

Environmental Impact Assessment

What is an EIA?

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is a comprehensive document that describes the current environmental conditions of the project site, provides details of the proposed project, assesses the potential environmental impacts associated with the project, and recommends mitigation measures and monitoring programs. The EIA is one of the highest levels of environmental assessment required by the Environment Agency—Abu Dhabi (EAD).

When is it required?

Upon review of an environmental permit application, EAD may require the preparation and submission of an EIA for industrial and development projects. An EIA may also be necessary following completion and approval of a Strategic Environmental Assessment or Preliminary Environmental Review. As a general guideline, an EIA is usually required for medium- to large-scale industrial or development projects, for sites where no previous studies are available (or available studies are out of date), or for projects where there is the potential for moderate to severe environmental impacts.

Why is it required?

Federal Law No. 24 of 1999 for the Protection and Development of the Environment requires that the operation of various establishments does not directly or indirectly cause pollution of the land, water, or air. As the competent authority for implementation of Federal Law No. 24 within the Abu Dhabi Emirate, EAD may require an EIA as a mechanism for predicting and evaluating potential environmental impacts resulting from industrial and development projects and for proposing suitable mitigation measures and monitoring controls.

Who prepares it?

The EIA should be prepared by an EAD-approved consultant engaged by the project proponent. The consultant must include in the report all of the details and requirements stipulated by EAD. The EIA should include a project description, a description of the current environmental conditions, potential (and cumulative) environmental impacts associated with all project phases and for each environmental component, selected mitigation measures, residual impacts, and details of the proposed monitoring program.

A Terms of Reference document, outlining the data collection and assessment needs of the EIA, must be submitted for approval by EAD prior to conducting the EIA (refer to the *Technical Guidance Document for Terms of Reference* for further information).

What happens next?

Upon submission of the EIA, EAD will review the document to verify that the report meets the stipulated requirements. EAD will provide a written response to the proponent, which may range from formal approval of the EIA to rejection of the EIA with a request for resubmission. Typically, EAD will include comments that may request additional information or clarifications. The proponent must provide EAD with any requested information or, at a minimum, a written response to the comments.

Upon receiving written EAD approval of the EIA, it is likely that a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) may be requested. The environmental consultant should commence preparation of the CEMP in order to obtain the environmental permit required for construction.

Further information?

For further information, refer to the *Technical Guidance Document for Environmental Impact Assessment Report*, visit the EAD Web site, or contact EAD Customer Service.