

What is EIA?

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is a statutory process that ensures that significant environmental effects of a development proposal are fully examined, understood and taken into account before a planning decision is made.

The EIA process includes screening, scoping, and production and submission of an Environmental Statement (ES). The ES is prepared by the developer (applicant or agent) and submitted with the planning application.

When is an EIA required?

EIA is required for certain types of development as described in schedule 1 or schedule 2 of the [EIA \(Scotland\) Regulations 2011](#). These include:

- [Schedule 1 development](#) – usually very large scale developments with obvious environmental effects and always require an EIA.
- [Schedule 2 development](#) – where the specific development is judged likely to give rise to **significant environmental effects** then an EIA is required. To determine whether an EIA is needed, a planning authority prepares a screening opinion.

The National Park is categorised as a 'sensitive area' in the EIA legislation. All developments listed in schedule 2, no matter what size or scale, ignoring the thresholds, must be screened to determine whether EIA is required.

Examples of schedule 2 developments common in the National Park include:

- Urban projects such as housing, car parking;

- Tourism and leisure projects including hotels, chalets, caravan or camp sites, holiday villages, and golf courses;
- Renewable energy projects such as run-of-river hydro projects and single wind turbines.

Screening to determine whether EIA is required

If you are unsure whether an EIA is required for your development proposal you should ask the National Park Authority to provide a screening opinion. The minimum information you need to submit is:

- A plan to identify the land;
- A description of the nature and purpose of the development and its possible effects on the environment; and
- Other information that you wish to provide.

We have **3 weeks** to respond (unless an extension is agreed) and confirm whether an EIA is required or not. [Schedule 3](#) of the EIA Regulations sets out the selection criteria we use to decide if an EIA is required. We may undertake consultations but these are not necessary at this stage. If we do not respond within 3 weeks, and an extension is not agreed, or if you disagree with the opinion that an EIA is required, then you can ask the Scottish Government to make a screening direction. EIA screening opinions and directions are published on our website.

The development should be screened as soon as possible to ensure any environmental effects are taken into account in the design, siting and detail of the proposal. It also avoids delay, as planning decisions cannot be made where an EIA is required. We advise you request an EIA screening opinion at the pre-application stage.

Procedure when EIA is required

An Environmental Statement must be prepared by the applicant. As a starting point, applicants are advised to study the advice in [Planning Advice Note 58 on Environmental Impact Assessment](#), which should be read in conjunction with the Scottish Government guidance contained in [Circular 3/2011](#) and the [EIA Regulations](#) themselves.

The circular sets out the information that must be included in an Environmental Statement (ES). It is more than a description of the proposal and a series of survey results but it also includes:

- A Non Technical Summary;
- A description of the significant effects of the development on the environment;
- An outline of the alternatives studied; and
- The mitigation measures envisaged to avoid, reduce and remedy significant adverse effects.

Scoping to determine what information should be covered by an EIA

EIA scoping is where the scope of the environmental assessment is determined, taking into account the nature of the proposal and its location, as well as the likely environmental effects and their significance. The scoping exercise with the National Park Authority can help identify the main issues early on and where mitigation measures may be needed. It helps the ES preparation and speeds up the process. We will be proportionate in the information and analysis that we require. Applicants may like to study the advice in the EC guidance on [EIA Scoping and Scoping checklists](#)

We strongly advise you request a scoping opinion from the National Park Authority prior to preparation of your ES. The minimum information you need to submit is:

- A plan to identify the land
- A description of the nature and purpose of the development and its possible effects on the environment
- Other information that you wish to provide at this preliminary stage.

We have **5 weeks** to undertake consultations and provide a scoping response setting out what environmental assessments are required. We may request a joint meeting with you and the statutory consultees who include:

- Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)
- Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA)
- Historic Scotland
- Transport Scotland or Roads Authority
- Local Authority Departments such as flooding, environmental health

An ES commonly contains the following information:

- Ecological, including habitat and species
- Landscape and visual amenity
- Archaeology and cultural heritage
- Outdoor access and recreation
- Hydrology and hydrogeology
- Transport/Traffic
- Noise/Vibration

Planning Applications with Environmental Statements

An **advertisement fee of £300** is required because EIA developments have to be publicly advertised. The process for determining an EIA application is similar to the normal planning application. There is a **28 day consultation period** for external organisations, and the public, to comment on the ES and the application proposal. The determination period for the planning application is **4 months** or an alternative timescale agreed via a processing agreement. If an ES addendum is required then a further 28 day consultation period is required.

Additional Links

[SNH EIA Guidance inc. the EIA Handbook](#)

[National Park Renewable Supplementary Planning Guidance \(SPG\)](#) (wind and hydro)

Further advice

Please contact the planning team at planning@lochlomond-trossachs.org or Tel: 01389 722024 for further advice. Please follow our [pre-application procedure](#) if you have a specific enquiry about a development.