

OP 4.01, Annex B - Content of an Environmental Assessment Report for a Category A Project

These policies were prepared for use by World Bank staff and are not necessarily a complete treatment of the subject.

OP 4.01 - Annex B
January, 1999

1. An environmental assessment (EA) report for a Category A project¹ focuses on the significant environmental issues of a project. The report's scope and level of detail should be commensurate with the project's potential impacts. The report submitted to the Bank is prepared in English, French, or Spanish, and the executive summary in English.

2. The EA report should include the following items (not necessarily in the order shown):

(a) *Executive summary.* Concisely discusses significant findings and recommended actions.

(b) *Policy, legal, and administrative framework.* Discusses the policy, legal, and administrative framework within which the EA is carried out. Explains the environmental requirements of any cofinanciers. Identifies relevant international environmental agreements to which the country is a party.

(c) *Project description.* Concisely describes the proposed project and its geographic, ecological, social, and temporal context, including any offsite investments that may be required (e.g., dedicated pipelines, access roads, power plants, water supply, housing, and raw material and product storage facilities). Indicates the need for any resettlement plan or indigenous peoples development plan² (see also subpara. (h)(v) below). Normally includes a map showing the project site and the project's area of influence.

(d) *Baseline data.* Assesses the dimensions of the study area and describes relevant physical, biological, and socioeconomic conditions, including any changes anticipated before the project commences. Also takes into account current and proposed development activities within the project area but not directly connected to the project. Data should be relevant to decisions about project location, design, operation, or mitigatory measures. The section indicates the accuracy, reliability, and sources of the data.

(e) *Environmental impacts.* Predicts and assesses the project's likely positive and negative impacts, in quantitative terms to the extent possible. Identifies mitigation measures and any residual negative impacts that cannot be mitigated. Explores opportunities for environmental enhancement. Identifies and estimates the extent and quality of available data, key data gaps, and uncertainties associated with predictions, and specifies topics that do not require further attention.

(f) *Analysis of alternatives.*³ Systematically compares feasible alternatives to the proposed project site, technology, design, and operation--including the "without project" situation--in terms of their potential environmental impacts; the feasibility of mitigating these impacts; their capital and recurrent costs; their suitability under local conditions; and their institutional, training, and monitoring requirements. For each of the alternatives, quantifies the environmental impacts to the extent possible, and attaches economic values where feasible. States the basis for selecting the particular project design proposed and justifies recommended emission levels and approaches to pollution prevention and abatement.

(g) *Environmental management plan (EMP).* Covers mitigation measures, monitoring, and institutional strengthening; see outline in [OP 4.01, Annex C](#).

(h) *Appendixes*

(i) List of EA report preparers--individuals and organizations.

(ii) References--written materials both published and unpublished, used in study preparation.

(iii) Record of interagency and consultation meetings, including consultations for obtaining the informed views of the affected people and local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). The record specifies any means other than consultations (e.g., surveys) that were used to obtain the views of

affected groups and local NGOs.

(iv) Tables presenting the relevant data referred to or summarized in the main text.

(v) List of associated reports (e.g., resettlement plan or indigenous peoples development plan).

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1. The EA report for a Category A project is normally an environmental impact assessment, with elements of other instruments included as appropriate. Any report for a Category A operation uses the components described in this annex, but Category A sectoral and regional EA require a different perspective and emphasis among the components. The Environment Sector Board can provide detailed guidance on the focus and components of the various EA instruments.
 2. See [OP/BP 4.12, *Involuntary Resettlement*](#), and [OP/BP 4.10, *Indigenous Peoples*](#).
 3. Environmental implications of broad development options for a sector (e.g., alternative ways of meeting projected electric power demand) are best analyzed in least-cost planning or sectoral EA. Environmental implications of broad development options for a region (e.g., alternative strategies for improving standards of living in a rural area) are best addressed through a regional development plan or a regional EA. EIA is normally best suited to the analysis of alternatives within a given project concept (e.g., a geothermal power plant, or a project aimed at meeting local energy demand), including detailed site, technology, design, and operational alternatives.
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