

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

Abricon has a long history of carrying out EIAs in the UK, FSU and elsewhere to accepted international standards and norms.

Environmental Impact Assessment can be defined 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.

Abricon Objectives for an EIA:

- To ensure that environmental considerations are explicitly addressed and incorporated into the development decision making process;
- To anticipate and avoid, minimize or offset the adverse significant biophysical, social and other relevant effects of development proposals;
- To protect the productivity and capacity of natural systems and the ecological processes which maintain their functions; and
- To promote development that is sustainable and optimizes resource use and management opportunities.

Operating Principles of the Abricon approach

The EIA process should be applied:

- As early as possible in decision making and throughout the life cycle of the proposed activity;
- To all development proposals that may cause potentially significant effects;
- To biophysical impacts and relevant socio-economic factors, including health, culture, gender, lifestyle, age, and cumulative effects consistent with the concept and principles of sustainable development;
- To provide for the involvement and input of communities and industries affected by a proposal, as well as the interested public;
- In accordance with internationally agreed measures and activities.

Specifically the EIA process as provided by Abricon provides for:

Screening - to determine whether or not a proposal should be subject to EIA and, if so, at what level of detail.

Scoping - to identify the issues and impacts that are likely to be important and to establish terms of reference for EIA.

Examination of alternatives - to establish the preferred or most environmentally sound and benign option for achieving proposal objectives.

Impact analysis - to identify and predict the likely environmental, social and other related effects of the proposal.

Mitigation and impact management - to establish the measures that are necessary to avoid, minimize or offset predicted adverse impacts and, where appropriate, to incorporate these into an environmental management plan or system.

Evaluation of significance - to determine the relative importance and acceptability of residual impacts (i.e., impacts that cannot be mitigated).

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Preparation of environmental impact statement (EIS) or report - to document clearly and impartially impacts of the proposal, the proposed measures for mitigation, the significance of effects, and the concerns of the interested public and the communities affected by the proposal.

Review of the EIS - to determine whether the report meets its terms of reference, provides a satisfactory assessment of the proposal(s) and contains the information required for decision making.

Decision making - to approve or reject the proposal and to establish the terms and conditions for its implementation.

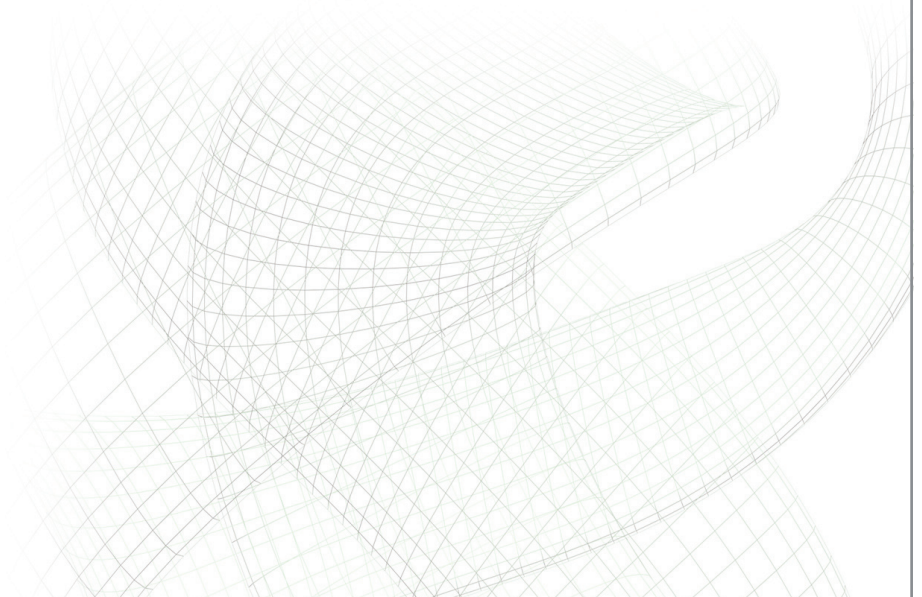
Follow up - to ensure that the terms and condition of approval are met; to monitor the impacts of development and the effectiveness of mitigation measures; to strengthen future EIA applications and mitigation measures; and, where required, to undertake environmental audit and process evaluation to optimize environmental management.

The steps of scoping and screening can be carried out in the wider context of a regulatory review, if appropriate, and during the process of data-gathering the needs of other regulatory requirements will be considered.

Current Environmental Baseline

The next step in the EIA methodology is to establish the current health and well-being (or otherwise) of the environment that might be affected by the proposed development. This involves using existing data, or, where necessary, carrying out practical studies of defined facets of the said environment. This will include characterisation of the:

- Climatic Conditions
- Landscape
- Ecology and Biotic Resources
- Air Quality
- Noise and Nuisance
- Ground Conditions
- Geomorphology and Geology
- Surface and Groundwater Quality
- Socio-Economic and Cultural Issues
- Land Use Patterns
- Archaeology.



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Plant Operation

As a final step the effects of the plant operation on the environment have to be established, focusing on the following points;

- Air Emissions (in general)
- Greenhouse Gases (in particular)
- Wastewater and its management
- Water Usage
- Solid Waste Management
- Noise, Dust, Odour and General Nuisance
- Contaminated Land/Groundwater
- Traffic, Transportation and Access
- Aesthetic Impact.

The work will include the identification of any key uncertainties and data gaps, and comment where, in our opinion, conservative measures are needed in subsequent mitigation actions taken because of such uncertainties. Alternatively, if the gaps can be closed and uncertainties resolved by further studies, we will put forward proposals to carry out such studies.

