

EIA PROGRAM

The environment is a basic need for all living things because every necessity for them depends on it. Unless our environment is protected, the existence of life on earth would be impossible. Human activities have caused environmental damages which have consequences on us and worst for our future generations to come. Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is of great importance for the sustainability of our environment. Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) can be defined as a systematic identification and evaluation of potential impacts of proposed items and actions relative to the physical, chemical, biological, cultural and socioeconomic components of the total environment. It is through the EIA process that we develop the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) report or action. It was earlier called EIA but due to the current social issues it is now referred to as ESIA, considering not only the environmental issues but also the social components as well.

Lamin Camara Senior program officer, Environmental Impact Assessment unit mentions that the primary purpose of the ESIA process is to encourage consideration of our environment in planning and decision making and take actions that are environmentally compatible. Conducting ESIA would among others help determine which project is suitable for a particular purpose considering the environmental and social impact that it would bring. It would help identify all the potential impacts of the project and put in place mitigation measures. Where impacts are irreversible an ultimatum is considered. In view of the fact that development is an ever-growing process, its impact on the environment is also ever-increasing leading to rapid deterioration in environmental conditions. As such environmental and social assessment provides a rational approach to sustainable development.

ESIA approved projects and non-ESIA approved projects are different in terms of sustainability, because ESIA helps identify all the positive and negative impacts where the positive impacts are enhanced and mitigation measures are put in place to combat the negative impacts.

Mr. Camara added that there are different classes of ESIA conducted in The Gambia depending on the nature of the project. We have ESIA for agricultural projects, ESIA for mining projects, ESIA for industrial projects, ESIA for petroleum projects, ESIA for oil and gas projects, ESIA for waste management projects etc.

Class A: Which requires mandatory ESIA. Class B: Which requires limited ESIA. Class C: Which does not require limited ESIA because their environmental impacts are negligible too small to be considered.

The National Environment Agency under the EIA unit works with different stakeholders to achieve this goal. The composition of the ESIA working group varies. We have different stakeholders that take part in different projects like lead institutions. For example ESIA for oil and gas projects Pura serves as the lead institution, with land and survey, parks and wildlife, department of physical planning, department of water resources and the community.

ESIA approved projects and non ESIA approved projects are different, when a project undergoes an ESIA process it ensures sustainability for that particular project. It ensures societal acceptance of that projects. It would minimize wastage of resources. It would also advice how to maintain your project in relation to the environmental and social impact view.

What is important and the society needs to know is that ESIA is a decision making tool that is meant to help us protect the environment and the population at large and for posterity.

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Why the need to carry out ESIA

The primary purpose of ESIA process is to encourage consideration of our environment in planning, and decision making and take actions that are environmentally compatible. ESIA is decision making tool for short.

Why is ESIA assessment important?

- ESIA assessment are very important because it would help determine which project is suitable for a particular purpose considering the environmental and social impact that it would bring.
- It would help identify all the potential impacts of the project and put in place place mitigation measure. Were the impacts are irreversible we can suggest for an ultimatum
- It ensures sustainability. ESIA approved projects and non ESIA approved projects are different in terms of sustainability, because ESIA helps identify all the positive and negative impacts where the positive impacts are enhanced and mitigation measures are put in place to combat the negative impacts

Types of ESIA conducted

The types of ESIA conducted depends on the nature of the project. We can ESIA for agricultural projects, ESIA for mining projects, ESIA for industrial projects, ESIA for petroleum projects, ESIA for oil and gas projects, ESIA for waste management projects etc. In the Gambia here, we have three classes of projects

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Who are the members of the EIA working group?

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Why relevance should be given to an ESIA process

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Any other vital information for public awareness and understanding

What is important and the society needs to know is that ESIA is a decision making tool that is meant to help us protect the environment and the population at large and for posterity.