

# Environmental Impact Assessment

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Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is one of the environmental policy instruments that covers and outreaches whole spectrum of environmental field. EIA should be conceived as procedure that is applied to assess possible environmental impact of the intended activity and elaborate proposals for prevention or reduction of unfavorable impact.

In opposition to legislation that regulates some certain environmental field, for example, water of air, EIA is directed towards assessment of all issues that impact environment. This assessment process should be launched at the most early phase of intended activity planning, projecting and decision-making. When implementing EIA the following direct or indirect changes in the environment caused by the implementation of an intended activity should be assessed:

- Those that impact humans, their health and safety;
- Biodiversity;
- Soil, air, water and climate;
- Landscape, cultural and nature heritage;
- Material values, as well as
- Interaction of all above mentioned fields.

Important role in the procedure for environmental impact assessment is allocated for the society to whom wide feasibility to participate in the evaluation of environmental issues as well as to affect decision-making process and consequences is given.

Requirements for procedure for environmental impact assessment in Latvia are established by the law "On Environmental Impact Assessment" and Cabinet Regulations of 17 February 2004 No. 87 "Procedure for assessment of environmental impact of intended activity". These documents are harmonized with the respective European Union Directives. The law and its subordinated regulations defines sequence of implementation of the assessment, explains rights, obligations and liabilities of all concerned parties, as well as describes result of the environmental impact assessment and its influence towards decision-making procedure.

Requirements for strategic environmental impact assessment of the Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 "On the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment" are set up in the law "On Environmental Impact Assessment" and Cabinet Regulations of 23 March 2004 No. 157 "Procedure for implementation of strategic environmental impact assessment". Strategic environmental impact assessment is an environmental impact assessment for a programming document, the implementation of which may have a substantial impact on the environment, as well as the preparation and discussing of an environmental review, the involving of the public in the preparation of the documents and decision-making. Strategic assessment is implemented for planning documents during preparation of them before they are accepted for the approval.

Further information about EIA is available in the Environment State Bureau homepage:<http://www.vidm.gov.lv/ivnvb/ivnvbe.htm>

<https://www.varam.gov.lv/en/environmental-impact-assesment>