leads to early identification of the following:

- the environmental and social baseline conditions of the target area;
- the major environmental and socio-economic impacts and opportunities associated with the implementation of the proposal;
- the modifications or alternatives to the draft proposal; and

- the measures that are necessary to address the environmental impacts and issues.

The purpose of the overview is to incorporate environmental objectives into the design of the proposal, rather than produce a report. Recently, the Environmental Overview has been promoted as an effective tool for programme design, and, specifically, one that is designed to overcome the 'checklist mentality' of EIA. So far, however, the Environmental Overview has been subject to little testing outside of UNDP initiatives. A copy of the table of contents for the Environmental Overview can be found in the resource material at the end of this topic (Handout 4-2) and may be reviewed in light of the above comments.


4-2

Class screening

A class screening may be undertaken for any type of project or activity where there is a reasonably sound knowledge of the environmental effects and the mitigation measures are well established. This approach is used in certain countries, notably Canada (at both federal and provincial levels), and aspects are also evident in the EIA procedure of the World Bank (see Box 3). It is applicable to small-scale projects that are routine and replicable, such as dredging, installation of culverts and realignments to an existing road.

A class screening will document the accumulated information on their likely impacts and standard mitigation practices. This report then serves as a model in the conduct of future screening of other projects of the same type. It does not relieve a proponent or competent authority of its responsibility for screening and, where necessary, of factoring additional information on site-specific and cumulative effects into a class assessment report or preparing a separate document if a project does not meet all of the previously agreed requirements for mitigation. However, in such cases, class assessment can greatly simplify and streamline the screening process.

Discuss how screening is initiated and how issues might be 'referred', focusing on the applicable EIA process.

Except where exempt by law, all proposed activities should undergo screening to determine whether or not they are subject to EIA. Because of their numbers, the screening procedure needs to be efficient, transparent and robust. In most EIA systems, the proponent or competent authority is responsible for all aspects of the screening process, from initiation to making the final decision on whether or not an EIA is necessary and, if so, at what level. Normally, this process will be undertaken in compliance with the applicable EIA legislation and requirements.

Leading EIA systems have established a number of procedural 'checks and balances' for this purpose. They include provision for:

- public notification and record of screening decisions;
- access to relevant information and documentation; and in some cases
- right or avenue of third party appeal for those who consider that the screening procedure has been applied inappropriately.

11

Briefly recall the possible outcomes from the screening process, referring to the flow chart of the EIA process.

Usually, screening has one of four outcomes:

- no further EIA requirement applies – the proposal will have an insignificant impact;
- a preliminary EIA study is required – the proposal will have an environmental impact that must be addressed but can be mitigated;
- a full or comprehensive EIA is required to complete the screening process – the proposal will have a potentially significant environmental impact; or
- an IEE is required – the potential environmental effects of the proposal are unclear or uncertain.

Certain types of proposals often fall automatically into one of these particular categories. For instance, large dams, power stations and oil refineries are nearly always environmentally significant and require full EIA. By contrast, social development or community health proposals rarely demand further assessment. An extended screening process (or IEE) may be undertaken for proposals for which the potential environmental impact cannot be identified readily.

For proposals that require full or further EIA, the next step in the process is to identify the key issues and impacts that need to be analysed. This process of defining the issues to be considered is called 'scoping'. It is dealt with next in Topic 5– *Scoping*.

Include a training activity to reinforce the topic (if desired).

Conclude by summarising the presentation, emphasising those key aspects of the topic that apply locally.

Annex 1: Criteria for the determination of the need for, and level of, environmental impact assessment

Character of the receiving environment

Consider:

- Is it, or is it likely to be, part of the conservation estate or subject to treaty?
- Is it an existing or potential environmentally significant area?
- Is it vulnerable to major natural or induced hazards?
- Is it a special purpose area?
- Is it an area where human communities are vulnerable?
- Does it involve a renewable or a non-renewable resource?
- Is it a degraded area, subject to significant risk levels, or a potentially contaminated site?

NOTE: Off-site (out of area) as well as on-site (local) characteristics should be considered, where relevant.

Potential impact of proposal

Consider:

- Will implementation or construction, operation and/or decommissioning of the proposal have the potential to cause significant changes to the receiving environment (on-site or off-site, transboundary, short term or long term)?
- Could implementation of the proposal give rise to health impacts or unsafe conditions?
- Will the proposal significantly divert resources to the detriment of other natural and human communities?

NOTE: This should include consideration of the magnitude of the impacts, their spatial extent, the duration and the intensity of change, the total life cycle and whether and how the impacts are manageable.

Resilience of natural and human environments to cope with change

Consider:

- Can the receiving environment absorb the level of impact predicted without suffering irreversible change?
- What are the implications of the proposal for bio-diversity?
- Can land uses at and around the site be sustained?
- Can sustainable uses of the site be achieved beyond the life of the proposal?
- Are contingency or emergency plans proposed or in place to deal with accidental events?

NOTE: Cumulative as well as individual impacts should be considered in the context of sustainability.

Confidence of prediction of impacts

Consider:

- What level of knowledge do we have on the resilience of a given significant ecosystem?
- Is the proposal sufficiently detailed and understood to enable the impacts to be established?
- Is the level and nature of change to the natural human environment sufficiently understood to allow the impact of the proposal to be predicted and managed?
- Is it practicable to monitor the predicted effects?
- Are present community values on land use and resource use known or likely to change?

Presence of planning, policy framework and other decision-making processes

Consider:

- Is the proposal consistent with existing policy frameworks?
- Do other approval processes exist to adequately assess and manage proposal impacts?
- What legislation, standard codes or guidelines are available to properly monitor and control operations and the types or quantity of the impacts?

Degree of public interest

Consider:

- Is the proposal controversial or could it lead to controversy or concern in the community?
- Will the amenity, values or lifestyle of the community be adversely affected?
- Will large numbers of people require relocation?
- Will the proposal result in inequities between sectors of the community?

Based on criteria developed by the Australian and New Zealand Environmental and Conservation Council (ANZECC) 1996

Reference list

The following references have been quoted directly, adapted or used as a primary source for major parts of this topic.

Australian and New Zealand Environmental and Conservation Council (ANZECC) (1996) *Guidelines and Criteria for Determining the Need for and Level of Environmental Impact Assessment in Australia.* Working Group on National Environmental Impact Assessment, ANZECC, Canberra.

Brown A (1998) The Environmental Overview as a Realistic Approach to Strategic Environmental Assessment in Developing Countries in Porter A and Fittipaldi J (eds) *Environmental Methods Review: Retooling Impact Assessment for the New Century,* pp. 127-134. The Press Club, Fargo, USA.

Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA) (1995) *Guide to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act.* CEAA, Ottawa.

Jones C (1999) Screening, Scoping and Consideration of Alternatives. in Petts J (ed) *Handbook of Environmental Impact Assessment (Volume 1),* pp. 201-228. Blackwell Science Ltd. Oxford, UK.

OECD (1992) Guidelines on Environment and Aid: Good Practices for Environmental Impact Assessment of Development Projects. OECD, Paris.

UNDP (1992) *Handbook and Guidelines for Environmental Management and Sustainable Development*. Environment and Natural Resources Group, UNDP, New York.

World Bank (1993) Environmental Screening, *Environmental Assessment Sourcebook Update No 2,* Environment Department, The World Bank, Washington D.C.

Further reading

Bulleid P (1997) Assessing the Need for EIA. In Weston J (ed) *Planning and Environmental Impact Assessment in Practice*, (pp. 26-41). Longman, Harlow, UK.

Canter L (1996) *Environmental Impact Assessment (Second Edition).* McGraw Hill Publishing Company, New York.

Commission of the European Communities (CEC), Directorate-General for Development, (1993) *Environment Manual Development Procedures and Methodology Governing Lome IV Development Co-operation Projects - User's Guide. CEC, Brussels..*

Donnelly A, Dalal-Clayton B and Hughes R (1998) *A Directory of Impact Assessment Guidelines, (Second Edition).* International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED). Russell Press, Nottingham.

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) (1992) *Environmental Procedures.* EBRD, London.

Kristoffersen H and Tesli A (eds) (1996) *Environmental Impact Assessment in the BalticCountries and Poland – Screening and Quality Control.* Nordic Council of Ministers, NORD 12, Copenhagen.

OECD /DAC (1994) *Towards Coherence in Environmental Assessment: Results of the Project on Coherence of Environmental Assessment for International Bilateral Aid.* Vol. 1. Canadian International Development Agency, Ottawa.

Training activities

Training activities will be more instructive if they are framed around a local proposal. Consider inviting prospective course participants to make a presentation if they have expertise in this area of EIA.

Discussion themes

4-1 What are the strengths and weaknesses of the screening procedure used in the local EIA process?

4-2 Discuss the relative strengths and weaknesses of the following screening methods: project lists with thresholds; case-by-case screening; initial environmental evaluation (IEE) and other types of preliminary EIA study.

4-3 Consider if a list of projects that must always undergo EIA is a useful approach? How would you go about drawing up or amending such a list and choosing the projects to be included?

4-4 What are the benefits and disadvantages of proponents making screening decisions? Is it necessary to make the reasons for the decisions available to the public?

4-5 What are the benefits and disadvantages of allowing an appeal process for screening decisions?

4-6 If a country's EIA legislation or policy prescribes/designates activities in terms of project type only, what are the advantages and disadvantages of also specifying projects by size (e.g. a reservoir or mine lease area more than a certain number of hectares)?

4-7 How might cumulative effects and/or sustainability criteria be incorporated in screening decision-making?

Speaker themes

4-1 Invite a speaker who has been involved in the conduct of screening to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the system used locally, giving examples.

4-2 Arrange for speakers representing different stakeholders in the EIA process (e.g. the screening decision-maker, the proponent, the public) to participate in a panel discussion focused on the strengths and weaknesses of the applicable process of screening and how it could be improved.

Group Activity 4–1: Screening

Title: **Comparison of screening methods**

Aim: To gain familiarity with the strengths and weaknesses of different screening methods.

Group size: Four to six participants

Duration: Three hours

Resources required:

- ❑ Three local case studies providing background information used for or relevant to screening the proposals.
- ❑ The screening method and any criteria used for these proposals and one or two other sets of criteria (from donors or other countries) that can be used for comparison. (Handout 4–1 can be used).
- ❑ The screening decisions on these proposals and, if possible, the reasons for these decisions.

Description of activity:

Applying the different types of screening method to the three case studies, answer the following questions:

- ❑ What differences were evident in the way that the different methods operated?
- ❑ What further information would you have liked to have, or other aspects that you would like to have considered, before you had to make the screening decision?
- ❑ Which method was the easiest to use?
- ❑ Which method do you feel gave the most reliable answer to whether EIA was necessary or not? Why?
- ❑ What limitations did each of the screening methods have?
- ❑ What could be the repercussions of these limitations?
- ❑ Compare and discuss the groups' findings with the actual decision made, where available.
- ❑ Suggest modifications that could be made to the local screening process to improve its accuracy, reproducibility, certainty of outcome and accountability.

Group Activity 4–2: Screening

Title: **Screening proposals**

Aim: To understand how screening is conducted.

Group size: Class or small group activity

Duration: Three hours

Resources required

- ❑ Five short case studies, one suited to extended screening.
- ❑ Background information, with associated maps, for the proposals that could be required to support the screening decisions.

Description of activity

- ❑ Provide the class or groups with the five short case studies and ask them to screen the proposals, giving reasons for their decisions.
- ❑ Bring the groups back together after the first hour to discuss progress.
- ❑ As a group, develop a list of information which would be required in order to screen projects adequately.

If appropriate, the above activity can include an extended screening process referring to Handout 4–2, and would benefit from being undertaken in conjunction with a site visit to a project.


1

The purpose of screening

The purpose of screening is to determine:

- whether or not a proposal requires an EIA
- what level of EIA is required


2

Outcomes of screening

- full or comprehensive EIA required
- more limited EIA required
- further study needed to determine EIA requirement
- no further requirement for EIA


3

Screening and scoping compared

Screening – determines the requirement for EIA
– establishes the level of review necessary

Scoping – identifies the key issues and impacts
– establishes the terms of reference


4

Screening methods

- legal/policy definition
- inclusion list of projects (with/without thresholds)
- exclusion list of projects
- criteria for case-by-case screening


5

Figure 1: A framework for screening


6

Extended screening methods

- initial environmental evaluation or examination (IEE)
- environmental overview
- class screening


7

Typical proposals requiring full EIA include:

- dams and reservoirs
- (re)settlement and urban development
- infrastructure (e.g. transport and sanitation)
- industrial facilities (e.g. manufacturing plants)
- energy and minerals extraction (e.g. oil & gas, coal)
- waste management and disposal of hazardous and toxic materials
- energy development (power stations, transmission lines, pipelines)


8

Location and environmental criteria for case-by-case screening

The following are important in determining significant effects:

- assimilative capacity of the natural environment
- environmental sensitivity, e.g. wetlands, coastal and mountain zones
- environmental standards and objectives
- existing land uses
- adjacent to protected or designated areas
- within landscapes of special heritage value
- abundance and quality of natural resources


9

Extended screening – information required by decision-makers

- description of the proposal
- conditions and characteristics of the environment
- applicable policy planning and regulatory objectives
- identification of potential impacts
- degree of public concern and interest


10

An initial environmental examination

- describes the proposal
- considers alternatives
- addresses the concerns of the community
- identifies potential environmental effects
- established mitigation measures
- includes mitigation and follow up if necessary


11

Flowchart of the process

Screening List A: Projects requiring no environmental analysis

DG VII Sectoral Classification

SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES	
Education	• Educational facilities (small-scale) • Teaching facilities and equipment • Scholarships and conferences • Teaching staff and resource personnel • Audio-visual productions • Training
Health	• Medical centres (small-scale) • Medical supplies and equipment • Medical staff and community health workers • Training • Nutrition
Population	• Family planning
ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES	• Telecommunications • Research
PRODUCTION SßECTOR	• Trade (except trade in tropical hardwoods, endangered species, hazardous materials)
MULTI SECTOR	• Micro-projects/programmes (small-scale capital and service)
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE	• Programme assistance (general and sectoral import programmes) • Non-project/special country support (stabex)
FOOD AID	• Food aid
EMERGENCY OPERATIONS	• Emergency assistance • Assistance to refugee returnees and displaced persons
AID THROUGH PRIVATE ORGANISATIONS	(REFER TO APPROPRIATE SECTOR)
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE	• Studies, including evaluations • Technical assistance for project implementation • Technical assistance for policy formulation • Works supervision • Institution building at the government/local level

* Under certain local circumstances, the Delegation can over-ride this categorisation and place the project in Category B, for instance in cases of substantial amounts of food aid.

Source: Commission of the European Communities (1993)

Screening List B: Projects requiring further environmental analysis

DG VIII Sectoral Classifications

SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES	
1. Rural and Urban Water Supply and Sanitation	• Rural water supply and sanitation • Land drainage (small scale) • Sewerage systems • Installations for the disposal of sewerage sludge
2. Waste Disposal	• Recycling plants • Installations for the disposal of domestic refuse (large scale)
3. Urban Development	• Housing and commercial projects
ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES	
4. Transport	• Upgrading/rehabilitation of major rural roads • Airports with basic runway length less than 2,100m
5. Ports and Harbours	• Inland ports which permit the passage of vessels under 1350 tonnes • Upgrading of port or harbour facilities (large scale)
6. Energy	• Thermal power stations and other combustion installations with a heat output of less than 300 megawatts • Electricity transmission lines • Rural electrification • Renewable energy (large scale) • Mini-Hydro
PRODUCTION SECTOR	
7. Agriculture	• Widespread introduction of new management practices (eg. mechanisation, mixed cropping) • Widespread introduction of new crops • Pest control programmes (large scale) • Widespread introduction of fertilisers • Watershed management and rehabilitation
8. Irrigation	• Surface-water fed irrigation projects covering between 100 and 500 hectares • Ground-water fed irrigation projects covering between 200 and 1000 hectares
9. Forestry	• Protected forest reserves (large-scale) • Agro-forestry (large-scale) • Productive forest reserves (large-scale)
10. Livestock	• Intensive rearing of cattle (>50 heads), pigs (>100 heads), or poultry (>500 heads)

Screening List B: Projects requiring further environmental analysis (cont)

11. Fisheries and Aquaculture	• Intensive aquaculture (large-scale) • Extensive aquaculture (exceeding 50ha, or exceeding 10ha if affecting mangroves) • Artisanal fisheries (large-scale) • Introduction of new species • Introduction of new harvesting technology
12. Mineral Extraction and Processing	• Extraction of aggregate minerals such as marble, sand, gravel, shale, salt, phosphates and potash • Extraction of non-metallic or energy producing minerals (small-scale)
13. Industry	• Agro-industries, including manufacture of vegetable and animal oils and fats, manufacture, packing and canning of animal, fish and vegetable products • Manufacture of timber products, pulp, paper and board (large-scale) • Tannery and leather-dressing factories • Production of chemicals, including pesticides (small-scale) • Industries utilising hazardous materials (small-scale)
14. Tourism	• Accommodation (large-scale) • Amenities (large-scale), such as water, energy, sanitation, waste disposal • Facilities (large-scale), such as beach use, marinas, modifications to ports, entertainment complexes • Ecological or cultural-tourism (dependent upon conservation-worthy ecosystems, flora or fauna; or local populations with a particular cultural identity)
15. Resettlement	• All other resettlement schemes

Source: Commission of the European Communities (1993)

Screening List C: Projects requiring a full Environmental Impact Assessment

DG VIII Sectoral Classifications

SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES	
1. Rural and Urban Water Supply and Sanitation	• Canalisation and flood-relief works (large-scale) • Dams and reservoirs (medium and large-scale) • Wastewater treatment plants (large-scale) • Land drainage (large-scale)
2. Waste Disposal	• Waste disposal installations for the incineration, chemical treatment or land fill of toxic, hazardous and dangerous wastes • Installations for the disposal in industrial wastes
3. Urban Development	• Hospital and educational facilities (large-scale)
ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES	
4. Transport	• Major urban roads • New and upgraded motorways/express roads • Rural road programmes • Oil and gas pipelines and installations • Rail infrastructure • Elevated and underground railways and suspended lines used mainly for passenger transport • Inland waterways • Airports with a basic runway length of 2,100m or more
5. Ports and Harbours	• Trading ports • Ports for inland waterways traffic which permit the passage of vessels over 1350 tonnes • Large scale expansions to existing ports and harbours
6. Energy	• Thermal power stations and other combustion installations with a heat output of 300 megawatts or more • Hydroelectric power (large-scale)
PRODUCTION SECTOR	
7. Agriculture	• Land clearing/conversion to agriculture (large-scale) • Land reclamation (large-scale)
8. Irrigation	• Surface-water fed irrigation projects covering more than 500 hectares • Ground-water fed irrigation projects more than 1000 hectares
9. Forestry	• Plantation afforestation/reforestation (large-scale)
10. Livestock	• Large-scale open range rearing of cattle, horses, sheep etc

Screening List C: Projects requiring a full Environmental Impact Assessment

11. Fisheries and Aquaculture	• Industrial Fisheries
12. Mineral Extraction and Processing	• Deep drilling, such as geothermal, oil, and water supplies • Extraction of metallic and energy-producing minerals by open-cast mining • Extraction of coal/lignite by underground or open-cast mining • Surface industrial installations for the extraction of coal, petroleum, natural gas and ores • On-site mineral processing facilities (large-scale)
13. Industry	• Industrial estates • Major industrial facilities including the following: - Oil refineries - Gasification or liquefaction plants of 500 tonnes or more of coal or bituminous shale per day - Installations for the production of ferrous and non-ferrous metals, including smelting, refining, drawing, rolling and surface treatment (large-scale) - Installations for the extraction and processing of asbestos and cement products - Treatment and production of chemicals (large-scale), including integrated chemical installations - Manufacture or transport of pesticides or other hazardous and/or toxic materials
14. Tourism	• Coastal development (large-scale)
15. Resettlement	• Resettlement schemes (large-scale)

Source: Commission of the European Communities (1993)

Environmental overview (initial environmental evaluation) Operational guidelines

Taken from UNDP, *Handbook and Guidelines for Environmental Management and Sustainable Development* (New York, 1992), part II, pages 30-39. [3]

Environmental Management Tools

Four management tools to be used at each step of UNDP operations are discussed in this section.

In addition, environmental documents and related reference materials are now being produced in copious amounts. As many of these materials could be used to prepare Environmental Overviews and Management Strategies, a library-style reference system on the environment could be set up in each field office. That is, environmental information arriving at UNDP field offices could be categorized and collected in one place for staff members to be able to consult and retrieve.

Field offices that already have libraries could set up sections on the environment and encourage Programme Officers to forward all appropriate documents to this facility. Field office environmental focal points may also assist offices in assuring that environmental management processes are completed as outlined here and that environmental information flowing into the office is disseminated to the appropriate staff members, government counterparts and NGOs. Activities of the Sustainable Development Network and the Global Environment Facility should also be linked to the guidelines.

Tool 1: Environmental Checklist for UNDP Technical Cooperation

To ensure that proper consideration has been given to the environment, a checklist serves as a reminder to those participating in activity implementation (See Box 1.) These specific questions should be answered to facilitate the process of assessing whether the environmental dimension has been included.

Tool 2: Environmental Overviews

An Environmental Overview (EO) is an assessment tool that forms the basis for an Environmental Management Strategy. The aim of this short document is to provide basic information on the present environmental situation of a country or project. It will also include an assessment of how the environment might be altered if the programme or project is implemented. This tool is the simplest instrument which can be used to determine whether a proposed activity is being designed and implemented within an environmentally sound and sustainable approach. The EOs will be used in designing all UNDP activities.

All Environmental Overviews should:

- identify the main environmental opportunities and constraints that the implementation of the programme or project could bring about;
- suggest alternatives to the programme/project design that would take better advantage of potential environmental opportunities and/or mitigate likely environmental disturbances associated with the programme/project; and
- identify areas of uncertainty regarding modifications to the environment, as well as those potential social and economic conflicts that might arise if environmental changes are introduced in the programme/project area.

Whether the overview is prepared for a Country Programme or for specific projects and programmes, it should not be longer than seven pages. Box 2 (Preparation of Environment Overviews for UNDP Country Programmes [EOCs]) and Box 3 (Preparation of Environmental Overviews for UNDP-sponsored Projects and Programmes [EOPs]) contain annotated outlines of what to include in each type of overview. Only Box 3 is included in this reading excerpt.

The responsibility of preparing EOs belongs to those who are proposing a programme or project and, when appropriate, should be included in the terms of reference. This would include UNDP staff, other UN agency professionals, government or NGO counterparts and outside experts.

For the Country Programme, the EOC should be prepared at the same time the Advisory Note is being drafted. For a project or programme document, the EOP should be done before or while the Project Formulation Framework (PFF) is being drafted but not finalised. This leaves ample time to make revisions if necessary and to incorporate mitigation measures and other environmental considerations throughout the Note or PFF. Once the EO is prepared, some of the information it contains should be incorporated into appropriate sections of the Advisory Note (eventually the Country Programme) or the actual PFF (for example, justification, objectives and so forth). The EO should also be attached as an annex to the programme/project document so that it can be reviewed by the Project/Programme Activity Committee (PAC) and the Action-Committee (AC).

Generally speaking, EOs are not based on original research, although occasionally independent research might be necessary. EOs should be developed mainly from existing information contained in country environmental profiles such as those prepared by other international organizations, academic institutions, bilateral donors and NGOs (for example, those of the World Bank and Interregional Development Banks, or the national reports prepared for the UN Conference on Environment and Development). New information should be generated only if no other details about the characteristics/functions of the local environment are available. Participatory development techniques that take advantage of grass-roots knowledge will help improve the accuracy of EOs.

An EOP should in principle be prepared for all projects from forestry to education to management training. For projects that lack any environmental factors or potential environmental components, the EOP will be limited to one page of outline subheadings with an explanation in each case as to why it is not applicable. For projects that do not have detailed EOPs, the project document chapter on 'Special Considerations' will explain in brief that no EO was created because of the non-applicability of the topic. Very few projects will fall under this category, however.

UNDP staff should use the information contained in the document as an important input to the evaluation of the proposed programmes and projects. The EOC can influence, for example, the drafting of many sections of the Country Programme.

Box 1. Environmental Checklist for UNDP Cooperation

- Has an EOC/EOP been prepared for the programme/project?
- Does the programme/project document include explicit actions to prevent and conserve the environment?
- Have the sources of environmental impact (positive and negative) been properly identified in the programme/ project document?
- Does the programme/project document include environmental mitigation measures?
- Have the potential conflicts of interest been properly addressed in the document?

Tool 3: Environmental Screening of UNDP Activities Using EOPs

EOPs contain the necessary basic information to allow those who are designing or responsible for the proposed programme/activity to decide whether the activity deserves further environmental consideration. To facilitate this, box 4 provides five main reference points to screen UNDP proposed activities. These criteria are not comprehensive, but mainly serve as a reminder for the environmental reviewer. EOCs will also be annexed to the Country Programme, and this will provide the basis for assessing the environmental performance of the programme or project over time.

After UNDP screens the EOPs, the following choices of action exist:

- Given potential environmental opportunities and/or the absence of negative environmental impacts, write the final document (incorporating the EOP) and submit it to the PAC and, if necessary, the Action Committee.
- Do not pursue the proposal further due to its potential negative impact on the environment.
- Request additional information/clarification regarding the environmental characteristics of the area where the proposed activity is expected to take place; demand elaboration of some aspects of the EOP

or expansion of information regarding potential environmental impacts prior to drafting the final document.

- Introduce changes to the design presented in the PFF to eliminate or mitigate potential negative environmental impacts, or to make better use of opportunities.
- Recommend preparing an in-depth Environmental Management Strategy for the project document that would be referred to throughout the implementation of the activity.

If the screening process leads to a choice to provide UNDP support for the programme/project under consideration, the EOP should be annexed to the project document.

Tool 4: Environmental Management Strategies

An Environmental Management Strategy (EMS) is a detailed action oriented plan prepared for UNDP projects. Environmental Overviews answer the question 'what' is happening or might happen to the environment with a proposed action. Environmental Management Strategies answer the questions:

- 'how' (to improve the environment or mitigate its disturbance),
- 'when' (at what time, through the life of a project, this will be done),
- 'who' (will be accountable for implementing and monitoring environmental activities),
- 'how long' (before the results will be seen), and
- 'what is required' (in terms of experts, information, institutional and financial support) for integrating environmentally sound and sustainable development principles within a proposed development activity.

Box 2 Preparation of Environmental Overview of Programme (Project) and Management Strategy (EOP/MS) Annotated Outline for Tool 2 and Tool 4

Although the text of this EOP/MS refers to projects, it can also be used for programmes. This outline contains a 'menu' of possible topics that might assist staff members to develop EOPs. Thus the sections included here should be completed only when applicable (see also Annex III for a sample EOP and MS). Information can be presented sectorally rather then geographically if necessary. Linkages between sections should be identified

1 Brief Description of the EOP/MS Environment of the Area of the Project (1 page maximum)

In general, this section is intended to provide all those who are participating in the development of a UNDP Project with basic general information on the physical characteristics of the environment in the area. The idea is to highlight any important aspects of the natural environment that might be a determinant in the design, appraisal, extension, approval and assessment of a proposed UNDP regional, national or local project.

Land and water ecosystems

Describes those types of land and water ecosystems that characterize the project area (such as plains, valleys, mountain ecosystems, rivers, lakes) and whether any of these are known to represent untapped environmental opportunities or areas of particular environmental concern. Includes information on climate if appropriate, such as when the project relates to specific types of agricultural production. In urban areas, describes briefly the relevant geographical features.

Living resources

Describes (1) the biological species (fauna and flora) in the project area that represent particular concerns and/or opportunities for the environment (for example, the unexploited potential of certain resources such as medicines that could be obtained from tropical forest species), (2) the socio-cultural context in the project area (population size, ethnicity, poverty and gender indicators etc.).

2 Main Environmental Issues in the Project Area (1 page maximum)

This section covers the three environmental issues that are most important in the area where the project will be implemented—whether, for example, the area is prone to flooding, there is an ongoing process of desertification, or the sustainable fish catch potential is smaller than present exploitation. Topics to

consider might include quality of life of the local population, natural hazards, fragile ecosystems, role of children and women and over-crowding. Consultations with local population groups will improve the accuracy of this section.

3 Economics and the Environment in the Project Area (1 page maximum)

This section generally discusses whether the prevailing economic situation in the project area will affect the environment. Lists any prevailing national or local economic policies and regulations in the project area that affect the quality of the environment. Any enforcement mechanisms that prevail in the project area to protect the local environment should also be included. General statements about the population's socio-economic situation may be added if not listed under 1 above.

4 Environmental Management in the Project Area (1 page maximum)

This section should describe the capacity of the people and institutions working in the project area to cope with their environmental problems, achieve appropriate environmental management and promote sustainable development.

Legal and regulatory

Describes whether there are explicit environmental policies and regulations in the project area and, if so, whether they have the enforcement mechanisms and appropriate technical and financial support to be effective.

Major environmental actors

Includes a brief description of the main environmental actors in the project area (government authorities, international organizations, private sector, NGOs, individuals) and their objectives and strategies. Identifies possible conflicts among the actors if the proposed project is implemented. Consider whether women play an active role in all these groups and are able to make the necessary contributions, explain their role.

Technical and managerial capacity to deal with environmental issues

Describes generally the existing educational, technical and managerial capacity in the project area (within the public, private, NGO and academic sectors) to deal with the environmental issues relevant to the project. Special emphasis should be given to the presence and activities of grass-roots organizations working on environmental protection. The strength and resources of environmental institutions in the project area should be briefly assessed.

5 Major Natural and Socio-Economic Impacts and Opportunities Associated with the Project Implementation (1 page maximum)

Both these sections should incorporate the views of the affected population groups; participatory development techniques should therefore be used whenever possible.

Potential impacts on the natural environment

Identifies the potential impacts, both positive and negative, that the implementation of the project may have upon the natural environment. Identifies the three most important environmental impacts that the implementation of the project might bring about, and describes how the project will address them. If the project is on agroforestry, for example, indicates whether soil conservation, watershed management and appropriate selection of pesticides and fertilizers have been envisaged.

Potential socio-economic impacts

Lists the three most important potential benefits and costs to the socio-economic impacts environment that may result from the implementation of the project.

6 Alternatives for Project Design (1/2 page maximum)

This section will discuss the possibility of altering the project design (technology, project objectives and methodology of implementation) to take better advantage of the opportunities offered by the environment in the project area, and to mitigate and eliminate the environmental disadvantages that the project might create.

7 Identification of Environmental Objectives of the Proposed Activity (1/2 page)

The EOP/MS should state clearly and succinctly the environmental objectives of the alternative. These must conform with the broader development objectives of the country and therefore might go beyond the particular activity's goals. If a proposed activity does not explicitly indicate any environmental objectives, UNDP staff should request that such objectives be identified.

For example, a project on animal-husbandry might identify production targets but not explicitly include environmental objectives. If the proposed activity will introduce new technologies or exotic animal and plant varieties, relocate people or introduce new chemical products, the local environment will be affected. The strategy, in this case, will help identify and clearly design the environmental objectives of such an animal-husbandry project. Environmental objectives could include soil protection, plant conservation and integrated agricultural development.

8 Identification of Conflicts of Interest

Some of the objectives pursued by different environmental actors might conflict. For example, the interests of companies that commercialize chemical fertilizers will conflict with activities aiming to promote organic fertilization. The EOP/MS must identify such conflicts of interest and devise possible alternatives to avoid them. In the previous example, an incentive might be proposed for the commercial chemical enterprise to sell other fertilizers (including organic) that will promote soil fertility without damaging the environment.

9 Formulation of an Operational Strategy

The most important action-oriented part of the EOP/MS is the formulation of an operational strategy that will allow the achievement of the environmental objectives and goals proposed by the EOP/MS. The strategy must be formulated by the staff proposing, designing or evaluating the activity in consultation with project participants.

Specific environmental targets to be achieved

Identifies specific environmental targets in addition to the main environmental policy objectives identified in Section 2. If the proposed activity entails manufacturing processes (such as tanneries or food processing) which generate waste, for example, specific environmental targets would be set such as reducing all waste emissions by 15% over a period of three years and installing interim measures.

Participants in environmental management

Identifies the objectives and strategies of the major actors related to the environment in the area where the proposed activity will take place.

Plan of activities and timetable

Identifies a number of activities that will lead to the implementation of the strategy. A timetable must also be formulated indicating when such activities are expected to occur, and who will be responsible for them. As the EOP/MS will eventually become part of either the programme or project document, the proposed environmental activities and timetable should be compatible with the overall activities and timetable of the Programme or Project. Relevant national and local activities and timetables should also be considered.

Environmental information

Provides reliable and accurate environmental information as the basis for sustainable decision making, while acknowledging that accurate environmental information is difficult to obtain, especially in developing countries. The EOP/MS might include efforts to obtain the most accurate environmental information relevant to the proposed activity or to initiate work that will generate the necessary information over an identified period.

Supporting needs

Identifies the specific needs required for the successful implementation of the strategy. The needs to be identified include:

- Education and training

- Technical and managerial skills
- Access to environmental data banks
- Institutional support
- Financial aspect

  The development and implementation of the EOP/MS requires technical and financial resources. Technical assistance might be needed from UNDP in order to develop the strategy and identify the resources required to carry it out.

Assigning implementation responsibilities

States clearly who will be accountable for implementing each one of the activities proposed within the strategy.

Decision making

Analyzes the environmental chain of command and responsibilities in the area where an activity is being considered. This analysis should not be restricted to the chain of command in the environmental field (ministry of the environment, forestry sector) but should include the other sectors of the economy that are intimately related to the environment such as industry, trade, health, and so on. The objective is to identify to whom suggestions and recommendations—indeed, the entire EOP/MS—would be addressed. It should also include what would be the most efficient way to influence the decision-making process to protect and enhance the environment.

10 Monitoring the EOP/MS

Every UNDP-sponsored activity is monitored regularly to ensure that its stated objectives are being achieved in the time framework envisaged. As the EOP/MS will probably be incorporated into the programme or project document that describes the proposed activity, it should be monitored according to the procedures presented. Constant, cautious monitoring on an as frequent a basis as possible, using specific success indicators for the points raised in the strategy, will help guarantee that the objectives are achieved.

The main difference between an EO and an EMS is that the latter is an ongoing effort demanding close UNDP monitoring throughout the activity while the former is a more static undertaking completed during project formulation. The EMS should be prepared by those proposing the implementation of a project: mainly government officials, NGOs, academic institutions and UN agencies responsible for implementation. Terms of reference will need to refer to the EMS preparation.

The EMS, as part of the EOP/MS, steps 7 to 10, will be prepared according to the specifications provided in Box 3, using participatory development techniques to the greatest extent possible. The length of an EMS can vary greatly, so guidelines on the length of each section are not included. UNDP staff are responsible for ensuring that the EMS is prepared according to these guidelines. It is recommended that the proposed project executer undertake the technical coordinating responsibilities, using, as necessary, appropriate UN agencies and/or other affiliated agencies or NGOs.

The ideas expressed in the EMS eventually need to be incorporated into the objectives, activities, inputs, work plan and so on of the project or programme document. Special references should also be made to the EMS and, if necessary, a specific section summarizing the EMS should be added. The EMS should also be attached as an annex to these documents to assist in monitoring the activities over time.

BOX 3 Criteria for Screening UNDP EOCs and EOPs Tool 3

It is recommended that the programmes/projects that fall within any of the following categories be subject to further environmental consideration:

Environmentally Sensitive Areas or Activities

- Activities leading to encroachments on tropical rain forests, wetlands, mangrove forests, coral reefs, coastal zones or other vulnerable areas
- Activities changing natural vegetation and/or the habitats of wildlife species, or in areas inhabited by endangered species
- Activities in legally declared protected areas
- Ecologically fragile areas (including those identified as such by NGOs)
- Areas subject to desertification, arid and semi-arid zones, drylands
- Ecotourism activities
- Areas of unique conservation, historical, cultural, archaeological or aesthetic interest
- Areas of particular social significance (habitats for nomadic people or indigenous populations)
- Areas where pre-established pollution limits have been exceeded or where activities would lead to air, water, soil, radioactive or noise pollution

Livestock, Farming and Fishing Practices

- Sustainable agriculture
- Activities leading to soil erosion or in soil-conservation areas
- Integrated pest control or pesticide use/management
- Agroforestry
- Afforestation
- Activities leading to increased grazing
- Introduction or modifications of new crops or livestock
- Introduction of new species where there is limited knowledge of the ecological functions of the local ecosystem
- Biotechnology
- Activities with the possibility of exceeding carrying capacity (eg. catching larger quantities of fish than can be replaced by natural rate of growth)
- Controlled breeding and exploitation of fish or shellfish carried out in marine or inland waters or in artificial ponds

Activities Dealing with Water Resources

- Water management
- Irrigation and flood control
- Hydroelectric
- Ground water
- Management of inland wetland ecosystems
- Health and sanitation

Infrastructure and Industrial Strengthening

- Large infrastructure and urbanization activities (eg. port development, airports and railway systems)
- Energy generation
- Mining (land and water)
- Activities leading to conflicts over use of resources (eg. port development and tourism)
- All industrial development
- Activities causing emissions to soil, water and air and/or that may endanger the environment

- Activities demanding considerable increases in consumption of raw materials (water, land, fossil fuels)
- Activities creating major changes in landscape
- Activities creating risks of accidents that could have serious consequences for local people or the natural environment
- Occupational safety and training
- Activities that introduce immigrant labour and change local social fabric

Urbanisation, Land Development and Waste Management

- Human settlements (housing, office, commercial buildings)
- Land-use planning or road building
- Activities leading to accumulation of waste and creation of unwanted disposal sites
- Production, transport or storage of hazardous wastes.
- UNDP Environmental Overview
- ADB Checklist of Environmental Parameters for Major Dam/:Reservoir/Hydropower Projects