

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)



PERTH &
KINROSS
COUNCIL

What is Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)?

EIA is the name of the process for drawing together an assessment of significant environmental effects that are likely to arise from a proposed development. The aim of EIA is to protect the environment to ensure that the environmental implications of decision for development proposals, both positive and negative, are known by the planning authority and are taken into account before decisions are made. EIA requires options to prevent, reduce or mitigate any adverse impacts to be considered and included to off-set any significant environmental impacts that are identified.

EIA is only required in certain circumstances however. The formal process for identifying what development proposals require to undertake this assessment, and what should be included within it and how making a decision on such projects, are set out in the [Town and Country Planning \(Environmental Impact Assessment\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2017](#). Further guidance on understanding these regulations is provided in the Scottish Government's [Planning Circular 1/2017: Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations](#).

It should be noted that in certain circumstances the [Town and Country Planning \(Environmental Impact Assessment\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2011](#) still apply. Where this is the case, any formal decision of the planning authority will advise accordingly.

Within the Regulations there are five broad stages to EIA:

- **Screening:** Is a process used by developers to confirm with the Council (as planning authority) whether a project needs EIA or not. A screening opinion will be issued as EIA is required or EIA is not required. This can be requested via a [form on our website](#). We have 21 days to adopt a Screening Opinion.

Developments falling within categories described in 'Schedule 2' that meet the applicable thresholds may require EIA. To undertake this assessment, applicants may submit a request for a Screening Opinion. This process will consider whether the proposal will likely have a significant effect on the environment by virtue of its characteristics (such as its size and nature), the location (land uses or within or near to environmentally sensitive areas) and the potential impacts (the scale and nature of the impacts). Selection criteria are provided in Schedule 3 of the Regulations.

All developments falling within 'Schedule 1' of the EIA Regulations will always require EIA and do not need to be screened. Such development may advance to the Scoping or EIA Report preparation stage.

- **Scoping:** A developer may request the council to provide a Scoping Opinion for all Schedule 1 development and those Schedule 2 developments that are screened where EIA is required. This can be requested [via our form on our website](#). We have 35 days to adopt a Scoping Opinion.

This process is recommended by the Council for all EIA development to identify specific environmental topics or known sensitivities to be specifically assessed and reported (such as impacts on the landscape, noise, transport etc.) to avoid delays and uncertainties processing a planning application. The Council will undertake consultation with certain bodies as part of this process.

The Council is required to retain requests for screening and scoping and any opinions issued for at least two years. When these relate to a planning application these can be found on our [online portal](#). Copies are also available for inspection at our offices.

- **Preparation of the EIA Report (EIAR):** This is the process of preparing the actual EIA Report (EIAR), drawing all of the information together and presenting it in a cohesive way that meets the requirements of the regulations. A report must be based on any Screening Opinion where one was given and it must also be prepared by competent experts be accompanied by statements to verify the expertise and qualifications of such experts. A separate Non-Technical Summary (NTS) must also be prepared as part of the EIAR.
- **Submission of a planning application:** An application for planning permission for EIA development must be accompanied by an EIAR. The Council cannot grant permission for EIA development without consideration of environmental impacts as assessed through an EIAR. Where an EIAR is required and has not been submitted the Council will allow 21 days for the report to be submitted. The submission of an EIAR is notified and published on our website, the Edinburgh Gazette and local press. Interested parties have at least 30 days to comments on the report.
- **Decision making:** The Council has a statutory duty to have regard to the EIAR, and any supplementary environmental information it may require, in considering the likely or potential environmental impacts when appraising a planning application against planning policy and other material considerations.

This appraisal will be outlined in the Council's 'Report of Handling' (including Committee reports). Where an EIA application is determined, we will also provide information within any decision notice information about the development, a summary of the environmental information and consultations undertaken and, if we approve the application, detail or reasoned conclusion for granting permission and specify any planning conditions, mitigation measures or monitoring measures that the developer is required to adhere to.

To assist the processing of your application we request that all documents are submitted in PDF format. Where possible, documents should not exceed 10MB in size for receipt by email – which may require them to be split in to a number of emails. Large submissions, such as your EIAR, can also be submitted on a pen-drive or CD.

Perth & Kinross Council also provide a [Pre-Application Service](#); which can be used to complement the EIA Screening and Scoping Process to receive advice on all aspects of the proposed development and how this might relate to environmental considerations, whether or not EIA is required.

We actively encourage the use of [Processing Agreements](#) which can provide more certainty on the route and timescales for determination, which can be particularly helpful for EIA development. These agreements will also set out, for both the applicant and the Council, the likely information required to assess your application – including the EIAR and other stand-alone information.

Completed EIA Screening or Scoping Request Forms and information submissions should be sent to:

DevelopmentManagement@pkc.gov.uk or:

Development Management
Perth & Kinross Council
Pullar House
PH1 5GD

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