

# ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR NEW BUILDINGS

## What is EIA?

EIA is a systematic analysis of all environmental impacts arising out of a developmental activity. Depending on type and magnitude of impacts, mitigation measures are suggested to keep the overall environmental quality intact. Efforts are also made to further enhance environmental aesthetics and socio-economics in the area.

## Who can Benefit?

EIA is worldwide accepted phenomenon for setting off impacts of a project at its initial stages. An EIA is conducted during project preparation stage and can be useful to host of industries, utilities, infrastructure projects, institutions, technology transfer projects, policy makers etc. It yields best results when done at planning stage however cases have been there when a proponent does it for a full fledge running plant and also considers post-closure.

The Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) is the nodal body in India for all environment related issues (*Know more: [www.envfor.nic.in](http://www.envfor.nic.in)*). Under Environment (Protection) Act 1986, from year 2004 onwards, Ministry has made EIA compulsory for 32 categories of projects including any new building/construction project having investment over INR 500 million or housing over 1000 people or discharging sewage over 50,000 lts/day. Based on EIA, these activities need to obtain prior environmental clearance from MoEF.

## Why IT/BPO Industry?

General perception is that ITES is the cleanest industry. In fact there are several environmental constrains, with which a modern ITES industry operate. Most important of them are:

- Change in local physiography & drainage pattern
- Dust and other pollutants generated during construction
- Disposal/Reuse of construction debris
- Safety & Hygiene during construction and operation
- Depletion of ground water
- Rise in Heat Island Effect and GHG emission
- Energy Conservation
- Release of pollutants from heavy-duty generators, rise in surrounding noise
- Traffic congestion and related pollution
- Discarded electronic waste, cables etc, which are toxic to environment
- Additional load on sewerage
- Solid Waste Management, mostly inorganic



These considerations make it inevitable to conduct an environmental assessment holistically in order to safeguard environment.

## **Methodology**

An EIA is done by a team of experts, led by an environmental specialist. Generally it is done by an EIA consultant. Though guidelines from World Bank, ADB etc. is available, following MoEF guidelines is sufficient in India. The process of obtaining environmental clearance encompasses following:

- Environmental setting/screening at site, by means of a reconnaissance survey. Possible direct and induced impacts of project are identified.
- The existing environmental quality is established by primary and secondary field data collection and monitoring of various pollutants in air, water, soil etc. continuously for one month.
- The long and short-term impacts from project are assessed using qualitative and quantitative simulation techniques.
- An Environment Management Plan (EMP) is prepared and mitigation measures suggested to offset assessed impacts. Thus EIA report is prepared.
- EIA report is submitted to local State Pollution Control Board, who in turn organizes a public hearing and issues NOC.
- NOC alongwith EIA report is submitted to MoEF who in turn awards the Environmental Clearance and the project proponent can legally start construction.

## **Time Taken**

The entire EIA and clearance process normally takes 3-4 months but EIA done during Monsoon period is not valid.

## **What's way out?**

People generally used to avoid this process and escape in order to save time and money. With the rising SC intervention and environmental litigations, more and more industries are becoming intelligent about such matters as it also affects their global reputation and relations with overseas client. GE Capital was the first company to get this study done and clearance obtained for its call center at Jaipur.

*To know more please refer: [www.cholarisk.com](http://www.cholarisk.com)*