



# ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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# Environmental Impact Assessment, EIA

- An EIA is a report prepared BEFORE a development project or large change in the way an area of land is used.
- The purpose of an EIA is to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of the proposed development before the project proceeds.

# EIA

- “EIA may be defined as a formal process used to predict the environmental consequences of any development project. EIA thus ensures that the potential problems are foreseen and addressed at an early stage in the projects planning and design.”
  - Manu and Anshu, UEMRI-India

# Development projects

- Road construction
- A hydroelectric power plant
- A dam on a river
- An airport
- An extension of a city for housing
- A mine

# An EIA will examine:

- The original environment
- Possible impacts on human life and the environment
- Ways to reduce negative impacts
- Economic benefits and other benefits of the project

# Baseline study

- A baseline study consists of measurements before any development takes place.
- What is the environment like now?
- The baseline study is used to try to forecast what changes may be caused by the development.

# Baseline Study

- The baseline study will include measurements of:
  - Microclimate
  - Biodiversity: Biotic components
  - Scenery
  - Abiotic components
  - Human populations in the area

# Scoping

- Identify the key issues and concerns of the interested parties
- Who is concerned?
- What are the concerns?
- What is the level of concern where the development becomes unacceptable?



# Purpose of an EIA

- To aid in planning of development
- To understand the environmental impact that may occur from a project before it is put into place (scoping)
- To help determine ways to minimize the damage done to the environment

# Impact Assessment

- “EIA is ... a planning tool that is now generally regarded as an integral component of sound decision making.. As a planning tool it has both an information gathering and decision making component which provides the decision maker with an objective basis for granting or denying approval for a proposed development.”
  - Justice La Forest, Friends of the Oldman v. Canada et al. (1991)

# Summary of the purposes of the EIA:

- Support the goals of environmental protection and sustainable development
- Integrate environmental protection and economic decisions at the earliest stages of planning
- To predict environmental, social, economic and cultural consequences
- To mitigate any adverse impacts
- To provide involvement of the public and government agencies

# EIA parts review

- Baseline study
- Scoping (identifying impacts)
- Predicting the scale of the potential impacts
- Mitigation of the impacts (Finding ways to lower the impacts)
- A non-technical summary so that the general public can understand the issues.

# Bibliography

- Environmental Impact Assessment UNEP
- IB ESS Course Companion pages 299-300