

# Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

## EIA OVERVIEW

The term 'Environmental Impact Assessment' (EIA) describes a procedure that must be followed for certain types of projects before they can be given planning permission. The procedure is a means of drawing together, in a systematic way, an assessment of a project's likely significant environmental effects. This helps to ensure that the importance of the predicted effects, and the scope for reducing them, are properly understood by the public and the relevant competent authority before it makes its decision.

EIA enables environmental factors to be given due weight, along with economic or social factors, when planning applications are being considered. It helps to promote a sustainable pattern of physical development and land use in cities, towns and the countryside. If properly carried out, it benefits all those involved in the planning process.

From a developer's point of view, the preparation of an environmental statement in parallel with project design provides a useful framework within which environmental considerations and design development can interact. Environmental analysis may indicate ways in which the project can be modified to avoid possible adverse effects. For the planning authority and other public bodies with environmental responsibilities, EIA provides a basis for better decision making. More thorough analysis of the implications of a new project before a planning application is made, and the provision of more comprehensive information with the application, should enable authorities to make swifter decisions.

