
Annex 1 : Assigning Project Categories

A1.1 Project Categories

Projects may be assigned to one of three different categories:

Category 1: These are projects which are not expected to result in any significant negative environmental impacts and which do not require any additional environmental study.

Category 2: These are projects which may cause a limited number of significant negative environmental impacts, but the impacts and relevant mitigation actions are well known. These projects can be implemented after a limited environmental study called an **Initial Environmental Evaluation** or **IEE**.

Category 3: These are projects which are likely to cause a range of significant negative environmental impacts whose extent and magnitude cannot be determined without a detailed study. Similarly, appropriate mitigation measures cannot be devised until the results of this study have been obtained. These projects can only be implemented after a full **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)** study which involves detailed studies and consultations has been carried out

A1.2 Examples of Project Categories

Examples of the types of project that might be assigned to different categories are:

<i>Project Category</i>	<i>Typical Projects</i>	<i>Requirements</i>
1	Small scale developments (not located in sensitive areas), such as the construction of a small number of residential buildings and projects not involving any construction work or land use changes, such as education and rural health projects.	None
2	Medium scale developments which are well understood and may be adjacent to - but not located in - sensitive areas, such as low voltage electrical transmission lines, medium scale irrigation and drainage (100 - 200 ha) or rural road rehabilitation.	Initial Environmental Evaluation
3	Projects located in environmentally sensitive areas or involving major infrastructure or land use changes such as dams, factories or large scale afforestation.	Environmental Impact Assessment

The second schedule of the Environmental Audit, Assessment and Review regulations also

contains indicative lists of projects for different categories. Note that these lists are *only an indication* of the types of project that might be assigned to each category and in reality the decision must be made on a case by case basis by considering a number of factors related to the size, nature and location of the project and the scale of the likely impacts.

A1.3 Assigning Project Categories

The definition of the environment in these guidelines (paragraph **3.2.1**) is important in deciding on the likely impacts which may arise from a project. Those who are not familiar with this definition should consult it before proceeding.

Carrying out a full **EIA** study can involve investing significant time and resources in investigating and taking account of the potentially significant environmental impacts arising from a project. Assigning project categories is, therefore, essentially the process of deciding if the potential of a project to cause negative environmental impacts is significant enough to warrant the time and expense of either a full EIA study or an IEE, which is a more limited study .

In order to make the decision on assigning a project category, consider the indicative lists in the first schedule of the regulations and the table above, and then ask the following questions. If the answer to any of the questions is “yes” then the project is likely to require some form of assessment and should be assigned to category 2 or 3.

- **Sensitivity of the Location**

Is the development is to be located in an area which is:

- | | | |
|----|--|----------|
| 1. | particularly sensitive to development? | YES / NO |
| 2. | rich in cultural resources? | YES / NO |
| 3. | or in - or nearby - an environmentally sensitive area? | YES / NO |

(Annex 9 provides additional guidance on what is meant by an “environmentally sensitive area”)

- **Nature of the Expected Impacts**

Are there any potentially significant negative environmental impacts related to either the construction, operation or decommissioning of the project, and is there uncertainty any as to their significance?

YES / NO

These could be impacts associated with issues such as any significant land use changes or infrastructure development, potential emissions to air or water, the production of solid waste, impacts on communal or individual property and access rights or any significant social, cultural or health impacts related to the above.

- **Impact Receptors**
Are the potential receptors of any impacts - i.e those affected by the development - particularly sensitive to change (for example, schools, valuable crop-producing fields, water supplies, poor people)?

YES / NO

- **Associated Development**
Is there any likelihood of significant induced or associated development (such as new access roads, construction camps, worker's accommodation, raw materials extraction or traffic movements)?

YES / NO

Note:

The objectives of some projects, such as reforestation or implementation of a wastewater treatment plant, are primarily to improve the environment. These projects should not be automatically assigned to category 1, as they can easily lead to unintended negative impacts - which are commonly overlooked by focusing on the desired beneficial impacts.

A1.4 Choosing Between Category 2 and Category 3

If, by the process described above, the decision is taken that some form of assessment is required, then the next stage is to decide if the project is category 2 or category 3. This decision depends on the size and nature of any potentially significant negative environmental impacts and how much is known about the nature and location of those impacts. Answering the following questions should assist this process.

- Is the project only likely to give rise to a limited number of significant adverse impacts?
 - Are both the impacts and relevant mitigation actions well known?
- ⇒ If the answer to both these questions is “yes” then the project is likely to be a category 2 project requiring an **Initial Environmental Evaluation** or **IEE**.

An **IEE** is, in practice, a simplified **EIA** study. This simplified process is adequate because where there are limited and well understood impacts, the stringent requirements for detailed study and investigation required for a full **EIA** study are not necessary.

- ⇒ If, on the other hand, the project is likely to cause a large number of significant, adverse environmental impacts whose extent and magnitude cannot be determined without a detailed study - and appropriate mitigation measures cannot be devised until the results of this study have been obtained - then the project requires a full **EIA** study and should be

assigned to category 3.

The difference between a category 2 (**Initial Environmental Evaluation**) and category 3 (**EIA Study**) project may lie only in the size and location of a project rather than in its nature. For example, a minor access road to an existing development passing through an uninhabited area of limited ecological value may have only a limited environmental impact and be assigned to Category 2. Were that same road to pass through an environmentally sensitive area or require the relocation of a number of homesteads then it would be assigned to Category 3 and require a full **EIA Study**.

Note:

Predicting potential impact on the environment is not an exact science and the decision as to which category a project is assigned will commonly depend on the best judgement and common sense of the person responsible for making the decision. Therefore, if you are in doubt, or uncertain as to the answers to any of the above questions, you should seek expert advice from established guidelines, the Swaziland Environment Authority or other professional sources.