

IEMA response to:
**Defra's Environmental
Impact Assessment (EIA)
Regulations: Post
Implementation Review-
Impact Evaluation
Survey**



April 2022

Foreword

Having left the auspices of the EU Directive in environmental impact assessment there is an opportunity to retain the best aspects of the existing policy and practice, as well as introducing changes to improve these instruments to secure better outcomes for the environment and society. IEMA (Institute of Environmental Management Assessment) is committed to aiding policy makers in making evidence-based policy using sound science and professional experience from competent experts. IEMA has been publishing good practice guidance on EIA since 1993 and continues to advocate for advances in the field of impact assessment to support the objective of living within environmental limits and supporting a just transition to a sustainable economy.

For the avoidance of doubt, whilst IEMA is an advocate for improved practice and reform of environmental assessment, we remain a strong supporter of EIA. Our experience over the past 35 years is that EIA remains a vital policy tool and offers the following key benefits:

- Enhances the environmental quality of developments;
- Avoids and minimises potential negative impacts on people and the environment;
- Engages those who might be affected as a consequence of a development; and
- Provides stakeholders and authorities with a full and clear understanding of the likely environmental effects, prior to making a consenting decision.

About IEMA

IEMA is the professional body for everyone working in environment and sustainability. It is the largest professional body for environmental practitioners in the UK and worldwide with over 18,000 members.

IEMA is an authoritative voice on Environmental Impact Assessment and for the past 30 years has been at the forefront of reform. We have remained an integral part of the consultation on change including previous modifications to EU Directive and to the regulations in the UK. Our Impact Assessment (IA) Network brings together skilled and experienced experts in IA and includes representation from developers, consultancies, statutory consultees, academia and others. We have active members in 40 countries, with the majority of our IA practitioners based in the UK and Ireland. The IEMA IA Network is comprised of several components:

- The Impact Assessment Steering Group
- The Global Environmental and Social Assessment Group
- The EIA Quality Mark
- The EIA Register
- Members and Working Groups
- The Impact Assessment Outlook Journal
- IEMA EIA Guidance

A summary of each of these aspects is provided in Annex A at the end of this submission and has been provided to Defra to show the depth and breadth of IEMA's competence and knowledge on EIA.

Executive Summary

In this response we have provided a bespoke submission to Defra's Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations: Post Implementation Review - Impact Evaluation Survey.

It should be noted that we have already reviewed and responded to EIA-related subject matter in the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) Consultation on 'Planning for the Future'¹, and the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee (HCLGC) inquiry: The future of the planning system in England². In addition, we have provided a report 'IEMA – Levelling up EIA to Build Back Better' to Defra and MHCLG in September 2020 setting out key recommendations for improvements to EIA.³ These submissions contain useful information on IEMA advice on EIA reforms and are available online via the hyperlinks provide in the footnotes.

IEMA has not attempted to answer specific questions on the implementation of the individual versions of the EIA regulations across the Forestry EIA Regulations; The Agriculture EIA Regulations; The Water Resources EIA Regulations; and The Marine Works EIA Regulations. However, we have responded to the generic questions that apply to all of these regimes, and have responded in line with Defra's stated objectives to review the regulations against the original objectives to:

- Help the Government to achieve its objective of living within environmental limits while achieving a sustainable economy.
- Allow the public to play a part in making decisions in environmental protection.

In line with these objectives IEMA would like to highlight to Defra the four recommendations in IEMA's 2017 'Proportionate EIA Strategy'⁴ on:

- **Enhancing People** - So that those involved in EIA have the skills, knowledge and confidence to avoid an overly precautionary approach.
- **Improving Scoping** - To generate a more consistently focussed-approach to this critical activity throughout the EIA process.
- **Sharing Responsibility** - Recognising that disproportionate EIA is driven by many factors and that enabling proportionate assessment will require collaborative actions that work towards a shared goal.
- **Embracing Innovation and Digital**- Modernising EIA to deliver effective and efficient assessment and reporting that adds value to projects and their interaction with the environment

Furthermore, IEMA provided Defra and HCLGC with six priorities for EIA reform in September 2020 in our report 'IEMA – Levelling up EIA to Build Back Better':

¹ See IEMA's formal response to the MHCLG consultation here (bit.ly/34Hfikt)

² See IEMA's written evidence to HCLGC here <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/23564/html/>

³ See IEMA's paper on Levelling Up EIA to Build Back Better (bit.ly/34Hfikt)

⁴ Proportionate EIA – A Collaborate Strategy For Enhancing UK Environmental Impact Assessment Practice, IEMA 2017 <https://www.iema.net/resources/reading-room/2017/07/18/delivering-proportionate-eia>

- **Governance on ‘scoping’ non-EIA development:** Provide new requirements and standards on how the need for reporting is scoped for projects which are not EIA development – i.e. the 99.8% of planning applications.⁵ As part of this, a consistent mechanism should be defined to ensure the requirements and mitigation of the project are implemented – this could be through mandating the use of an Environmental Management Plan (EMP).
- **Publish clear requirements and standards for EIA and SEA:** Convene a working group to define existing good practice which will deliver the key themes outlined in the August White Paper. This should include re-defining SEA and EIA as a design tool for plan making and design coding; a delivery mechanism for net environmental gain; and delivery of effective scoping. This would lead to an agreed set of enhanced and simplified requirements and standards and would give practitioners and decision makers the evidence to substantiate the approaches taken and decisions made.
- **Ensure EMPs are central to the EIA process and provide certainty on implementation:** EMPs to become a validation requirement of any EIA and singularly include all design and mitigation requirements – delivering quality design. An EMP is the single plan against which monitoring can be undertaken to ensure implementation/delivery post-consent compliance and evolve to provide the structure and control mechanisms of further plans (e.g. construction environmental management plans). There needs to be a re-focus on capturing data on the implementation and effectiveness of mitigation through monitoring and to use this data to inform future developments.
- **Appraise the role of a national IA unit:** Revisit previous consideration of a national IA unit to deliver a uniform approach in determining the requirement for EIA and SEA and to develop (or commission) a proportionate evidence base to support screening and scoping decisions. This would reduce uncertainty in the current PPG, provide early certainty to developers, reduce timescales and reduce the risk of successful legal challenge⁶. This could be explored as part of any evolving role of the Planning Inspectorate and would help to deliver a consistent and proportionate approach to screening and scoping.
- **Embrace innovation and digital IA:** Define the steps that will be implemented and when (acknowledging that some of them will be required to be up and running prior to implementation of reform). Priorities should include a national data hub (both for primary data, EIAs and SEAs), a permanent move to digital submissions and improved use of interactive mapping to provide clarity on whom or what is impacted. Any national data hub needs to deliver better accessibility and can also be used to share industry intelligence⁷.

⁵ Based on 432,200 planning applications in England in 2019 (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/875032/Planning_Application_Statistics_October_to_December_2019.pdf) compared to IEMA estimates of annual UK ES submissions ranging between 600 to 900 gives a conservative total of 0.2%.

⁶ Screening remains a key target for current legal challenge as emphasised by a recent flurry of cases in 2020.

⁷ A priority will be the documentation of commonly occurring impacts that we have a high confidence in being able to mitigate. This will further influence the proportionality agenda.

- **Competence in EIA and SEA:** Acknowledge IA as a specialist area of expertise, one that requires competent experts to lead assessments and prepare reports and recognises their role in underpinning the decision-making process. This may include a decision on shared technical capacity across determining authorities so that the value of skills development and training is realised (unless the benefits of a national unit resolve this need).

In addition to the public reports and consultations provided above, IEMA provided a private briefing to MHCLG and Defra in late 2020 on 'The Future of Environmental Assessment' which contained the following ten recommendations:

1. **Adopt a Tiered Assessment Regime**
2. **Embed the Mitigation Hierarchy**
3. **Promote Evidence-based Practice**
4. **Mandate the use of Competent Experts**
5. **Support an Integrated Assessment of Effects**
6. **Adopt Receptor-led Assessment**
7. **Improve Public Participation and Stakeholder Engagement**
8. **Promote Better Informed Decisions**
9. **Renewed Focus on Monitoring and Management**
10. **Measure Sustainable Development and Environmental Net Gain**

The following responses to the Defra Post Implementation Review Questions draws on the above recommendations where relevant.

Defra Post Implementation Review Questions

Question 1, 14, 27 and 40

To what extent have the EIA regulations succeeded in their objectives?

Far above expectations

Above expectations

Met expectations

Below expectations

Far below expectations

Please explain your answer

To understand if the EIA regulations have succeeded in their objectives, we need to understand what their objectives were.

Environmental impact assessment has been practiced for over 50 years⁸ and is now applied in over 100 countries worldwide. In the UK and English context environmental assessment has been heavily influenced by the European Directive on EIA and has been practiced in the UK for around 35 years. It should be further noted that the UK was a strong influencer of the EU

⁸ National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 in the United States of America.

Directive and many of the principles and practices arising from the Directive have been informed by UK policy and practice.

Taking a high-level view, the core principles and aims of the EIA Directive are:

- National policy on the environment should be based on the precautionary principle and on the principles that preventive action should be taken, that environmental damage should, as a priority, be rectified at source and that the polluter should pay. Effects on the environment should be taken into account at the earliest possible stage in all the technical planning and decision-making processes.
- Development consent for public and private projects which are likely to have significant effects on the environment should be granted only after an assessment of the likely significant environmental effects of those projects has been carried out. That assessment should be conducted on the basis of the appropriate information supplied by the developer, which may be supplemented by the authorities and by the public likely to be concerned by the project in question.
- The effects of a project on the environment should be assessed in order to take account of concerns to protect human health, to contribute by means of a better environment to the quality of life, to ensure maintenance of the diversity of species and to maintain the reproductive capacity of the ecosystem as a basic resource for life.

Looking at these principles the EIA regulations on their own were not going to achieve the objective of living within environmental limits while achieving a sustainable economy. This objective would require far ranging changes to the economy, legislation and societal values that goes much wider than the relatively narrow scope of EIA legislation. Key limiting factors on the scope of EIA are the following:

- *Limited application*: Applies to less than 1% of developments.
- *Limited timespan*: Only applies at single point, at planning permission.
- *Limited influence*: Is only advisory and subject to political decision making.
- *Limited safeguards*: Relies on monitoring and enforcement outside of the scope of EIA.

Limited Application

EIA is focused on a relatively small number of projects. In 2019, EIA was only being delivered on 423⁹ of projects, which were considered to be of the highest risk to the environment. In England and Wales, planning applications are in the range of 60,000 to 80,000 **per month** according to Planning Portal. Therefore, for the vast majority of new projects (99.9%), EIA is not required. Taken in the context of the stated government objective to help the Government to achieve its objective of living within environmental limits while achieving a sustainable economy, EIA is unable to manage the impacts across the country from the 99.9% of development applications that do not require EIA, or from ongoing business activities which are subject to other environmental regulations.

⁹ This data is related to English district, county and Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP) in 2019.

Limited Timespan

EIA is a point-in-time assessment of a project, which has not yet been built. Most EIAs are carried out over a 1 to 2 years period and are seeking to assess the environmental effects of projects with a design lifespan of between 25 and 100+ years. EIA therefore relies on a snapshot of the current environmental baseline, and a projection of the future development of the receiving environment. EIA is working with limited data, and reliant on models, forecasts and expert judgement to predict the future impacts of a project. Considering the rapid nature of changing science, legislation, policy, demographics and the environment, it is inevitable that an EIA will have limited ability to manage the environmental and social risks arising from a project over its operational lifetime. EIAs greatest value is therefore to apply the mitigation hierarchy (avoid >reduce >mitigate >compensate) to the project development and design to avoid impacts at the outset, through consideration of alternatives, location, layout, materials and processes. Once the design has been optimised through the EIA process the remaining (or residual) impacts are reliant on wider environmental and social legislation, regulation and permitting to manage the impacts of a project over its operational lifespan, these safeguards operate outside of the influence of EIA.

Limited Influence

There is a common misconception that EIA somehow determines planning acceptability. The reality is that EIA is a decision support tool and is not binding on a development application. The EIA may highlight multiple significant adverse impacts, however the Local Authority, Planning Inspectorate or Secretary of State may well approve it in any case, even if it has a recommendation for refusal by a Planning Officer or Planning Inspector. In these cases, it would be harsh in the extreme (but correct) to say that the EIA has failed in its objective to help the Government to achieve its objective of living within environmental limits while achieving a sustainable economy. The problem here is clearly that even if the EIA identifies unsustainable or significant environmentally damaging development, it can be disregarded by the decision maker in favour of other political or economic factors. This is a 'fatal-flaw' in EIA with respect to safeguarding the environment.

Limited Safeguards

Once the EIA has completed its work of avoiding and reducing the impacts of a development the remaining residual impacts are subject to mitigation and compensation measures. These mitigations should be implemented by the developer through an environmental management system (EMS)¹⁰ and should be secured by the Local Authority or Secretary of State via planning conditions and supported by appropriate monitoring to ensure effectiveness of implementation.

In reality, many mitigations are not properly secured with legally-binding conditions, and monitoring conditions are often absent or inadequate. Furthermore, during construction the implementation and monitoring of mitigations are routinely left to developers and contractors with little (or no) oversight from independent environmental clerks of works, regulators or authorities. The end result is that many mitigation measures are not carried out, or are deficient in their implementation. Furthermore, the lack of monitoring and implementation is further

¹⁰ Which should be the main tool for an organisations environmental and social risk management and should include environmental management plans (EMP) and/or construction environmental management plans (CEMP) for individual projects.

exacerbated by site conditions and construction techniques deviating from those assessed in the EIA due to unforeseen changes or new information.

Similarly, once built, operational monitoring of noise, air quality, traffic movements etc are rarely checked against those predicted in the EIA. Enforcement of breaches is rare and is normally triggered by complaints by the public rather than any active monitoring or auditing by Local Authorities or Regulators. Given that the operational phase of a development can represent decades of potential environmental impacts, these fall outside the scope of the EIA process to manage. As demonstrated by the ongoing pollution of waterways and the sea with raw sewerage, existing enforcement and sanctions of breaches of operational permits appear inadequate to prevent ongoing pollution.

Question 2, 15, 28 and 41

How effective has the policy been implemented?

Very Well
Well
Fairly
Poorly
Very poorly

Please explain your answer and give examples where possible

As set out in the previous answer there are number of limitations that prevent the full implementation of the EIA objectives. Many of these limitations sit outside of the EIA regulations, nevertheless the greatest failing of the current system has been to secure mitigations, monitor impacts and implement enforcement.

This issue was highlighted in our State of EIA Report in 2011¹¹ and reiterated in our 2020 report, 'IEMA – Levelling up EIA to Build Back Better' where we made the following recommendation:

Ensure EMPs are central to the EIA process and provides certainty on implementation:

EMPs becomes a validation requirement of any EIA and this singularly houses all design and mitigation requirements – delivering quality design. This can then become a single plan which can be monitored to ensure implementation/deliver post consent monitoring and evolve to provide the structure and control mechanisms of further plans (e.g. construction environmental management plans). There needs to be a re-focus on capturing data on the implementation and effectiveness of mitigation through monitoring.

In addition, IEMA provided a private briefing note to MHCLG and Defra in 2020 on 'The Future of Environmental Assessment' in which the following recommendations were made with respect to mitigation, monitoring and enforcement.

¹¹ IEMA, Special Report – The State of Environmental Impact Assessment Practice in the UK, 2011

Embed the Mitigation Hierarchy

There should be a requirement to demonstrate that the ‘Mitigation Hierarchy’ has been applied from the concept level and then throughout design and implementation, with strong incentives and penalties for failing to avoid and prevent impacts, rather than an over-reliance on often ineffective mitigation and compensation.

One potential focal point for embedding the mitigation hierarchy from the early phases of concept development would be the introduction of a requirement for all projects to have an Environmental Assessment Coordinator akin to the former role of the CDM Coordinator (See entry on Competent Experts).

The evidence of the implementation of the mitigation hierarchy at pre-application stage and pre-construction stage should then inform outcome targets to be monitored / audited during implementation and reported upon as part of the systematic national evidence programme and central repository referred to, under ‘Evidence-based Practice’ and recommendations under ‘Renewed Focus on Monitoring and Management’ (below).

Promote Evidence-Based Practice

The UK (and/or England) should develop a systematic national evidence programme and central repository (online)¹² with institutional governance and appropriate funding. This would, over time, correct many of the criticised aspects of EIA and SEA practice (scoping, screening, proportionality, costs, accuracy, environmental and social outcomes).

The national evidence programme could be run along class/sector lines and is ideally suited to digital methods and can be adopted alongside and integrated into the ongoing development of digital impact assessment. See footnotes for an overview of Digital Impact Assessment¹³, case studies¹⁴, and digital EIA recommendations¹⁵.

Mandate the use of Competent Experts

EIA should be a process that is transparent, independent and distanced from politics, prepared by and used by qualified and experienced professionals.

The government should consider adopting standards (such as the IEMA EIA Quality Mark and EIA Practitioner Register) in Central and Local government procurement for EIA services to ensure the use of accredited ‘Competent Experts’.

Furthermore, greater provision of learning and training resources should be provided to Local Authorities and Statutory Consultees to raise competence and share good practice. See also recommendations under ‘Better Informed Decisions’ on creation of a National EIA Unit and a National Regulator, to provide a centralised body of public sector competent experts and provide sufficient expertise to advise National decision makers and Local Authorities.

¹² See “Industry Evidence Programme Offshore Wind Farms - Pilot Industry Evidence Base” June 2018 (IEMA, TCE & RHDHV).

¹³ IEMA, Digital Impact Assessment – A Primer for Embracing Innovation and Digital Working, March, 2020

¹⁴ IEMA, Impact Assessment Outlook Journal Vol. 6 Digital IA in Practice, May, 2020.

¹⁵ Digitising the future of Environmental Impact Assessments: Report launched 31st March 2020, UKRI / Innovate UK.

In addition, similar to the concept of the CDM (Construction Design and Management) coordinator¹⁶ for managing health and safety. A similar regime could embed an Environmental Assessment Coordinator into projects from conception to implementation to maximise the opportunities for early intervention, identification of opportunities, and continuity across the project life cycle.

Promote Better Informed Decisions

Recommendation on governance infrastructure to lead to better informed decisions:

- Creation of a National Environmental Assessment Unit and a National Regulator (role outlined below);
- A new, single set of EIA Regulations (with sector specific annexes if required);
- The development of a tiered approach to EIA and SEA;
- Central online platform for data and decisions;
- Creation of a national repository of environmental assessment evidence (see 'Evidence-based Practice') and
- Consider a requirement for an Environmental Assessment Coordinator to be appointed at the earliest phase of design akin to the former role of the CDM coordinator for health and safety matters. The Environmental Coordinator role to continue through all subsequent relevant phases of development, before being handed over to an EMS coordinator.

Recommendations on the Role of the National Environmental Assessment Unit/National Regulator:

- Direction and leadership of EIA and SEA and independent voice;
- Ownership and maintenance of guidance working with the established content, tone and breadth of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG);
- Generation, maintenance and ownership of national data;
- Ownership and maintenance of case law database;
- Coordination of IA skills, training, research and funding (and links to institutions/academia/education) and monitoring feedback;
- Regulator of competent training; and
- Driver of requirements for competent professionals in EIA and SEA.

A Renewed Focus on Monitoring and Management

Recommendations for Evidence-based Environmental Monitoring and Management:

- Greater focus on the transition from IA (pre-consent) to environmental management and auditing (post consent);
- Major refocus across the post-consent regime on monitoring and adaptive management;
- Renewed focus on gathering evidence and recycling the evidence to inform revisions/updates and subsequent proposals;
- Greater emphasis on independent auditing and enforcement of non-compliance during construction and operation;
- Mechanisms in part already established for NSIP through DCO requirements should be more widely adopted (scaled appropriately to tier);

¹⁶ CDM Regulations 2007, now superseded by CDM 2015.

- Mandate EMPs – developer and competent authority agreement; and
- Use of EMPs to deliver project feedback/monitoring results.

Question 3, 16, 29 and 42

What are the costs that you/your business incurs in relation to the implementation of EIAs? Please quantify these where possible, considering costs such as staff time/wages, fees, consultants etc. If this is not possible, please provide a qualitative description of the costs.

IEMA cannot provide individual costs to businesses for specific EIAs. However, as a percentage of total development costs (DevEx and CapEx) from discussion with our members we are aware that it is, at least anecdotally, **less than 1%**.

Furthermore, the cost question is to some extent out of context unless you pair it with the cost of not doing EIA. The cost of not doing EIA will not necessarily be born by the developer, but will be picked up by the environment and wider society and these costs may manifest as increased NHS costs (from poor air quality and pollutants), increased flooding and cost of new flood defences (from building in the flood plain), cost to public health and society from loss of recreation and wellbeing (from habitat loss, pollution of watercourses and loss of green space etc).

Therefore, IEMA expect that Defra will calculate and take into account the cost benefits from EIA from avoided costs (as a result of the application of the mitigation hierarchy through EIA).

Question 5, 18, 31 and 44

Do you believe there has been a disproportionate impact on small and micro businesses from these regulations?

IEMA believes that the cost to business of implementing the regulations should be in relation to the risk of significant environmental and social adverse impacts, rather than the size of the company promoting the scheme. Therefore, if a project has no likely significant adverse environmental effects, then it should not need EIA; conversely, if the project does have likely significant adverse environmental effects, then these should be assessed and managed. This safeguard should not be waived just because a developer is a small or micro business. See IEMA recommendations on proportionate EIA on how we can more effectively scope projects.¹⁷

Question 6, 6b, 19, 19b, 33, 33b, 45 and 45b

In your opinion, how well understood are the regulations among developers/project proposers/licensing users?

Very Well
Well
Fairly
Poorly
Very poorly

¹⁷ Proportionate EIA – A Collaborate Strategy For Enhancing UK Environmental Impact Assessment Practice, IEMA 2017 <https://www.iema.net/resources/reading-room/2017/07/18/delivering-proportionate-eia>

Please explain your answer

EIA has been practiced in the UK for over 35 years and is a well-established component of the planning system. EIA developments are known to planners and experienced project developers. Inexperienced developers would be expected to seek professional advice and the current (2017) regulations require the use of 'competent experts' for EIA. Planning professionals, lawyers, and consultants are all well placed to advise project proposers on the requirements. There is also a wealth of freely available online materials on the subject for newcomers. The UK has an enviable position of having a sophisticated pool of professional advisors across all sectors to support developers. The IEMA EIA Quality Mark alone includes over 60 organisations providing EIA services.

Do you have any suggestions to improve the understanding of the rules or guidance?

Yes

No

Don't know

Please explain your answer

Recommendations as previously provided to Defra and MHCLG in September 2020 in our report 'IEMA – Levelling up EIA to Build Back Better':

- **Publish clear requirements and standards for EIA and SEA**
- **Appraise the role of a national IA unit**
- **Embrace innovation and digital IA**
- **Promote Competence in EIA and SEA**

Recommendation as provided to MHCLG and Defra in late 2020 on 'The Future of Environmental Assessment':

Promote Better Informed Decisions

Recommendation on governance infrastructure to lead to better informed decisions:

- Creation of a National Environmental Assessment Unit and a National Regulator (role outlined below);
- A new, single set of EIA Regulations (with sector specific annexes if required);
- The development of a tiered approach to EIA and SEA;
- Central online platform for data and decisions;
- Creation of a national repository of environmental assessment evidence (see 'Evidence-based Practice') and
- Consider a requirement for an Environmental Assessment Coordinator to be appointed at the earliest phase of design akin to the former role of the CDM coordinator for health and safety matters. The Environmental Coordinator role to continue through all subsequent relevant phases of development, before being handed over to an EMS coordinator.

Recommendations on the Role of the National Environmental Assessment Unit/National Regulator:

- Direction and leadership of EIA and SEA and independent voice;

- Ownership and maintenance of guidance working with the established content, tone and breadth of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG);
- Generation, maintenance and ownership of national data;
- Ownership and maintenance of case law database;
- Coordination of IA skills, training, research and funding (and links to institutions/academia/education) and monitoring feedback;
- Regulator of competent training; and
- Driver of requirements for competent professionals in EIA and SEA.

Question 7, 20, 34 and 46

Have there been any unintended effects caused by the regulations?

Yes

No

Don't know

Please explain your answer

The lack of systematic monitoring, national centre of excellence, or central repository of knowledge on EIA means it is difficult to accurately monitor the effects of EIA. This situation might be remedied by promoting greater use of evidence base practice, as recommended in IEMAs 2020 report to MHCLG and Defra on 'The Future of Environmental Assessment':

Promote Evidence-Based Practice

The UK (and/or England) should develop a systematic national evidence programme and central repository (online)¹⁸ with institutional governance and appropriate funding. This would, over time, correct many of the criticised aspects of EIA and SEA practice (scoping, screening, proportionality, costs, accuracy, environmental and social outcomes).

The national evidence programme could be run along sector/industry lines and is ideally suited to digital methods and can be adopted alongside and integrated into the ongoing development of digital impact assessment. See footnotes for an overview of Digital Impact Assessment¹⁹, case studies²⁰, and digital EIA recommendations²¹.

Question 8, 21, 35 and 47

Do you have any suggestions to reduce any burdens inherent in the EIA process?

Yes

No

Don't know

¹⁸ See "Industry Evidence Programme Offshore Wind Farms - Pilot Industry Evidence Base" June 2018 (IEMA, TCE & RHDHV).

¹⁹ IEMA, Digital Impact Assessment – A Primer for Embracing Innovation and Digital Working, March, 2020

²⁰ IEMA, Impact Assessment Outlook Journal Vol. 6 Digital IA in Practice, May, 2020.

²¹ Digitising the future of Environmental Impact Assessments: Report launched 31st March 2020, UKRI / Innovate UK.

Please explain your answer and give examples

IEMA has published a range of suggestions to reduce burdens in EIA.

Please see our four recommendations in IEMA's 2017 'Proportionate EIA Strategy'²² on:

- **Enhancing People**
- **Improving Scoping**
- **Sharing Responsibility**
- **Embracing Innovation and Digital**

Furthermore, IEMA provided Defra and MHCLG with six priorities for EIA reform in September 2020 in our report 'IEMA – Levelling up EIA to Build Back Better':

- **Governance on 'scoping' non-EIA development**
- **Publish clear requirements and standards for EIA and SEA**
- **Ensure EMPs are central to the EIA process and provide certainty on implementation**
- **Appraise the role of a national IA unit**
- **Embrace innovation and digital IA**
- **Competence in EIA and SEA**

In addition to the public reports and consultations provided above, IEMA provided a private briefing to MHCLG and Defra in late 2020 on 'The Future of Environmental Assessment' which contained the following ten recommendations:

- **Adopt a Tiered Assessment Regime**
- **Embed the Mitigation Hierarchy**
- **Promote Evidence-based Practice**
- **Mandate the use of Competent Experts**
- **Support an Integrated Assessment of Effects**
- **Adopt Receptor-led Assessment**
- **Improve Public Participation and Stakeholder Engagement**
- **Promote Better Informed Decisions**
- **Renewed Focus on Monitoring and Management**
- **Measure Sustainable Development and Environmental Net Gain**

IEMA would be happy to provide further details and discuss any of the above recommendations.

Question 9, 22, 36 and 48

Do you feel refinements could be made to improve the enforcement and / or compliance rates?

Yes

No

Don't know

²² Proportionate EIA – A Collaborate Strategy For Enhancing UK Environmental Impact Assessment Practice, IEMA 2017 <https://www.iema.net/resources/reading-room/2017/07/18/delivering-proportionate-eia>

Please explain your answer and give examples

As set out in our response to Questions 2, 15, 28, 41 above this issue was highlighted in our State of EIA Report in 2011²³ and reiterated in our 2020 report, 'IEMA – Levelling up EIA to Build Back Better' where we made the following recommendation:

Ensure EMPs are central to the EIA process and provides certainty on implementation:

EMPs becomes a validation requirement of any EIA and this singularly houses all design and mitigation requirements – delivering quality design. This can then become a single plan which can be monitored to ensure implementation/deliver post consent monitoring and evolve to provide the structure and control mechanisms of further plans (e.g. construction environmental management plans). There needs to be a re-focus on capturing data on the implementation and effectiveness of mitigation through monitoring.

In addition, IEMA provided a private briefing note to MHCLG and Defra in 2020 on 'The Future of Environmental Assessment' in which the following recommendations were made with respect to mitigation, monitoring and enforcement.

Embed the Mitigation Hierarchy

There should be a requirement to demonstrate that the 'Mitigation Hierarchy' has been applied from the concept level and then throughout design and implementation, with strong incentives and penalties for failing to avoid and prevent impacts, rather than an over-reliance on often ineffective mitigation and compensation.

One potential focal point for embedding the mitigation hierarchy from the early phases of concept development would be the introduction of a requirement for all projects to have an Environmental Assessment Coordinator akin to the former role of the CDM Coordinator (See entry on Competent Experts).

The evidence of the implementation of the mitigation hierarchy at pre-application stage and pre-construction stage should then inform outcome targets to be monitored / audited during implementation and reported upon as part of the systematic national evidence programme and central repository referred to, under 'Evidence-based Practice' and recommendations under 'Renewed Focus on Monitoring and Management' (below).

Promote Evidence-Based Practice

The UK (and/or England) should develop a systematic national evidence programme and central repository (online)²⁴ with institutional governance and appropriate funding. This would, over time, correct many of the criticised aspects of EIA and SEA practice (scoping, screening, proportionality, costs, accuracy, environmental and social outcomes).

The national evidence programme could be run along class/sector lines and is ideally suited to digital methods and can be adopted alongside and integrated into the ongoing development of

²³ IEMA, Special Report – The State of Environmental Impact Assessment Practice in the UK, 2011

²⁴ See "Industry Evidence Programme Offshore Wind Farms - Pilot Industry Evidence Base" June 2018 (IEMA, TCE & RHDHV).

digital impact assessment. See footnotes for an overview of Digital Impact Assessment²⁵, case studies²⁶, and digital EIA recommendations²⁷.

Mandate the use of Competent Experts

EIA should be a process that is transparent, independent and distanced from politics, prepared by and used by qualified and experienced professionals.

The government should consider adopting standards (such as the IEMA EIA Quality Mark and EIA Practitioner Register) in Central and Local government procurement for EIA services to ensure the use of accredited 'Competent Experts'.

Furthermore, greater provision of learning and training resources should be provided to Local Authorities and Statutory Consultees to raise competence and share good practice. See also recommendations under 'Better Informed Decisions' on creation of a National EIA Unit and a National Regulator, to provide a centralised body of public sector competent experts and provide sufficient expertise to advise National decision makers and Local Authorities.

In addition, similar to the concept of the CDM (Construction Design and Management) coordinator²⁸ for managing health and safety. A similar regime could embed an Environmental Assessment Coordinator into projects from conception to implementation to maximise the opportunities for early intervention, identification of opportunities, and continuity across the project life cycle.

Promote Better Informed Decisions

Recommendation on governance infrastructure to lead to better informed decisions:

- Creation of a National Environmental Assessment Unit and a National Regulator (role outlined below);
- A new, single set of EIA Regulations (with sector specific annexes if required);
- The development of a tiered approach to EIA and SEA;
- Central online platform for data and decisions;
- Creation of a national repository of environmental assessment evidence (see 'Evidence-based Practice') and
- Consider a requirement for an Environmental Assessment Coordinator to be appointed at the earliest phase of design akin to the former role of the CDM coordinator for health and safety matters. The Environmental Coordinator role to continue through all subsequent relevant phases of development, before being handed over to an EMS coordinator.

Recommendations on the Role of the National Environmental Assessment Unit/National Regulator:

- Direction and leadership of EIA and SEA and independent voice;
- Ownership and maintenance of guidance working with the established content, tone and breadth of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG);

²⁵ IEMA, Digital Impact Assessment – A Primer for Embracing Innovation and Digital Working, March, 2020

²⁶ IEMA, Impact Assessment Outlook Journal Vol. 6 Digital IA in Practice, May, 2020.

²⁷ Digitising the future of Environmental Impact Assessments: Report launched 31st March 2020, UKRI / Innovate UK.

²⁸ CDM Regulations 2007, now superseded by CDM 2015.

- Generation, maintenance and ownership of national data;
- Ownership and maintenance of case law database;
- Coordination of IA skills, training, research and funding (and links to institutions/academia/education) and monitoring feedback;
- Regulator of competent training; and
- Driver of requirements for competent professionals in EIA and SEA.

A Renewed Focus on Monitoring and Management

Recommendations for Evidence-based Environmental Monitoring and Management:

- Greater focus on the transition from IA (pre-consent) to environmental management and auditing (post consent);
- Major refocus across the post-consent regime on monitoring and adaptive management;
- Renewed focus on gathering evidence and recycling the evidence to inform revisions/updates and subsequent proposals;
- Greater emphasis on independent auditing and enforcement of non-compliance during construction and operation;
- Mechanisms in part already established for NSIP through DCO requirements should be more widely adopted (scaled appropriately to tier);
- Mandate EMPs – developer and competent authority agreement; and
- Use of EMPs to deliver project feedback/monitoring results.

IEMA has a post consent working group and is currently working with the Association of Environmental Clerks of Works (AECoW) on how to raise the profile and secure greater adoption of independent environmental clerks of works, paid for by the developer but reporting to the LPA and public on developer compliance.

Question 10, 23, 37 and 49

How successful have the regulations been in securing their objective of helping Government to achieve its goal of living within environmental limits whilst achieving social and or economic sustainability?

Very Well

Well

Fairly

Poorly

Very poorly

Please explain your answer

This question is similar in nature Question 1, 14, 27 and 40, however, the objective of helping the government achieve its goal of living within environmental limits whilst achieving social and or economic sustainability is broader than the EIA regulation objectives.

As stated earlier in this response, the EIA regulations on their own were never going to achieve the objective of living within environmental limits while achieving a sustainable economy. This objective would require far ranging changes to the economy, legislation and societal values that

goes much wider than the relatively narrow scope of EIA legislation. Key limiting factors on the scope of EIA are the following:

- *Limited application*: Applies to less than 1% of developments.
- *Limited timespan*: Only applies at single point, at planning permission.
- *Limited influence*: Is only advisory and subject to political decision making.
- *Limited safeguards*: Relies on monitoring and enforcement outside of the scope of EIA.

However, the key word in the question is '**Helping**' and undoubtedly the EIA regulations help. To reinforce this question, you could ask the reverse, 'If we didn't have EIA regulations would the Government find it harder to achieve its goal of living within environmental limits whilst achieving social and or economic sustainability? Again, by identifying and mitigating the most significant adverse effects arising from major developments, it is clear that without EIA we would be in worse position than we are now with respect to living within environmental limits and achieving a sustainable economy.

Question 11, 24, 38 and 50

Do you feel the regulations could be improved to better meet the objective of living within environmental limits while achieving social and economic sustainability?

Yes

No

Don't know

Please explain your answer

IEMA has been clear and consistent in our position and advice to the government that we believe the fundamental principles as set out within the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) EU Directives are still valid and should be retained in a future environmental assessment regime. Impact assessment is a key tool in a range of policy measures required to meet the challenge of sustainable development.

However, we also believe that we should be engaged in a process of continuing improvement to refine, adapt and improve our methods and policies to reflect changing science, improved methods, experience and to address an increasingly emergency situation with regards to climate change and biodiversity loss.

It is the view of IEMA that there is significant scope for improvements in the process, procedures and implementation of environmental assessment in order to achieve the aims and principles of the EIA (and SEA) policies. IEMA provided a private briefing to MHCLG and Defra in late 2020 on 'The Future of Environmental Assessment' which contained the following ten recommendations:

IEMA's Principles for Environmental Assessment Reform

1. Adopt a Tiered Assessment Regime
2. Embed the Mitigation Hierarchy
3. Promote Evidence-based Practice
4. Mandate the use of Competent Experts
5. Support an Integrated Assessment of Effects
6. Adopt Receptor-led Assessment
7. Improve Public Participation and Stakeholder Engagement
8. Promote Better Informed Decisions
9. Renewed Focus on Monitoring and Management
10. Measure Sustainable Development and Environmental Net Gain

Recommendations no. 2, 3, 4, 8 and 8 are already summarised above in response to Questions 2, 15, 28, 41. The remaining recommendations are summarised below.

Adopt a Tiered Assessment Regime

A new, tiered assessment regime:

There should be a new tiered assessment regime, where the level of assessment relates to the complexity of the development and environment:

- The level of assessment will ideally be determined/informed at the national plan/programme level to provide certainty for developers – it is likely that relatively few developments will require an upper tier assessment, the majority of projects will be at the lowest tier;
- The upper tier assessment should be based on the approach currently in place for NSIPs, and adapted accordingly; and
- At the lowest tier, the assessment might only be focussed on one or two issues, with standard conditions and/or self-assessment & mitigation being applied for common impacts that are predictable and manageable.

Considerations for Tiering: The use of tiers needs further evaluation, but the following factors could align to the tier assigned to the project alongside the use of Case/Sector based Evidence Programs (see 'Evidence-based Practice' below):

- Depth and breadth of assessment;
- Level of stakeholder and public engagement;
- Level of assessment and quantitative nature to demonstrate net gains;
- The requirement and breadth of Environmental Management Plans (EMP);
- Competence level in decision making; and
- Expectations of post consent monitoring, studies and feedback.

Terminology: There is a need for better communication of the wide scope and benefits of EIA and SEA to all involved parties (and particularly locally elected members, MPs and ministers).

Alternative names for a revised EIA / SEA process could be 'Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)' and 'Strategic Integrated Assessment' (SIA) to better capture the wide scope and integrated nature of the environmental assessment process. A second alternative is to adopt 'Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA)' and 'Strategic ESIA' (SESIA), with the term ESIA widely adopted internationally.

Screening and Scoping: Within the project level tier of environmental assessment (i.e. EIA), there are multiple potential improvements to screening and scoping that can be investigated. In summary these include:

- Use of an online evidence programme (see entry on 'Evidence-based Practice') and digital impact assessment to improve and inform screening and scoping;
- Require the use of Competent Experts (see entry on 'Competent Experts') and/or use of a centralised regional/national screening service (drawing on 'Evidence-based Practice');
- Remove the dichotomy between EIA and Non-EIA development. All development could be regarded as development requiring environmental assessment, with screening re-purposed and merged with scoping and consultation to determine an appropriate and proportionate scope;
- The use of 'Evidence-based Practice' to develop Class/Sector mitigations and standards would greatly simplify the screening and scoping process;
- Scoping should be mandatory;
- Screening and scoping decisions stored on central online platform and notices automatically provided to the public and stakeholders – these can be challenged if evidence provided;
- 'Receptor-led Assessment' approach to scope development, and logging on interactive digital tool;
- Use of 'Evidence-based Practice' when providing justification for impacts that require no further consideration; and
- Acknowledgement that there may be deviation from the Screening / Scoping Opinion for the betterment of the project.

Support an Integrated Assessment of Effects

As one of the few truly integrated assessment tools in the design process (of plans and projects) SEA and EIA, when implemented early and properly by 'Competent Experts', can reduce costs, speed up implementation, build stakeholder and public consensus, and crucially, avoid and minimise unnecessary and undesirable environmental and social impacts.

On this basis, it is recommended that some form of integrated environmental assessment is undertaken for all projects and plans, scaled to the appropriate level, and proportionate to the potential effects of the proposal.

Further recommendations:

- Ensure continuity across different tiers of assessment, so that information, commitments and decisions from previous stages are incorporated into following stages (e.g. between SEA and EIA);
- Shift the focus towards a tool which captures and demonstrates the positives and net gains (as well as any adverse effects);
- Avoid multiple and conflicting IA tools and assessments – a single approach should be considered, if possible;
- Have a common approach to the ‘Mitigation Hierarchy’;
- Movement from topic-based to ‘Receptor-led Assessment’ (see below)– this will be best suited to embracing digital progression, capturing multiple impacts to the same receptor; improving public understanding and engagement and ensuring mitigation developed is multifunctional; and
- Time and effort should be weighted to the thinking, design and mitigation development, and away from traditional reporting.

Adopt Receptor-led Assessment

Environmental: Consideration of environmental receptors needs to move beyond the narrow consideration of protected sites and protected species to assess the impact of the proposals on both the biotic and abiotic elements of the affected ecosystems to ensure any impacts to the functioning of ecosystem as well as individual habitats and species are safeguarded.

In terms of net environmental gain, reversing biodiversity loss and declining species diversity, richness, and abundance, the focus should be on a proposal’s contribution to (and compatibility with) an ecosystem restoration and recovery programme with the aim of maintaining functioning bioregions.

Social: The advantages of changing to a receptor led structure would be that stakeholders, residents and the public with a broader interest in the impacts of a project can more easily access a holistic view of the impacts on a receptor, such as their community or home rather than for example, air quality and noise considered in isolation.

Furthermore, single technical issue stakeholders would be more likely to see their topic in the context of the other impacts and considerations by having to read across all the receptors to see the various impacts from their areas of focus. This would promote a greater understanding of the interrelated nature of development impacts and the inherent trade-offs required within a design process.

The suggested approach above is made more viable and more easily achievable by the advent and adoption of digital ways of working as set out in the IEMA Primer on Digital Impact Assessment. Digital techniques will allow the detailed baseline, policy and methodological data to be nested within the digital report interface, available to access to those seeking this information, but not getting in the way of non-specialists seeking a concise reportage on the significant effects and the

proposed mitigation measures, i.e. digital offers the potential for the combination and dual benefits from both conciseness and comprehensiveness.²⁹

Improve Public Participation and Stakeholder Engagement

Participation: Public participation is currently low, mainly due to barriers (often unintentional) to many sections of society from engaging with the current planning and policy system. At present EIA is one of the few parts of the process that offers an opportunity for public participation, however this is highly variable between projects. Any reform should look to widening and enabling greater public participation in line with legal and policy requirements such as the Aarhus Convention.

Accessibility and Transparency: EIA reporting and consultation should be transparent both in outcomes and simple language that are accessible to all (both in terms of relevance and terminology).

Modern technology, and in particular, information technology and digital innovations have created multiple new techniques for aiding public participation and engagement. These tools need to be better harnessed to provide more accessible, transparent, and timely information to a greater range of affected communities (and diverse groups within communities) and stakeholders.

See footnotes for an overview of opportunities presented by Digital Impact Assessment³⁰, digital case studies³¹, and digital innovation recommendations³².

Measure Sustainable Development and Environmental Net Gain

Sustainable Development: In order to measure achievement, compliance and contribution against the overarching aim of the NPPF and SDGs some measure or other method of incorporating sustainable development should be included explicitly into the practice of EIA and SEA.

Environmental Net Gain: Net gain principles should be a requirement of all developments above a certain threshold (except for example very minor works), encompassing non-EIA development to NSIPs, but scaled appropriately to the impacts of the development. This should not be limited to biodiversity net gain but could include social value or other environmental and climate related metrics.

IEMA would be happy to provide further details and discuss any of the above recommendations with Defra.

²⁹ Recommendation taken from essay by R. Howard in IEMA IA Outlook Journal Vol. 8. 2020 p.18-19.

³⁰ IEMA, Digital Impact Assessment – A Primer for Embracing Innovation and Digital Working, March, 2020

³¹ IEMA, Impact Assessment Outlook Journal Vol. 6 Digital IA in Practice, May, 2020.

³² Digitising the future of Environmental Impact Assessments: Report launched 31st March 2020, UKRI / Innovate UK.

Question 12, 25, 39 and 51

Do you believe there any gaps in the regulations that are causing or enabling negative environmental impacts / outcomes?

Yes

No

Don't know

Please explain your answer

As set out in our response to Questions 2, 15, 28, 41 a key gap is the lack of monitoring and enforcement of mitigation measures leading to negative environmental and social impacts and outcomes. However, it is not necessarily the wording of the regulations that is faulty but rather their interpretation and use, this is compounded by the lack of resources within LPAs and regulators, and also a lack of expertise and training on EIA within those bodies.

If the regulations are revised the wording on mitigations and monitoring should be strengthened to require the developer to fund an independent environmental clerk of works to audit and monitor the development's compliance with the findings of the EIA, the planning conditions and environmental management plan, and report back directly to the LPA, regulators and statutory consultees, to ensure any non-compliances are identified and rectified. Any deficiencies should be set out in some form of improvement notice with clear timelines and actions. Sanctions should be in place in the event of continued non-compliance with the improvement notice.

Question 13, 26, 40 and 52

Do you believe the existing form of Government regulation for environmental assessment is the correct approach? If not, what might you replace it with?

Yes

No

Don't know

Please explain your answer

As set out in response to Questions 8, 21, 35 and 47 and as highlighted throughout this response, IEMA have published a range of suggestions to improve EIA and SEA across a number of documents.

Please see our four recommendations in IEMAs 2017 'Proportionate EIA Strategy'³³ on:

- **Enhancing People**
- **Improving Scoping**
- **Sharing Responsibility**
- **Embracing Innovation and Digital**

³³ Proportionate EIA – A Collaborate Strategy For Enhancing UK Environmental Impact Assessment Practice, IEMA 2017 <https://www.iema.net/resources/reading-room/2017/07/18/delivering-proportionate-eia>

Furthermore, IEMA provided Defra and HCLGC with six priorities for EIA reform in September 2020 in our report 'IEMA – Levelling up EIA to Build Back Better':

- **Governance on 'scoping' non-EIA development**
- **Publish clear requirements and standards for EIA and SEA**
- **Ensure EMPs are central to the EIA process and provide certainty on implementation**
- **Appraise the role of a national IA unit**
- **Embrace innovation and digital IA**
- **Competence in EIA and SEA**

In addition to the public reports and consultations provided above, IEMA provided a private briefing to MHCLG and Defra in late 2020 on 'The Future of Environmental Assessment' which contained the following ten recommendations:

- **Adopt a Tiered Assessment Regime**
- **Embed the Mitigation Hierarchy**
- **Promote Evidence-based Practice**
- **Mandate the use of Competent Experts**
- **Support an Integrated Assessment of Effects**
- **Adopt Receptor-led Assessment**
- **Improve Public Participation and Stakeholder Engagement**
- **Promote Better Informed Decisions**
- **Renewed Focus on Monitoring and Management**
- **Measure Sustainable Development and Environmental Net Gain**

IEMA would be happy to provide further details and discuss any of the above recommendations.

For comments or questions relating to IEMA's Response please contact:

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Dr Howard is the policy and engagement lead for Impact Assessment at IEMA and a leading professional in EIA, with two decades of international experience across renewable energy and major infrastructure. A Fellow of IEMA and Chartered Environmentalist, Rufus holds degrees in Biodiversity Conservation and Environmental Law, and a doctorate in Management. A trusted advisor, Rufus has directed environmental projects for major organisations such as the World Bank, The Crown Estate, Natural Resources Wales, the EBRD, Statkraft, Orsted, National Grid, and the Environment Agency.

Annex A – Summary of IEMA’s IA Expertise

The Impact Assessment Steering Group

Made up of leading practitioners from regulators, developers, academics and consultant practitioners, the IASG is comprised of 15 members who guide IEMA’s activities in IA through horizon scanning, policy leadership, and quality review. The Impact Assessment Steering Group elects 5 new members each year, each member serves for 3 year terms. Recent steering group representatives have come from the following organisations:

Arcadis
Arup
Environment Agency
Highways England
Jacobs
Ministry of Defence
MKO
Mott MacDonald
SSE
Stantec
Temple Group
Tower Hamlets
Turley
Waterman Group
Xodus Group

The Global Environmental and Social Assessment Group

The GESA steering group is made up of leading international practitioners who guide IEMA’s international IA activities through horizon scanning, policy leadership, and quality review. Recent steering group representatives have come from the following organisations:

Arup
BCA Health
CDC Group
Climate Fund Managers
ERM
European Bank of Reconstruction and Development
Fothergill T&C
Macquarie Capital Green Investment Group (GIG)
Mott MacDonald
Ramboll
SLR Consulting
WSP

The EIA Quality Mark

The IEMA EIA Quality Mark³⁴, established in 2011, brings together 60 organisations leading EIA's in the UK, including the majority of practitioners working in the UK:

ABP Marine Environmental Research Ltd (ABPmer)
Adams Hendry Consulting Ltd
AECOM Ltd
Andrew Martin Planning Limited
Arcadis Consulting (UK) Limited
ASH Design + Assessment Limited
Atkins
Avison Young
Barton Willmore LLP
BDP
Bidwells
Binnies UK Ltd
Boyer Planning Ltd
BWB Consulting Ltd
CampbellReith Hill LLP
Capita Property & Infrastructure
CBRE Ltd
David Lock Associates
Deloitte Real Estate
Delta Simons
DHA Planning Ltd
Dulas Ltd
ECUS Ltd
Environment Agency (NEAS)
Environmental Resources Management (ERM)
GoBe Consultants
Iceni Projects Limited
Jacobs UK Ltd
JBA Consulting
LDA Design Consulting Ltd
Lichfields
LUC
Mott MacDonald Ltd
Natural Power Consultants
Nexus Planning Limited
Ove Arup and Partners Ltd
Pegasus Planning Group Ltd
Quod Ltd
Ramboll UK Limited
Ricardo Energy & Environment
Royal HaskoningDHV

³⁴ <https://www.iema.net/corporate-programmes/eia-quality-mark>

RPS Group Plc
RSK Group Plc
Savills (UK) Ltd
SLR Consulting Ltd
Spawforths
Stantec
Stephenson Halliday Ltd
SWECO UK Ltd
Temple Group Ltd
Terence O'Rourke Limited
Tetra Tech
The Environment Partnership (TEP)
Turley Associates Ltd
Wardell Armstrong LLP
Waterman Infrastructure & Environment Ltd
White Peak Planning
Wood Plc
WSP
Xodus Group Ltd

The EIA Quality Mark is a scheme operated by IEMA that allows organisations (both developers and consultancies) that lead the co-ordination of statutory EIAs in the UK to make a commitment to excellence in their EIA activities and have this commitment independently reviewed. The EIA Quality Mark is a voluntary scheme, with organisations free to choose whether they are ready to operate to its seven EIA Commitments.

The EIA Register

In addition to the EIA Quality Mark for organisations, IEMA maintains a EIA register for individuals. The purpose of the Register is to promote the effective practice of EIA by setting quality standards based on the knowledge and experience of those involved in the process. Registration provides an efficient and effective means by which developers, consultancies and regulatory agencies can demonstrate to interested parties that their individual staff are adequately qualified, trained and experienced. The Register helps to establish a career path for those involved in the EIA process.

Members and Working Groups

Within IEMA 18,000 members, over 4000 members have indicated they have a professional interest in impact assessment. Members can take part in impact assessment working groups to help further good practice in impact assessment. The following list is our current working groups

- Digital Impact Assessment
- Health in Impact Assessment
- Marine and Coastal Impact Assessment
- Post Consent and Construction Phase Environmental Performance
- Social Impact Assessment
- Strategic Impact Assessment
- Traffic and Transport Impact Assessment

The Impact Assessment Outlook Journal

IEMA publishes a quarterly journal on impact assessment³⁵. This UK practice series offers thought pieces contributed by EIA Quality Mark registrants and IA Network members, formatted as a thought-provoking quick read covering key aspects of UK EIA practice. It showcases fresh ideas on key topics and offers new perspectives on the practice of Impact Assessment. Outlook journals cover the following topics:

- Volume 1: Perspectives upon Proportionate EIA
- Volume 2: Perspectives upon Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects and Development Consent Orders
- Volume 3: Perspectives upon renewable energy and EIA
- Volume 4: Perspectives on net gain in EIA
- Volume 5: Flexibility in EIA
- Volume 6: Digital Impact Assessment in Practice
- Volume 7: Demystifying Cumulative Effects
- Volume 8: Health Impact Assessment in Planning
- Volume 9: Careers and Skills in Impact Assessment
- Volume 10: Marine and Coastal Impact Assessment
- Volume 11: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
- Volume 12: Strategic Impact Assessment

IEMA EIA Guidance

IEMA has a long history of publishing practitioner guidance and methodological guidelines on key impact assessment topics and has produced a number of key publications in recent years such as:

- 2015 EIA Guide to Shaping Better Quality Development
- 2016 EIA Guide to Delivering Better Quality Development
- 2017 Health in Environmental Impact Assessment: A Primer for a Proportionate Approach
- 2017 Delivering Proportionate EIA
- 2020 EIA Guide to Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience 2nd Edition
- 2020 IEMA Guide to: Materials and Waste in EIA
- 2020 Digital Impact Assessment: A Primer for Embracing Innovation and Digital Working
- 2020 Major Accidents and Disasters in EIA: A Primer
- 2021 Principles of Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment in the UK
- 2022 A New Perspective on Land and Soil in Environmental Impact Assessment
- 2022 EIA Guide to Assessing Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Assessing their Significance 2nd Edition

³⁵ <https://www.iema.net/corporate-programmes/eia-quality-mark/impact-assessment-outlook-journal>