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## **Environmental Impact Assessment: Campaigner's Guide**

## About this guide

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is a key aspect of many planning applications. It is an assessment which is meant to help us understand the potential environmental impacts of development proposals.

Unfortunately both the process and the outcome of EIA can be complex and confusing, leaving local communities unsure as to how a development might affect them. This guide is intended as a broad introduction to the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The material is drawn from regulations and official guidance and is designed to help you understand what EIA is and in what circumstances it should happen.

The guide is not intended to provide guidance on how to prepare an EIA nor is it legal advice. For example it does not explain how to prepare an archaeological survey or landscape assessment. The overall theme of this guide is to encourage you to engage in the EIA process. Experts do not always know best and by ignoring local knowledge, their decisions may have disastrous consequences for local people living near development sites.

## What is environmental impact assessment?

In a nutshell EIA is just an information gathering exercise carried out by the developer which enables a Local Planning Authority to understand the environmental effects of a development before deciding whether it should go ahead.

The really important thing about environmental assessments is the emphasis on using the best available sources of objective information and in carrying out a systematic and holistic process. In theory this should allow the whole community to properly understand the impact of the proposed development.

Environmental assessment should lead to better standards of development and in some cases development not happening at all.

Where developments do go ahead, environmental assessments should help to propose proper mitigation measures.

Environmental impact assessment is meant to be a systematic process which leads to a final product, the Environmental Statement (ES).

### **Important jargon you will need to know:**

- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is a term used to describe the total process of assessing the environmental effects of a development project.
- An Environmental Statement (ES) is used to describe the written material submitted to the local planning authority in fulfilment of the EIA regulations.
- The term Environmental Assessment (EA) is no longer used, so as to avoid confusion with the Environment Agency.

## **So where does EIA come from?**

The EIA process derives from European law. The European law basis is EU Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended by EU Directive 2014/52/EU.

The Directive is mainly implemented in UK legislation through the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. These are generally known as the EIA Regulations. Important official guidance on the interpretation of the EIA Regulations and on the procedure to be used can be found online – see the references at the end of this guide.

#### [July 2017 update](#)

[Please note that the official planning guidance has not yet been updated to take account of the changes made in the 2017 Regulations, which came into force on 16 May 2017.](#)

The Regulations only cover decisions made under Town and Country Planning legislation. However, the Directive requires that all types of developments having significant impacts on the environment go through the EIA process.

Therefore there are separate pieces of legislation (and some non-legislative processes) covering EIA for other types of developments including highways, power stations, water resources, land drainage, forestry, pipelines, harbour works and many others.

There are also EIA regulations for major projects dealt with under the 2008 Planning Act by the examination unit, part of the Planning Inspectorate conducting examinations for the Secretary of State.

UK regulations have been criticised as not fully interpreting the spirit of the EIA directive. Individual cases regarding major development proposals have led to controversial debates about the quality of EIA. Third parties have complained to the European Commission about the failure of the UK Government to fully implement the EU directives on EIA.

The regulations are regularly updated to take account of UK judgments and judgments by the European Court of Justice.

## When is an EIA required?

In a simple world EIA would apply to all forms of development, but just to confuse everyone, EIA is required for some types of development and not others. Deciding on whether an EIA is required can be the source of major dispute between developers, communities and local authorities.

The EIA regulations define two different types of developments, set out in two Schedules to the regulations. For Schedule 1 projects an **EIA must always be carried out**. For Schedule 2 projects an EIA must be carried out **if the development is likely to have a significant impact** on the environment by virtue of its nature, size or location (see selection criteria below). The definitions allow for considerable uncertainty about the need for EIA in specific circumstances and this can result in legal challenges.

### **Examples of Schedule 1 projects include:**

- Major power plants
- Chemical works
- Waste disposal incineration

- Major Road Schemes

**Examples of Schedule 2 Projects include:**

- Quarries and opencast mines
- Deep drilling
- Surface industrial installations
- Some intensive agricultural purposes
- Surface storage of fossil fuel
- Foundries and forges
- Coke ovens
- Manufacture of dairy products
- Brewing
- Some textile operations
- Rubber production
- Waste water treatment plants
- Holiday villages
- Golf courses
- Wind turbines

All Schedule 2 developments are based on thresholds. A proposed development only becomes a Schedule 2 development where it **exceeds the threshold**. For example a 'surface industrial installations' development only falls within Schedule 2 where 'the area of development exceeds 0.5 hectare (section 2(e) of the Schedule 2 table).

**Key Point:** It is important not to confuse the issue of 'thresholds' with the issue of whether a Schedule 2 development must undergo EIA because it is likely to have a significant effect on the environment. Just because a project falls within one of the categories set out in Schedule 2 and exceeds the Schedule 2 threshold does not automatically mean EIA is required. The key question is whether the proposed development is *likely to have significant effects* on the environment.

**The three-stage process for assessing Schedule 2 developments - as follows:**

1. Is the proposed development within a category set out in Schedule 2?

If so, either:

2. a. does it exceed the threshold set out for that category in Schedule 2?  
or b. is it in a 'sensitive area' such as a SSSI, SAC, National Park, AONB etc?
3. If so, is it likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as its nature, size or location?

**If the answer to all three of those questions is 'yes' then an EIA is required.**

Questions 1 and 2 are objective questions of fact. However, question 3 is a matter of opinion and different authorities may reach different views on that question. A decision on question 3 is therefore much harder to challenge in Court.

**Alright, so how do local authorities reach a decision on all of these tests?**

The overall test for whether EIA is required for a Schedule 2 description of development is whether the proposed development would be likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as its nature, size or location.

**Government guidance states that EIA will be needed for Schedule 2 projects in three main types of cases:**

- major projects
- occasionally for projects on a smaller scale which are proposed for particularly sensitive or vulnerable locations;
- in a small number of cases, for projects with unusually complex and potentially adverse environmental effects; where expert and detailed analysis of those effects would be desirable and would be relevant to the issue of principle as to whether or not the development should be permitted.

The decision should be taken by the local planning authority or the Secretary of State on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the criteria set out in the most recent Regulations, and in the screening checklist (see the references at the end of this guide).

The criteria which must be taken into account when screening a Schedule 2 development are set out in Schedule 3 to the Regulations which are as follows:

**Schedule 3 selection criteria for screening schedule 2 development:**

### **1 Characteristics of development**

The characteristics of development must be considered having regard in particular to:

- the size and design of the development;
- the cumulation with other development;
- the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity;
- the production of waste;
- pollution and nuisances;
- the risk of major accidents and/or disasters relevant to the development concerned, including those caused by climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge;
- the risks to human health (for example, due to water contamination or air pollution).

### **2 Location of development**

The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by development must be

considered, having regard in particular to:

- the existing and approved land use;
- the relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground;
- the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas—
  - (i) wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths;
  - (ii) coastal zones and the marine environment;
  - (iii) mountain and forest areas;
  - (iv) nature reserves and parks;
  - (v) European sites<sup>1</sup> and other areas classified or protected under national legislation;
  - (vi) areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the environmental quality standards, laid down in Union legislation and relevant to the project, or in which it is considered that there is such a failure;
  - (vii) densely populated areas;
  - (viii) landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance.

### **3 Characteristics of the potential impact**

The likely significant effects of the development on the environment must be considered in relation to criteria set out in paragraphs 1 and 2 above, taking into account—

- (a) the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);
- (b) the nature of the impact;
- (c) the transboundary nature of the impact;
- (d) the intensity and complexity of the impact;
- (e) the probability of the impact;
- (f) the expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact;
- (g) the cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or approved development;
- (h) the possibility of effectively reducing the impact.

The 2017 regulations and planning practice guidance make clear that the usual indicative criteria for requiring EIA in schedule 2 cases may not apply when the development is likely to impact on environmentally sensitive locations: *“Projects listed in Schedule 2 which are located in, or partly in, a sensitive area also need to be screened, even if they are below the thresholds or do not meet the criteria”*<sup>2</sup>. For any development likely to have significant impacts on SSSIs or in areas such as National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the probability of requiring environmental impact assessment for particular development is increased.

There are a number of complex ideas bound up in the assessment of the likely impact of the development and its consequent need for environmental impact assessment. The sensitivity of particular receptors to environmental impact may, for example, include both social and ecological impacts. Likewise there is an emerging trend to see the environmental carrying capacity of an area in terms, not just of wildlife, but as a measure of (for example) air pollution and its impact on human health. This has led to an extremely important and contentious area of environmental impact

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<sup>1</sup> As defined in Regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010

<sup>2</sup> Reference ID: 4-017-20140306

assessment and planning regulation which is the assessment of health impacts and their materiality to planning decisions. As noted above, the 2017 regulations now include a specific reference to “risks to human health” in Schedule 3, para 1(g).

## What about extensions to existing developments?

Changes or extensions to [Schedule 2](#) development, which when considered with the existing development as a whole, may result in significant adverse effects on the environment, or which meet the thresholds or criteria set out in column 2 of Schedule 2, are also Schedule 2 development and require screening.

## Who decides if an EIA is required?

A developer can decide to submit an EIA voluntarily for a large scale development. Normally, however, it is the local planning authority who decides if an EIA is required in consultation with the applicant.

### The local planning authority

The local planning authority may be asked informally by the applicant whether EIA is necessary for schedule 2 projects. The 2017 regulations require a local planning authority to provide on request a formal opinion as to whether EIA should be carried out, and this is termed a screening opinion. The local planning authority must be satisfied that it has received sufficient information to give a safe opinion, bearing in mind that the failure to require an EIA for a project subsequently found to have significant environmental impacts, could be subject to costly legal challenge.

Where an application is submitted for a development falling within any of the Schedule 2 descriptions without an ES, the local planning authority may determine that EIA is required and refuse to consider the application until an ES is submitted.

### The Secretary of State

The Secretary of State has reserved powers to intervene in cases where the local planning authority have failed to give an opinion on whether an EIA is needed within the prescribed period, or where the applicant disagrees with the opinion given by the local planning authority.

**Important Note:** if you are not satisfied with the screening opinion of a local authority you can request a **Screening Direction** from the Secretary of State (via the National Planning Casework Unit). You will need to justify why you think a development will introduce significant effects on the environment, and what these are likely to be. The more convincing your arguments (better if backed up with robust evidence) the more likely it is your case will be looked at. The SoS will then issue a Screening Direction, saying whether or not EIA is required. This decision cannot be overturned.

## EIA and Case Law

In recent years, there have been a large number of cases in the UK courts and the European Court of Justice that have looked at questions surrounding environmental impact assessments. One important case illustrates the range of EIA questions which the courts have dealt with:

In *Berkeley v Secretary of State for the Environment* 2000, the House of Lords ruled that EIA could no

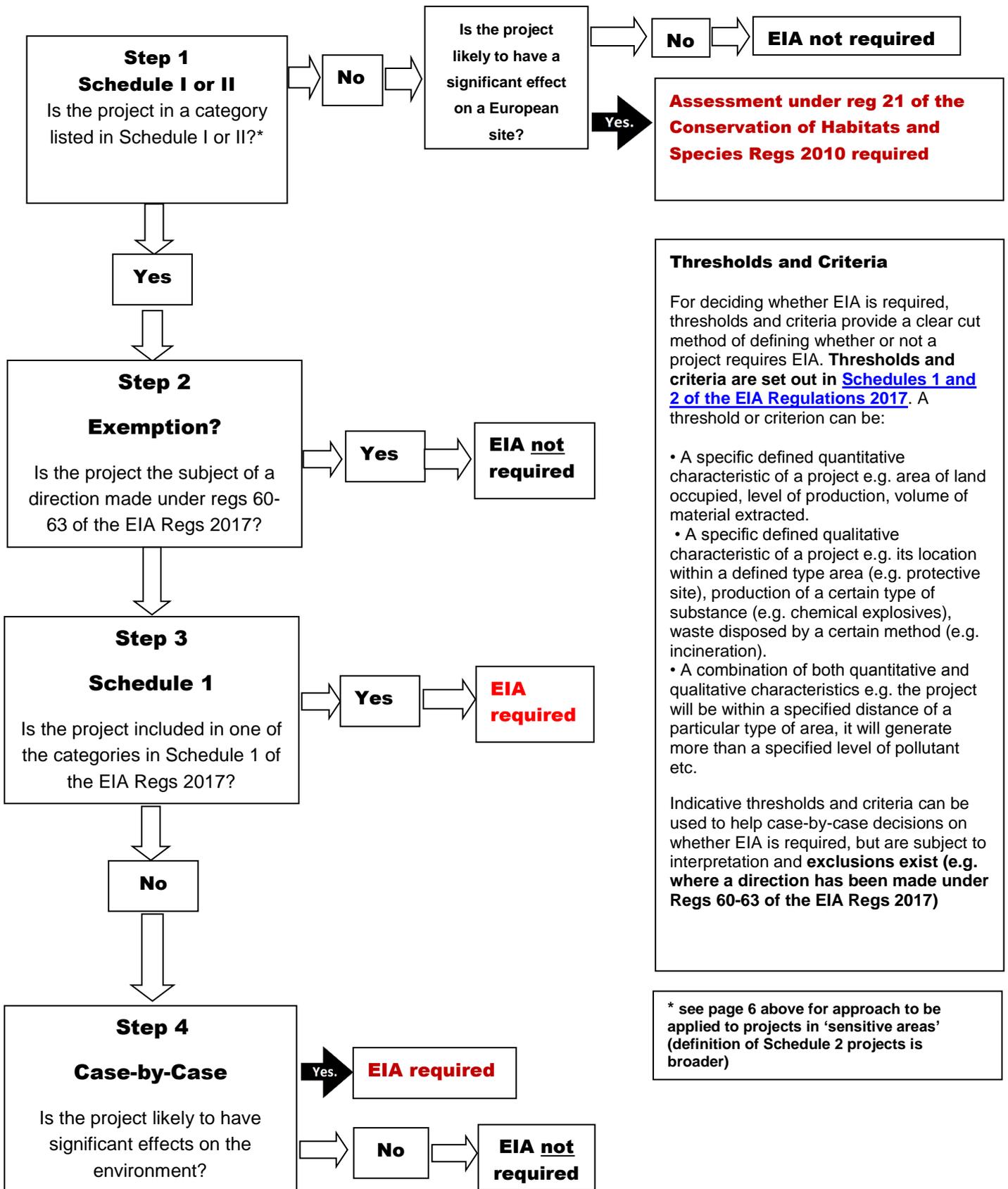
longer be inferred. In short, this means that planning authorities can no longer say that while they have not carried out an explicit EIA, their determination process amounts to an EIA by addressing key environmental impacts. This was often used as a defence by local authorities who had not required EIA. The Lords ruled that EIA was a distinct set of methods which must be applied coherently and in their entirety. In effect, local authorities are now under more pressure to get their decisions about whether to require an EIA right in the first instance.

### **Case law on Schedule 2 projects**

The European Court of Justice gave judgment in the case of Paul Abraham and others v Region Wallone and others (2008), a case about modifications to an airport in Belgium. The European Court referred to the original European law (the Directive) which requires that projects which are likely, by virtue of their nature, size or location, to have significant effects on the environment, are to be subject to an EIA. The Court then issued a warning that *“a Member State which establishes criteria and/or thresholds taking account only of the size of projects, without also taking their nature and location into consideration, would exceed the limits of its discretion”* under the Directive.

This judgment may mean that even if the project does not exceed the threshold set out for its category in Schedule 2, and is not actually in one of the ‘sensitive areas’, an EIA could still be required if the nature and location of the project mean that the project is still likely to have a significant effect on the environment. Note that Reg 5(7) specifically allows the Secretary of State to direct that an EIA should be carried out even where the Schedule 2 criteria or thresholds are not meant.

**N.B. Please see separate Caselaw Annex for further information on EIA caselaw**



**Thresholds and Criteria**

For deciding whether EIA is required, thresholds and criteria provide a clear cut method of defining whether or not a project requires EIA. **Thresholds and criteria are set out in [Schedules 1 and 2 of the EIA Regulations 2017](#)**. A threshold or criterion can be:

- A specific defined quantitative characteristic of a project e.g. area of land occupied, level of production, volume of material extracted.
- A specific defined qualitative characteristic of a project e.g. its location within a defined type area (e.g. protective site), production of a certain type of substance (e.g. chemical explosives), waste disposed by a certain method (e.g. incineration).
- A combination of both quantitative and qualitative characteristics e.g. the project will be within a specified distance of a particular type of area, it will generate more than a specified level of pollutant etc.

Indicative thresholds and criteria can be used to help case-by-case decisions on whether EIA is required, but are subject to interpretation and **exclusions exist (e.g. where a direction has been made under Regs 60-63 of the EIA Regs 2017)**

\* see page 6 above for approach to be applied to projects in 'sensitive areas' (definition of Schedule 2 projects is broader)

**Step 5 - Recording the Screening Decision**

When a formal screening decision is made whether to require or not to require EIA, the competent authority must keep a record of the decision and the reasons for it, and make this available to the public (see Reg 28 of the EIA Regulations 2017).

## So what stages of the EIA should we look out for?

### Identifying Alternatives

Paragraph 2 of Schedule 4 of the 2017 regulations requires the applicant to provide a reasoned decision of the main alternatives to development. These requirements raise a number of issues about planning decision making. It suggests for example that a developer would honestly seek to examine other development sites which may not be in their control. It also suggests that, in the case of waste disposal, consideration should be given to more sustainable solutions in sectors outside the operational range of the company. In practice therefore, the assessment of alternatives is at present fairly meaningless, since developers will not identify an option likely to make profits for a competitor.

### Scoping

Scoping is simply the part of the process when the applicant and the LPA decide what issues the EIA will investigate. The emphasis should be on the 'main' or 'significant' effects. Other issues may be of little or no significance for the particular development and will need only brief treatment to indicate that their relevance has been considered. Regulation 15 allows developers to obtain a formal scoping opinion from an LPA on what should be included in an ES. It means that responsibility for failing to include an important issue rests as much with planning officers as it does with the applicant.

### Baseline

The scoping exercise enables the applicant to establish the existing conditions or standards referred to as the baseline against which the effects of the proposed development may be judged. This can be a crucial stage for communities who may have local knowledge which is highly relevant to understanding the baseline conditions.

### Consultation

As well as consulting the local authority, anyone conducting an EIA is obliged to consult a set of statutory consultees. These names, which include government agencies, are laid down in the regulations and are obliged to provide information which they hold and which might be relevant to the EIA. In practice, there are some key consultees, such as the Environment Agency who deal with a whole range of pollution issues and flood defence, Natural England and Historic England who deal with biodiversity and archaeology respectively.

The consultation bodies are only required to provide information already in their possession usually held on public registers, or available under Environmental Information regulations. They are not required to carry out any research on behalf of the applicant. A reasonable charge may be made to cover the cost of making the information available to the applicant.

In addition to the statutory consultation, many of those working with third parties have taken the directive requirement for consultation as applying to the whole community. The EIA 2017 regulations specify under 19(3)(d) that a person *'likely to be affected by, or with an interest in the application who is unlikely to become aware of it by means of a site notice or local advertisement'* needs to be sent a notice. Under 20(2)(j) where an ES is submitted after a planning application any person wishing to make written representations to the planning authority can do so for a specified period (which must be not less than 30 days from the date of publication of the ES).

### Publicity

For an ES accompanying a planning application, the publicity by the local planning authority consists of the following (see Article 15 and Schedule 3 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (SI 2015/595):

- a copy of the ES is put on Part I of the Register of Planning Applications available for inspection by members of the public;
- a site notice in the prescribed form is displayed on or near the application site for not less than 30 days;
- an advertisement is put in a newspaper circulating in the locality of the application site.

Where the development involved is likely to be controversial, the planning authority may provide copies of the ES in local public libraries or at local authority offices or other convenient locations.

If an ES is submitted after the Planning Application, it is the applicant's responsibility to organise publicity by:

- a notice that should be put in a newspaper circulating in the locality of the application site;
- a site notice on the application site containing the same information as the newspaper advertisement, in a position where it is visible to members of the public without trespassing. The site notice should remain in position for not less than seven days in the month immediately preceding the submission of the ES.

A certificate that the site notice has been posted, together with a copy of the newspaper advertisement, should be supplied to the local planning authority with the ES.

### **What's the format of an environmental statement?**

Once the EIA has been carried out, the information should be systematically presented in the environmental statement. The Regulations specify in Schedule 4, the information to be included in the ES is as follows:

#### **Description of the development, including in particular:**

- description of the physical characteristics of the whole development and the land-use requirements during the construction and operational phases;
- a description of the main characteristics of the production processes, for instance, nature and quantity of the materials used;
- an estimate, by type and quantity, of expected residues and emissions (water, air and soil pollution, noise, vibration, light, heat, radiation, etc) resulting from the operation of the proposed development.

A description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the proposed development, including in particular, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, including the architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the inter-relationship between the above factors.

A description of the likely significant effects of the proposed development on the environment should

cover the direct effects and any indirect, secondary, cumulative, short, medium and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects of the development, resulting from:

- the existence of the development;
- the use of the natural resources;
- the emission of pollutants, the creation of nuisances and the elimination of waste and the description by the applicant of the forecasting methods used to assess the effects on the environment.

A description of the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and where possible, offset any significant adverse effects on the environment. A non-technical summary, of the information provided above.

An indication of any difficulties (technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered by the applicant in compiling the required information. There is no statutory or prescribed format for the arrangement of this information. This will depend upon the scale of the development project, and the complexity of the Issues that have been investigated. The ES can be a lengthy document with separate technical annexes.

## An Environmental Statement (ES) is often packaged in three parts

### **Part I: The planning application**

- Planning application form
- Certificate
- Schedule of plans and drawings

### **Part II: The environmental statement**

#### **Non-technical summary:**

This is the summary of the contents and conclusions of the EIA. It is the part of the ES which may be published separately for circulation on a non-statutory basis to local residents or interested parties. Beware of the often generalised nature of non-technical summaries. If you really want to get to grips with an application, you need the full ES.

#### **Environmental statement:**

This sets out the information about the development in more detail than the non-technical summary. The ES draws together the threads which have been explored through the technical reports. These issues can be summarised under various headings, depending upon the nature of the development proposed, and having regard to the various items identified in the Regulations (see Schedule 4). It is necessary to define the 'baseline' that has been adopted in order to demonstrate the effects, if any, of the development upon each key issue that has been identified by the scoping exercise. Also, where an issue has not been investigated in detail, this should be clearly explained in order to avoid any third party questioning the adequacy of the EIA.

The mitigation measures should be described either in relation to each item or collated in a separate section of the ES, which may also constitute the suggested environmental management and

monitoring scheme to be followed during and after the development has been completed and is operational.

The ES should set out an outline of the main alternatives studied by the applicant and an indication of the main reasons for his/her choice, taking into account the environmental effects.

**Main alternatives may include:**

- physical location of sites;
- type of processes (where relevant);
- physical appearance, design of buildings and site layout, including materials to be used;
- means of access, including principal mode of transport to be used to gain access to the development.

This component of an ES is often dealt with in a very summary way. It should not be ignored as it could give rise to third-party objections about the adequacy of the ES.

**Part III: Technical reports**

The individual technical reports prepared for the various effects on the environment, together with the data supporting the conclusions, should be included in Part III. This enables the local planning authority to verify the contents of the ES by reference to the source material, and also be satisfied that the EIA has been sufficiently rigorous and in accordance with the methodology agreed as part of the scoping exercise.

**When is an Environmental Statement not an Environmental Statement?**

The format and contents of an ES can often be inadequate either in terms of the quality of the assessment or because key parts of the assessment are missing. Frequent defects include: the failure to produce a non-technical summary, the failure to adequately consider human health and the failure to include proper consideration of alternatives. The discussion above has outlined some of the issues which the regulations require EIA to consider. It is also worthwhile making reference to the EU Directive 2011/92/EU which sometimes contains more useful indications of the scope of EIA.

The legal principle of direct effect, in which EU directives can have a direct effect in UK law, regardless of whether they have been transposed by UK regulations, means that local communities can mount challenges based on original directives.

**Are the public entitled to see the ES and how much should it cost?**

The public are entitled to see both the non-technical summary and the full ES. The local planning authority is obliged to provide this information. The problem is that they are also entitled to make charges to copy material, which for a full ES might run into hundreds of pounds.

The EIA regulations require that the developer must make available copies of the ES at a reasonable cost. This cost is nowhere defined but the average price for ES is between £60.00 and £120.00. This cost is a major barrier to public participation in the process. It is worth remembering that Parish Councils and elected members can often get free copies of ES.

In the past some local groups have also obtained copies free through appealing to MPs or MEPs.

Members of the public can rely on their rights under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 to obtain copies of the document at no more than the cost of photocopying. One way of saving costs is to ask for a copy of the EIA on a CD-Rom or via a download link. N.B. Where the council has a copy in CD Rom format, then this should cost no more than £1.00 - £2.00 to obtain.

### **What about assessing the quality of EIA?**

Information in planning cannot be seen as always providing a clear technical and objective statement of environmental circumstances. In practice, the ES is often a sales document for the applicant and there have been increasing calls for an independent commission of EIAs to take them out of the hands of those with a vested interest in seeing schemes approved. This realisation is vitally important for the evaluation of EIA since it requires planners and the public to apply a critical assessment of both baseline data and measures designed to secure mitigation. Note that the 2017 Regulations introduced a new requirement that the ES must be “prepared by competent experts” (Reg 18(5)(a)).

Beyond this critical mindset, a number of formalised mechanisms have been developed with which to assess the quality of EIA. The most often used system is known as the Lee Colley review package. This system attempts to divide an ES into its constituent areas and review categories and sub categories in line with an A to F scale. The review process is usually conducted by consultants with experience in each field but in fact any local community group could apply a technique, particularly where they have local knowledge not possessed by the developer.

The major problem with the system is that it's essentially subjective and certainly time consuming. It is therefore unlikely that a decision to reject the contents of ES could be justified solely on such an assessment. In practice the evaluation of ES is based on professional experience and on good knowledge of the application area and its environmental context.

### **EIA and permission in principle**

A series of sweeping legislative changes have come into effect in the last few years linked to the planning system. In 2016 the Housing and Planning Act introduced the concept of ‘permission in principle’, where land put on a ‘register’ is by virtue of being on the register, considered to have consent. There will be a ‘technical consultation’ on the details e.g. type and amount of development, but not on whether there should be a development or not.

It is likely that EIA screening would still be needed for most development proposals put forward on such sites, depending on whether EIA thresholds are likely to be exceeded or based on their proximity to sensitive sites. The threshold for screening in relation to housing developments in the 2017 EIA regulations is for sites proposing more than 150 dwellings or a site area greater than 5ha.

Screening for such proposals is likely to occur during the technical details consent stage (where it is likely statutory consultees are consulted the proposed development is acceptable in flood risk, heritage, ecology terms).

### **Conclusion**

The legal and procedural background to EIA is complex but members of the public can be surprisingly effective in participating in the process if they ignore the jargon, have a basic understanding of the process and apply their local knowledge effectively.

Things to look out for are phrases such as “desk top survey” which is short hand for nobody had time to look at the site. The quality of ES can be surprisingly poor, with developers often keen to do the least possible to get the application through, so it is vital local people go on asking critical questions of

the applicant and local authority planners.

EIA can be made into a useful tool to defend the environmental quality of localities but only if local people feel able to engage with the process effectively.

## Further information and guidance:

Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Website: [www.foe.co.uk](http://www.foe.co.uk)

**Planning:** Email: [planning@foe.co.uk](mailto:planning@foe.co.uk)

### **Rights & Justice Centre**

The Friends of the Earth Rights & Justice Centre provides legal advice and representation to people who want to use the law to protect their communities and the environment. We take on a small number of environmental “public interest” cases on behalf of these groups. We try in particular to work with community groups who suffer the brunt of bad environmental decisions and who cannot otherwise get legal advice. We also try to take ‘test cases’ that will help other communities in the future.

If you hear of an individual or community group (it doesn’t have to be a Friends of the Earth local group) who needs legal advice, you can put them in touch with the legal team at [legal@foe.co.uk](mailto:legal@foe.co.uk).

## Useful web sites

### **Government**

Department for Communities and Local Government

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government>

The Planning Inspectorate

[www.planning-inspectorate.gov.uk/](http://www.planning-inspectorate.gov.uk/)

Environment Agency

[www.environment-agency.gov.uk/](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/)

Information Commissioners Office

<https://ico.org.uk/>

Neighbourhood Statistics

[www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk)

Environment Agency Public Registers

<https://environment.data.gov.uk/public-register/view/index>

Planning Portal

[www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk)

Infrastructure Unit, Planning Inspectorate

[infrastructure.independent.gov.uk/](http://infrastructure.independent.gov.uk/)

### **Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs)**

Air Quality – UK National Air Quality site

[www.airquality.co.uk](http://www.airquality.co.uk)

Campaign to Protect Rural England planning site

[www.planninghelp.org.uk](http://www.planninghelp.org.uk)

Environmental Law Foundation  
[www.elflaw.org/](http://www.elflaw.org/)

Liberty  
[www.liberty-human-rights.org.uk/](http://www.liberty-human-rights.org.uk/)

Wildlife and Countryside Link.  
[www.wcl.org.uk](http://www.wcl.org.uk)

## Specific reading

Community Rights Resource Pack:  
[www.foe.co.uk/campaigns/fair\\_future/rights\\_resource\\_pack\\_13669.html](http://www.foe.co.uk/campaigns/fair_future/rights_resource_pack_13669.html)

The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2017/571/contents/made>

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/5/contents>

Government guidance on environmental impact assessment  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/environmental-impact-assessment>

Planning practice guidance screening checklist  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-impact-assessment-screening-checklist>

## European Commission

Commission's web pages on Environmental Impact Assessment  
<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eia/eia-legalcontext.htm>