

## **2.7.3 Describe and evaluate the use of environmental impact assessments (EIAs)**

# Key Words & Concepts

EIA

EIS

Baseline study

Mitigation

# Env'tal Impact Assessment (EIA)

- A method of **detailed survey** (required in many countries) before a major development project
- Ideally it should be independent of, but paid for by, the developer.

**What's an EIS?**

# Inv'tal Impact Statement (EIS)

- the report produced from an EIA is known as an **environmental impact statement (EIS)**

**What are the steps  
in the EIA process?**

Figure 2: Stages in the EIA process

1

**Screening**  
of **proposed projects** by local planning authority to determine if EIA is required



2

**Collection and presentation of environmental information**  
(preparation of the Environmental Statement)  
The responsibility of the developer  
The scope (material to be covered) determined with local planning authority

3

**Contents must include:**

4

1. A baseline study of the environment without the project
2. A description of the project (and if appropriate, alternatives)
3. Identification of environmental impacts
4. Proposal of mitigation measures

5



6

**Decision making by the LPA**  
Consideration of the planning application including the environmental statement after the receipt of views from statutory and non-statutory consultees and the public.

7

**Monitoring and Evaluation**

Often discussed but infrequently carried out.



# What's a Baseline Study?

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mkLU9Ni-1z4&feature=related>

This explains the process of data collection (site information) needed before development can be considered.

(The baseline study)

<http://www.diablogreen.com/environmental-services.html>

This is an example of a company who does baseline studies



# Baseline Study

The EIA should include a **baseline study**:

- a description of existing conditions to provide a starting point against which progress can be assessed or comparisons made
- Purpose:
  - to measure environmental conditions *before* development commences
  - to identify areas and species of conservation importance

- The **baseline study** needs to take place *BEFORE* the following:
  - any environmental development
  - assessment of possible impacts
  - monitoring of change during and after the development

**What about monitoring?**

# Monitoring

- By measuring conditions at the start of a project, it is possible to take later measurements, compare them with the baseline data, and determine whether change has taken place.
- For example, it would be possible to ascertain whether there are more local businesses since the start of a project, or tracking the number of migratory birds that seasonally return...

- It should be noted that environmental data is only one part of the information used in making decisions about proposed development projects
- What other factors may weigh more heavily than environmental considerations?...

...Take a guess!



# TASK:

- Evaluate the role and possible outcomes of Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) in **two** different societal structures.
  - *Where to start your search? Any combination of the following key search words:*
    - *UNEP*
    - *Agenda 21*
    - *Developing countries and/or LEDC*
    - *Developed countries and/or MEDC*
    - *Successes and challenges of EIA*
    - *etc...*