

EIA Process Guide for Thailand

EIA stands for The Environmental Impact Assessment, which is a process that has been applied in Thailand as a tool for environmental planning and management on development projects since 1981. The EIA has been used to recognize the effects of the projects as well as to establish the appropriate mitigation measures so that Thailand's natural resources will be used efficiently to the economic benefit and continued development of Thailand.

The EIA is fundamentally an evaluation of the significance of both potentially positive and negative effects of a development project. These potential environmental impacts are measured, and precautionary steps are taken accordingly.

The EIA is often referred to as an “analysis of the potential impacts, both positive and negative, of different types of projects or activities on the environment, conditions or circumstances that may affect those projects or activities, and in light thereof – measures for prevention, control and refinement before commencement of the projects or activities.” The topics that are covered in the EIA include; waste-water treatment, energy efficiency, solid waste management, traffic, air quality, soil and groundwater pollution, noise pollution, nature conservation, landscape, public health, visual aspects and social economic factors. This usually involves the collection and organization of information to establish a starting point against which the potential impacts can be measured.

The EIA environmental consultant will evaluate a building project with regard to the above criteria and draft a report which clearly identifies the direct and indirect, short and long term, environmental impacts related to the project that is under assessment.

The EIA report will then make recommendations on how any identified opposing effects of the project can be prevented, reduced or managed. For projects with a significant negative environmental impact, it is required by the environmental consultant to consider alternative ways of delivering the project, more often than not these include design modifications to lessen the negative impacts, but in extreme cases can also include a recommendation to abandon the project and locate it elsewhere.

The EIA report will also include a monitoring plan which details the measures that will be taken to validate the efficiency of the environmental control and management commitments that are made in the EIA report for both the construction and operational

phases of the project. For example, this could include a list of water quality parameters that will be measured in the emission of the project's waste water treatment, including the method and frequency of the monitoring and associated reporting.

The process for an EIA assessment is as follows below (for projects with no perceived major environmental impacts):

1. Hire a Consultant: Before beginning a project one must hire a consultant registered with the Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning ("ONEP"). The Consultant will prepare and the EIA report assessment of the project which will be reviewed by an appointed committee. The Consultant hired should be licensed by the EIA.
2. EIA Project Submission: The project is submitted to ONEP and the Permitting Agency for review.
3. Initial Review:
 - a. ONEP does and initial examination for 15 days. If the report is incorrect it is returned to applicant for correction.
 - b. ONEP makes Preliminary Comments. This is a 45 day process.
 - c. Expert Review Committee reviews submission. If approved it is sent to the Permitting License Agency.
 - d. Disapproval: Any objections by Review Committee are addressed and the report is resubmitted. This is a 30 day process.
 - e. Approval: Sent to the Permitting License Agency.
 - f. Disapproval: A second disapproval ends the process for this report. A new report must be written and resubmitted starting the process again.
4. Government Agency State Enterprise Review – A feasibility study is sent to the Government Agency State Enterprise for review.
 - a. Expert Review Committee Reviews study
 - b. ONEP Summarizes ERC Comments
 - c. National Environment Board reviews the study.
 - d. Comments are submitted
 - e. Cabinet Reviews the Study
 - f. Approval/Disapproval Decision is rendered.

Report Preparation Criteria

An EIA report should contain the following information:

5. Summary of project Details
 - a. Type and Size of Project
 - b. Project location with photos and a map.
 - c. Alternative location with justification for choosing the desired location.

- d. Report any significant environmental impacts with proposed mitigation measures based on ONEP guidelines.

6. Main report Details

- a. Introduction: Describe the purpose of the project and reasons for the project locations.
- b. Project Location: More detailed map study and photo collection demonstrating the areas that might be affected.
- c. Project Description: A detailed description of the project and landscaping.
- d. Existing Condition: Provide photos of how the environment and landscape will be changed.
- e. Assessment of Alternative locations for the project.
- f. Environmental impact reduction and preventive measures: The preventive and mitigation measures shall be described in detail. Compensation measures shall be proposed.
- g. Environmental Impact Inspection and Review: Plans and measures for all environmental impact shall be proposed from a technical and practicality standpoint.
- h. Coordination with other Government Agencies. Any cooperation with government agencies and documentation pertaining to this should be included in the report.
- i. Monitoring Plan: The report should describe the monitoring program and all measures presented to prevent pollution in the report.
- j. Final Summary: The report should summarize the damage to environment and the benefit cause by implementation of the project.