



Recommendation of the Council on  
the Assessment of Projects with  
Significant Impact on the  
Environment

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## **Date(s)**

Adopted on 08/05/1979

## **Background Information**

The Recommendation on the Assessment of Projects with Significant Impact on the Environment was adopted by the OECD Council on 8 May 1979 on the proposal of the Environment Committee (now called Environment Policy Committee). The Recommendation advises Adherents to integrate environmental considerations, using environmental impact assessment (EIA) into the planning of all projects having a potentially significant impact on the environment. It recommends that EIA should consider, where possible, alternative solutions of project implementation, measures for mitigating eventual environmental impacts, practical measures for ensuring public participation and post-EIA monitoring of actual environmental effects.

## **THE COUNCIL,**

**HAVING REGARD** to Article 5 b) of the Convention on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development of 14 December 1960;

**HAVING REGARD** to the Declaration on Environmental Policy of 14 November 1974 adopted by the Environment Committee at Ministerial level;

**RECALLING** in particular paragraph 9 thereof, in which the Governments of OECD Member countries declare that: "In order to prevent future environmental deterioration, prior assessment of the environmental consequences of significant public and private activities should be an essential element of policies applied at the national, regional and local levels";

**HAVING REGARD** to the Recommendation of the Council of 21 September 1978 for Strengthening International Co-operation on Environmental Protection in Frontier Regions [C(78)77(Final)];

**CONSIDERING** that significant public and private development projects, during execution and subsequent operation, may generate direct and indirect impact on the natural and man-made environment; that such impact may significantly reduce the potential short and long-term benefits expected from such projects; and that in some cases irreversible environmental damage and loss of amenities may result;

**RECOGNISING** that the capability for forecasting, or dealing with environmental impacts of such projects and for identifying and acting on opportunities for environmental enhancement is greater than in the past;

**RECOGNISING** that the use, where appropriate, of procedures for assessing environmental impact can improve development decisions;

**RECOGNISING** that Member countries have varying legislative, institutional and administrative frameworks within which the assessment of environmental and other impacts either takes place already or can be incorporated;

### **On the proposal of the Environment Committee;**

#### **I. RECOMMENDS** that Member Governments:

1. Integrate substantive environmental considerations into arrangements for regional and land-use planning and, using environmental assessment procedures, as appropriate, into the planning and decision-making process of all projects having potentially significant impact on the environment.
2. Co-ordinate the procedures for, and the form and timing of, the appropriate assessment of the environmental impact as an input to the planning and decision-making process, thus ensuring early consideration of measures for mitigating environmental impact, for enhancing environmental quality, and for avoiding undue delays of projects.
3. Incorporate, where relevant alternative solutions in the assessment of environmental impact, so that thorough analyses of projects can be made with a view to arriving at the best environmental options.
4. Include practical and appropriate measures for consulting public authorities and other organisations having functions and responsibilities relevant to the environmental impact of projects.
5. Introduce, where appropriate, practical measures for informing the public and for participation by those who may be, directly or indirectly affected, at suitable stages in the process of arriving at decisions on projects.
6. Ensure that there are means of putting into effect measures derived from the environmental impact assessment process.

7. Introduce practical measures for monitoring the effects on the environment of important projects which have been subject to environmental impact assessment procedures.

8. Consider, in accordance with OECD Recommendations of the Council dealing with transfrontier pollution, instituting environmental assessment procedures for actions that might have significant transboundary effects.

**II. INSTRUCTS** the Environment Committee, in support of the above actions:

1. To report on the practical experience of Member countries in implementing various assessment methods and procedures.

2. To report to the Council on actions taken pursuant to this Recommendation.

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