

Environmental Impact Assessment Frequently Asked Questions

What is an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA?)

An **Environmental Impact Assessment** (EIA) is an assessment of the possible impacts that a proposed project may have on the environment, consisting of the environmental, social and economic aspects.

The purpose of the assessment is to ensure that decision makers consider the environmental impacts when deciding whether or not to proceed with a project. The International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA) defines an environmental impact assessment as "the process of identifying, predicting, evaluating and mitigating the biophysical, social, and other relevant effects of development proposals prior to major decisions being taken and commitments made. EIAs require decision makers to account for environmental values in their decisions and to justify those decisions in light of detailed environmental studies and public comments on potential environmental impacts.

What is the EIA legislative policy?

The Government of Zimbabwe gazetted the Environmental Management Act in 2002 and S.I 7 of 2007 (Environmental Impact Assessment and Ecosystems Protection) which compels prescribed projects listed under the first schedule of the EMA Act (Cap 20:27) to undergo an EIA process prior to implementation.

What projects require an EIA?

The projects that require an EIA are listed in the First Schedule of the Environmental Management Act. They are as follows:

- Dams and manmade lakes;
- Drainage of wetlands and irrigation schemes
- Conversion of forest land to other use;
- Conversion of natural woodland to other use within the catchment

- area of reservoirs used for water supply, irrigation or hydropower generation or in areas adjacent to the Parks and Wildlife estate;
- Housing Developments;
 - Industry-chemical plants, iron and steel smelters and plants, smelters other than iron and steel, petrochemical plants, cement plants, lime plants, agro-industries, pulp and paper mills, tanneries, breweries and industries involving the use, manufacture, handling, storage, transport or disposal of hazardous- or toxic material.
 - Infrastructure-highways, airports, new railway routes and branch lines, new towns or townships, industrial sites;
 - Mining and quarrying-mineral prospecting; mineral mining; ore processing and concentrating; quarrying;
 - Petroleum production, storage and distribution;
 - Power generation and transmission- thermal power stations, hydropower schemes and high voltage transmission lines;
 - Tourist resorts and recreational developments –resort facilities and hotels, marinas and safari operators;
 - Waste treatment and disposal-toxic and hazardous waste: incineration plants, recovery plants, waste water treatment plants, landfill facilities and storage facilities; municipal solid waste: incineration, composting, recovery and recycling plants and landfill facilities; municipal sewage: waste treatment plants, outfalls into aquatic systems, effluent water irrigation schemes and
 - Water supply- groundwater development for industrial, agricultural or urban water supply; major canals, cross drainage water transfers, major pipelines and water withdrawals from rivers and reservoirs.

How long does it take to conduct an EIA study?

Before doing an environmental impact assessment for a project, a developer shall submit a prospectus to the Director General containing information on the project such as the nature of project, location, size, area sensitivity and project implementation strategy among other issues. If the Director General is satisfied that the proposed environmental impact assessment will be capable of evaluating the project's impact on the environment, she approves it and asks the developer to prepare an environmental impact assessment. If she is not satisfied she rejects the prospectus and gives the developer directions that are necessary for the preparation of a new one. When approving a prospectus the Director General may fix conditions relating to the scope of the assessment and the developer concerned shall comply with any such conditions.

How long does it take to review an EIA study?

The Director General responds to the submission of an environmental impact assessment report within sixty (60) working days and will notify the developer of her decision. If the Director General does not respond within this time the project shall be deemed to have been approved.

N.B For an EIA to work well, it should be considered at the time the project is conceptualised to avoid delays in project implementation on account of the EIA.

Who carries out the EIA study?

The developer shall engage a person independent of the development who is an expert in environmental planning and management services to prepare the environmental impact assessment.

How do I get hold of consultants?

To get hold of consultants visit an EMA office in your district or province. EMA has a list of approved consultants that developers should engage for

their environmental impact assessments. Payment of a fee of \$42 is needed for viewing of the approved consultants list.

How much are the EIA review fees?

The consultant charges his or her fee for compiling the EIA document and the Environmental Management Agency charges 1, 5% of the total project cost.

Who should be consulted during the EIA process?

The Director General may consult any authority, organisation, community, agency or person which or who in her opinion has an interest in the project.

How long is the licence valid for?

The certificate is valid for two years from the date of issue, the Director General can extend the validity of the licence for not more than one year for projects implemented within the stipulated period but not yet complete.

Environmental audits

Project developers are expected to adhere to the contents of the EIA report as far as possible during project implementation.

EMA shall carry out bi-annual environmental audits to ensure that all projects being implemented are in compliance with the regulations. The developer shall submit a Quarterly Environmental Monitoring Report on any issues raised in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report or any other issues that arise as a result of the implementation of the project.

Failure to submit a quarterly report will make a developer liable to a fine not exceeding level 14 or imprisonment for twelve months or both such fine and imprisonment.

Please talk to us we are always ready to listen. Email: eep@ema.co.zw or 04 305543 / Toll

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