

Terms of Reference

What is a TOR?

The Terms of Reference (TOR) document is used to determine the data collection and assessment needs of either an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for a development or project, or a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for a policy, plan, or program (PPP). The TOR report characterises existing baseline data, identifies data needs, and details methods for data collection. The report also includes a discussion of probable environmental impacts associated with the project and potential mitigation approaches.

When is it required?

Upon review of an environmental permit application, the Environment Agency—Abu Dhabi (EAD) will require preparation and submission of a TOR when either an EIA or SEA is required. The TOR must be completed, reviewed, and approved prior to conducting an EIA or SEA. This is to ensure that the specific approach proposed for the preparation of the EIA or SEA, including data collection and monitoring, is deemed appropriate by EAD.

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 environments. As the competent authority for implementation of Federal Law No. 24 within the Abu Dhabi Emirate, EAD may require a TOR 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 TOR should be prepared by an EAD-approved consultant engaged by the project proponent. For development and infrastructure projects, a Class A consultant must prepare a TOR. For an industrial project, a Class A or Class B consultant may prepare a TOR. The consultant must include in the report all of the details and requirements stipulated by EAD. As a minimum, the TOR should include results of the gap analysis to identify missing baseline data for each environmental component and a description of additional surveys that will be conducted.

What happens next?

Upon submission of the TOR, 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 TOR to rejection of the TOR 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 TOR, the site proponent may commence preparation of the EIA or SEA for the project.

Further information?

For further information, refer to the *Technical Guidance Document for Terms of Reference*, visit the EAD Web site, or contact EAD Customer Service.