

Environmental Impact Assessment

Overview of Research Paper

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Presentation Outline

1. *Background - EIA Research project*
 - Purpose
 - Method
2. *EIA Research Paper*
 - Overview of 5 parts
3. *Focus on Part 5: Auditing EIA*
 - Issues in implementing EIA
 - Challenges in auditing EIA



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EIA Research Project - Purpose

- *Environmental impact assessment is a critical tool used to identify the environmental, social and economic impacts of a project prior to decision making.*
- *Over 100 countries have legislated policies, guidelines and programs and it is a key tool embraced by multilateral aid agencies such as the World Bank.*
- *EIA presents both opportunities and challenges for auditors*
- *Shared knowledge is key*

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EIA Research Project

- *Project was identified through the WGEA's 7th survey on environmental auditing;*
- *Project is linked to Goal 1 of WGEA 2014-2016 work plan*
 - *Update existing and develop new guidance materials available to SAIs, conduct research studies on emerging topics in environmental auditing*
- *Project was led by Canada with participation from Brazil and India.*
- *Surveys were undertaken*

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EIA Research Paper - Overview

1. *Introduction*
2. *Importance of EIA*
3. *Components of EIA*
4. *Implementation of EIA*
5. *Auditing EIA*
 - *Past audits*
 - *Challenges*
 - *Criteria*
6. *Appendices*

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Part 1 - Introduction

- 1.1 *History of EIA*
- 1.2 *Types of Environmental Assessment*
 - *Strategic Environmental Assessment*
 - *Regional Environmental Assessment*
 - *Environmental Impact Assessment*

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Part 2: Importance of EIA

EIA is important :

- ✓ *To facilitate deliberate scrutiny of the environment in planning and decision making;*
- ✓ *to allow for public to participate;*
- ✓ *to promote the best project, with minimal negative impacts, enhanced benefits, and;*
- ✓ *to promote environmentally sustainable decisions.*
 - *addressing issues affecting areas such as equity between generations, governance, socio-ecological integrity.*

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Part 3: Components of EIA

EIA involves a succession of stages, from project proposal to analysis, public input, review, and ultimate decision making that will determine the project's fate:

- *Describe the project*
- *Describe the environment*
- *Evaluate the potential effects and consider mitigation*
- *Determine the residual effects (after mitigation)*
- *Report review (including views from the public)*
- *Decision to proceed (or not) with project*
- *Ensure mitigation is implemented*
- *Follow-up to measure appropriateness of mitigation*

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Part 5: Auditing EIA

- A survey was conducted with SAIs to collect knowledge of challenges in implementing EIA in various countries;
 - Insufficient data and analysis;
 - Lack of monitoring and follow-up;
 - Proponents not complying with requirements
 - Limited or no public participation
 - Inadequate coordination between sectors or governments
 - Unclear responsibilities

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Part 5: Auditing EIA

- SAIs were also asked to complete a survey to gauge their experiences with auditing EIA
- Main observations and challenges from mini-survey:
 - Documentation availability
 - Relevant information
 - Lack of regulations and Ministerial guidelines
 - Developing audit criteria
 - Examining case studies given the diversity of development projects (size and industry)
 - Determining an appropriate sample
 - Auditors lacking expertise to undertake EIA audits

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Part 5: Auditing EIA

Audit criteria

- *Most authoritative criteria sources are*
 - *national legislation, policies, standards;*
 - *international agreements and conventions;*
 - *specific requirements of financial institutions.*
- *Criteria may stem also from other sources:*
 - *professional standards and guidance from acknowledged organizations;*
 - *best practices, sound principles, Performance indicators;*
 - *expert advice, subject matter literature*

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Conclusion

- *The research paper provides:*
 - *general aspects of EIA;*
 - *hints to best practice governance, resources, etc;*
 - *audit related work done in the field; and,*
 - *some options of audit criteria sources.*
- *Country Papers will emphasize and provide practical examples of the challenges and opportunities in audit and EIA*

Thank you!

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