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An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is the process by which information about the environmental effects of a project is collected, assessed and taken into account by the Department in reaching a decision about whether a proposed development should be approved. As such its purpose is to improve the quality of decision making by identifying potential environmental issues early in the project process.

An EIA development is defined as either:

- "Schedule 1 development", for which an Environment Statement is required in every case. For example crude oil refineries; aerodromes with a runway length of 2,100 metres or more; waste disposal installations for the incineration, chemical treatment, or landfill of hazardous waste; gas pipelines of more than 800mm in diameter and 40 kilometres in length; intensive livestock installations with places for 900 sows, 3,000 pigs, 85,000 broilers or 60,000 hens; or
- "Schedule 2 development" for which EIA is required only if the project is likely to give rise to significant environmental effects. These are developments which include intensive fish farms; large pig and poultry units (unless in Schedule 1); mineral extraction; energy producing installations such as wind farms and hydroelectric installations; metal processing; chemical, food, textile, rubber and paper industries; infrastructure projects; tourist development and waste disposal. Projects of a type listed in Schedule 2 which are not in a sensitive area and are below the threshold in Column 2 of that Schedule do not require EIA.

However, where any part of the proposed development is in a sensitive area, or any threshold in Column 2 of that Schedule is exceeded or met, EIA may be required. The Department will make a determination, on the need or not for EIA - this process is referred to as "screening". It will also advise on the content of the ES, on request - referred to as "scoping".

Sensitive Area

Sensitive areas are defined as Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSIs), Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), National Parks, World Heritage Sites and European Sites (Special Protection Areas classified under the Wild Birds Directive and Special Areas of Conservation under the Habitats Directive).

Environment Statement

An Environment Statement is a publicly available document. It sets out the developer's own assessment of the likely environmental effects of his proposed development. It is prepared by the developer and submitted with his planning application. While the responsibility for preparing the environmental statement lies with the developer, he is expected to consult with those public authorities with relevant information. Those bodies are required to make available to the developer such environmental information as may be relevant.

All Environment Statements must include a description of the project, the main effects it is likely to have on the environment, a description of the measures envisaged to avoid, reduce or remedy **significant** adverse environmental effects, an outline of the main alternatives studied by the developer and a summary, in non-technical language.

How is “significance” determined?

There are 3 main considerations to be taken into account:

- The characteristics of the development, including its size, cumulation with other developments, use of natural resources, production of waste, pollution and nuisance and the risk of accidents having regard to the substances and technologies used;
- The location of the development e.g. the existing land use, the abundance of natural resources in the area and whether it is intended for a sensitive location; and
- The characteristics of the potential impact, its duration and its frequency.

Where an EIA is not required, environmental effects will be among the considerations taken into account by the Planning Department in deciding whether or not to grant planning permission.

Who decides if an EIA is necessary?

A developer may decide that his project falls within Schedule 1 or that it meets or exceeds the thresholds in Schedule 2 or is in or partly in a sensitive area, and submit an Environment Statement with his planning application. He may also apply to the Planning Department asking them to determine if EIA is required (the “opinion”). He should ask the Department as soon as he can provide a basic minimum information on the proposal.

More often, it will probably fall to the Department to determine if the application is an EIA application. It should be noted that if an application is an EIA application it cannot be processed until the Environment Statement is received.

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Notes:

Soil, Subgrade 3a - good quality agricultural land Land capable of consistently producing moderate to high yields of a narrow range of arable crops, especially cereals, or moderate yields of a wide range of crops including cereals, grass, oilseed rape, potatoes, sugar beet and the less demanding horticultural crops.

Elevations

NE Top field	98m	Height of solar panels 3.0m ABL
NE Middle field	92m	
NE Bottom field	64m	
SW Top field	96m	
SW Bottom field	76m	