
Topic 9

Review of EIA quality

Reviewing in the EIA process

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graph TD; A[Proposal Identification] --> B[Screening]; B --> C[EIA Required]; B --> D[Initial environmental examination]; B --> E[No EIA]; D --> C; D --> E; C --> F[Scoping]; F --> G[Impact analysis]; G --> H[Mitigation and impact management]; H --> I[EIA Report]; I --> J[Review]; J --> K[Decision-making]; K --> L[Approved]; K --> M[Not approved]; L --> N[Implementation and follow up]; M --> O[Resubmit]; O --> P[Redesign]; P --> F; J --> Q[*Public involvement]; Q --> R[*Public involvement]; R --> J; S[Information from this process contributes to effective future EIA] --> T[Implementation and follow up]; T --> S;
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The flowchart illustrates the EIA process, starting with **Proposal Identification**, followed by **Screening**. From **Screening**, the process branches into **EIA Required**, **Initial environmental examination**, and **No EIA**. **Initial environmental examination** leads to either **EIA Required** or **No EIA**. **EIA Required** leads to **Scoping**, which leads to **Impact analysis**, then **Mitigation and impact management**, then **EIA Report**, and finally **Review**. **Review** leads to **Decision-making**, which branches into **Approved** and **Not approved**. **Approved** leads to **Implementation and follow up**. **Not approved** leads to **Resubmit**, which leads to **Redesign**, which then feeds back into **Scoping**. **Public involvement** is indicated by two boxes labeled ***Public involvement** connected to the **Review** and **Decision-making** stages. A note states: ***Public involvement occurs at these points and also occur at any other stage of the EIA Process.** A feedback loop from **Implementation and follow up** leads to a box stating: **Information from this process contributes to effective future EIA**.

Purpose and objectives of review

The purpose of the review process is to establish if the information in an EIA report is sufficient for decision-making.

Key objectives are to:

- review the quality of the EIA report
- take account of public comment
- determine if the information is sufficient
- identify any deficiencies to be corrected.

EIA review – aspects for consideration:

- compliance with terms of reference
- information is correct and technically sound
- account taken of public comments
- complete and satisfactory statement of key findings
- information is clear and understandable
- information is sufficient for decision-making

EIA review – types of procedure

- Internal review:

- low operating costs
- can lack rigour and transparency
- often no documentation of results.

- External review:

- independent, expert check on EIA quality
- more rigorous and transparent
- report on sufficiency or deficiency

EIA review procedures

- environmental agency
- independent panel (or moderator)
- standing commission
- inter-agency committee
- planning authority

EIA review – steps to good practice

- set the scale of the review
- select reviewer(s)
- use public input
- identify review criteria
- carry out the review
- determine remedial options
- publish the review report

EIA review criteria

The following can be used (in order of priority):

- Terms of Reference
- EIA reports of comparable proposals
- other guidance including:
 - EIA requirements, guidelines and criteria
 - principles of EIA good practice
 - knowledge of the project and typical impacts

Carrying out the EIA review

A four-step approach can be followed:

- Step 1: identify the deficiencies
- Step 2: focus on critical shortcomings
- Step 3: recommend remedial measures
- Step 4: advise on implications for decision-making

(the last step does not apply in all systems)

EIA review methods

- general checklists
- project specific checklists
- review packages
- expert and accredited reviewers
- public hearings
- effectiveness review frameworks

A rating scale for EIA review

Rating	Explanation
A	generally well performed, no important tasks left incomplete
B	generally satisfactory and complete, only minor omissions and inadequacies
C	just satisfactory despite omissions and/or inadequacies
D	parts well attempted but must, on the whole be considered just unsatisfactory because of omissions and/or inadequacies
E	unsatisfactory, significant omissions or inadequacies
F	very unsatisfactory, important task(s) poorly done or not attempted
N/A	not applicable, the review topic is not applicable in the context of the project