Annex 2 : Preparing The Scoping Report

A2.1 What is a Scoping Report?

A **Scoping Report** is a document submitted to the Swaziland Environment Authority to demonstrate that the EIA study for a specific project has been properly planned, and that the key issues to investigate have been identified in consultation with relevant interested and affected parties.

The **Scoping Report** provides the framework, or "Terms of Reference" to guide and direct the EIA study and is usually prepared by an environmental specialist or consultant employed by the project proponent. The **Scoping Report** is a very important document as the quality and utility of the work done in an **EIA** study depends to a considerable extent upon it.

EIA work may only commence when the Swaziland Environment Authority has agreed that the **Scoping Report** is acceptable. The subsequent **EIA Report** will then be judged by the extent to which it conforms to the framework laid out in the **Scoping Report**. However, it is important to note that the **Scoping Report** is not a detailed rigid work programme that must be adhered to at all costs, it is a framework document. As **EIA** work progresses it is often necessary to change the orientation of work as new impacts are identified or studies reveal that impacts previously identified will not be significant. The only requirement is, that this process of change is fully justified and the reasoning behind it is detailed in the subsequent **EIA Report**.

The required form and content of the **EIA Report** and **CMP** to which the **Scoping Report** refers are contained in Annexes 4 & 5 respectively and are therefore not reproduced here.

A2.2 Why Prepare a Scoping Report?

The environment is a complex area and there are a broad range of potential issues which may be investigated in an **EIA** study (see section A2.5). However, not all issues will need to be investigated in every **EIA** study and some issues will be more important than others. The **Scoping Report** is therefore prepared to:

- ensure that the **EIA** study focuses on the key issues (such as the impacts to investigate and the study area to be considered) and that the relevant interested and affected people are consulted and participate in the decision making processes;
- provide an indication to the team carrying out the **EIA** study of the potential significance of the issues to be investigated, allowing them to allocate resources effectively;
- ensure that unnecessary time and resources are not spent investigating aspects of the development which will not give rise to potentially significant impacts;
- provide a benchmark against which the **EIA Report** may be subsequently evaluated.

This process both saves money and prevents the **EIA Report** from containing large amounts of confusing and unnecessary detail.

A2.3 When is the Scoping Report Prepared?

The **Scoping Report** must be prepared as early as possible in the project design process, this allows the analysis of different project alternatives such as siting and design options. Work on the **EIA** study may not commence until the **Scoping Report** has been approved by the Swaziland Environment Authority.

A2.4 How is a Scoping Report Prepared?

The first stage in preparing a **Scoping Report** involves consulting interested and affected parties about their concerns regarding a project and combining this information with expert opinion and established guidance on environmental impacts. This will provide a list of potentially significant impacts that should be investigated during the EIA study. Preparing the final **Scoping Report** then involves defining the management arrangements and Terms of Reference for the **EIA** study on the basis of that information.

The range of individuals, agencies and organisations to be consulted will be selected by the proponent, but should include as a minimum:

- National government ministries likely to have their areas of responsibilities affected by the proposal (for example, ministries concerned with agriculture, natural resources, transport, health and social welfare).
- Local government bodies in whose area a project is proposed or whose area is likely to be affected by the project.
- Traditional decision-making bodies (councils etc).
- Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and charities.
- Representatives of the public likely to be affected by the proposal.

Further details on Consultation and Public Participation, which are relevant to preparing a **Scoping Report** are contained in Annex 7.

Those consulted must be provided with information on the proposal and its alternatives, to enable them to indicate to the proponent the issues which concern them. In rural areas, particular attention should be paid to the methods used to consult the public and traditional authorities.

Determining the issues to be included in the **EIA** study also involves the use of expert scientific opinion and established guidance to ensure that nothing has been overlooked. Material which may assist in this process is contained in Annexes 4 & 5 (which provide guidance on the form

and content of an **EIA Report** / **CMP**) and references to further guidance are contained in Annex 8.

A2.5 Content of a Scoping Report

The **Scoping Report** should contain the following information as a minimum:

1. Introduction

- A brief background to the **Scoping Report** and summary of the proposed project and arrangements for conducting the **EIA** study.

2. Background

- A description of the major components of the project and the implementing agencies / private sector companies involved in the project.

- A background to the project - including the objectives of the project, any alternatives considered and its current status.

- Identification of any associated projects (e.g. access roads, construction camps, raw material extraction) required for the project to be implemented.

3. Organisation of the EIA Study

- The organisational structure of the **EIA** team - who is to undertake and manage the study, and who is to implement the recommendations of the study, including any relevant contractual arrangements.

- Arrangements for communication and liaison between those involved in the **EIA** work (such as the design team, proponent, environmental consultant and Swaziland Environment Authority).

- The core **EIA** team and other specialists who will be involved in carrying out the **EIA** study and a description of their expertise and experience.

4. Schedule

- A schedule and workplan for the **EIA** study including its relation to the design and implementation of the project and any other relevant milestones or key events.

5. Regulatory / Legal Framework

- Those laws, regulations and guidelines which will govern the conduct of the **EIA** and the structure and content of the **EIA Report**.

- Other relevant environmental legislation or standards that may affect the **EIA** study.

- Any contractual, intergovernmental or other agreements / arrangements which will affect the **EIA** study or implementation of its recommendations.

6. Study Area

- The geographical boundaries of the study area(s), which must include any adjacent vulnerable or sensitive areas.

7. The Scoping Process

- How the scoping process (preparing the Scoping Report) was conducted, including who was consulted, how those people or groups were identified and how they were subsequently consulted.

- The methodology, procedures and references used to identify the (i) key potentially significant impacts, and (ii) the study area.

8. Potentially Significant Impacts

- The potential sources of impact that have been identified from the project, its inputs and outputs or related components and activities - including induced development where applicable.

- The resulting potentially significant impacts that will be investigated during the EIA study (covering the implementation, operation and the decommissioning phases of the project).

- An indication of the potential significance of those impacts - indicating uncertainty where further study is required and potential for long distance / transboundary impacts or impacts of global significance.

- Potential receptors of impacts that have been identified, particularly any sensitive or vulnerable areas or groups.

- A clear summary presentation in table or matrix form of the above impacts and related information, with an explanation of any symbols used.

9. Consultation and Participation Arrangements

- Arrangements and plans for the consultation and participation of interested and affected parties that will apply during the **EIA** study as impacts are investigated and mitigation measures identified.

10. Form and Content of the EIA Report / CMP

- An undertaking from the project proponent to prepare the **EIA Report** and its associated **CMP** according to the form and content defined in Annexes 4 & 5 of these guidelines.

A2.6 Potential Environmental Impacts

The following section describes the kinds of issues that the Swaziland Environment Authority considers appropriate to discuss when identifying potential environmental impacts during the preparation of the **Scoping Report**. This section does not form a definitive checklist and preparing the **Scoping Report** will require further professional advice and reference to published environmental appraisal guidelines and check lists.

A2.6.1 Project Phases

Environmental impacts can occur throughout the lifetime of a project. Different impacts occur during the construction of a project to those that occur when it is operational. Therefore, when identifying potentially significant environmental impacts, the following three phases of a project must be considered:

- Construction and implementation or commissioning.
- Operation and production.
- Decommissioning (including the restoration of any temporary construction works).

A2.6.2 Sources of Environmental Impacts

When considering the environmental impacts which occur as a direct result of the project, or from closely related developments such as access roads or construction camps, there are a number of points to consider:

- What does the project actually do and what are the processes, inputs and outputs associated with the project (including both the main project activities and additional activities connected with setting up and operating the project, such as the storage of materials, maintenance depots and sewage connections to workers facilities)?
- What related activities will take place away from the project site (for example, transport of materials, housing for workers, new access roads and quarries)?
- Will the project result in any induced development (for example, additional traffic, squatter camps, small businesses to supply goods and services etc.)?

Direct environmental impacts associated with these activities can include the effects of pollution and other emissions to land, water and air, changes in land use and the degradation or loss of natural resources. However, the Swaziland Environment Authority uses the term "environment" in its broadest sense (see Chapter 3, Section 3.2) and is not only concerned with changes in the natural environment and increases in pollution. There are other types of impact which are equally important to people's well being, such as the impact of noise and vibration levels, odour, increased traffic accidents, changes in landscape and access to natural resources.

Note:

When identifying potentially significant impacts it is very important to consider what the effect unexpected incidents, such as extremes of climate, accidents or changes in market forces could have on the impacts arising from a project. Emergency procedures and risk or hazard assessments are often an important part of minimising environmental risk.

A2.6.3 Indirect Impacts

Often the direct environmental impacts of a proposed development are relatively easy to identify. What is more difficult, is to identify and evaluate those impacts which are *indirect* in nature. These are commonly of highly significant and can include:

- Health impacts, such as increases in malaria as a result of standing water allowing mosquitoes to breed.
- Indirect social impacts, such as a drop in water quality affecting fisheries and leading to a loss of income for downstream communities.
- Indirect environmental impacts, such as a decrease in communal land leading to overgrazing of remaining areas and resulting in land degradation.
- The collective (sometimes referred to as "cumulative") impacts from a number of small developments in a watershed or region.
- The impact of combinations of pollutants from different sources and chains of events leading to unforeseen impacts (sometimes referred to as "synergystic").

A2.6.4 Social Impacts

Changes in social, cultural and economic conditions that occur as a result of environmental impacts arising from a project are of primary importance. Maximising local employment can be a positive impact while importing labour can lead to tensions with locals, squatter's camps and health problems. Changes in income distribution and the form of compensation payments can also have a dramatic impact on social structures.

Most social impacts arising from environmental degradation are, however, more indirect in nature and careful thought is required to identify and address them. An example can illustrate this process.

Water resource development for irrigation and hydropower can cause changes in the flow of a river downstream of a project. In one case, the changes in the quality of water and reduced flow caused by a project significantly reduced an area of reeds. These reeds were used by locals to make baskets and other articles which they sold to provide valuable income. Without the resource of the reeds the people had to find an alternative source of income, which they did by taking trees from nearby woodland to process into charcoal. By doing so they contributed to an already serious problem of deforestation increasing soil depletion and erosion.

This chain of events could have been foreseen if the socio-economic importance of downstream natural resources had been investigated and likely impacts predicted. It would have been possible, either to have protected the reeds, through controlled discharges, or to have provided an alternative economic resource which could have been exploited without adding to existing environmental degradation.