



QUICK TIPS

KEY MAINSTREAMING TOOLS TO INTEGRATE ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

A number of tools and methods can be used to integrate environment and climate change in EU development cooperation. There are three key tools available for integration in the identification and formulation of programmes and projects: Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Climate Risk

Assessment (CRA). These are useful to identify opportunities to avoid/minimise adverse impacts and enhance positive contributions to environmental sustainability, low carbon development and climate resilience of actions associated to higher risk or sensitivity.



Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

An SEA evaluates the environmental implications of a proposed policy, plan or programme and provides a means for looking at cumulative effects. The SEA assesses the extent to which a given policy, plan or programme **(i)** provides an adequate response to environmental and climate change-related challenges, **(ii)** may adversely affect the environment, climate resilience or contribute significantly to greenhouse gas emissions, and **(iii)** offers opportunities to enhance the state of the environment and contribute to climate resilient and low-carbon development. Ideally, an SEA should be integrated into the policy, plan or programme preparation process from its earliest stages, and the preparation process should take its recommendations into consideration. An SEA can also be done at a later stage to inform and guide policy implementation and the development of downstream regulations.

SEA is a flexible instrument that can take multiple forms, depending on the context in which it is used. In EU development cooperation SEA is mainly used in the following situations:

1. When providing **budget support** to an environmentally sensitive sector ¹. In this case the SEA can provide inputs to assess the quality of the sector strategy to be supported, and provide recommendations on the focus of the EU support programme as well as on the performance indicators.

1. Agriculture, rural development and food security; infrastructure and transport; water and sanitation; private sector development; and energy.

2. When providing broad support to an environmentally sensitive sector, in which case the SEA can provide recommendations for the formulation of the EU support programme.
3. When an action includes the support to the development or update of a national sector strategy for an environmentally sensitive sector, in which case an SEA should be foreseen as part of that support.

The SEA can produce recommendations to enhance the environment and climate change performance of an EU support programme, as well as recommendations to the national partners to enhance their sector policies or strategies. Recommendations to national policies and strategies can also be addressed by the EU through its policy dialogue with the partner government.

- The environmental and climate change screening process in [Annex 3](#) of the mainstreaming guidelines (*Integrating the environment and climate change into EU international cooperation and development*) is used to decide on the need of preparing an SEA. [Annex 5](#) of the guidelines also provides a model Terms of Reference (ToR) for an SEA.
- An [SEA Booklet](#) (*Strategic Environmental Assessment in EU development cooperation, A handful of tips to get it right!*) is also available with tips for a successful SEA.
- Examples of SEAs prepared in the context of EU development cooperation can be found in capacity4dev.eu.



Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

An EIA, as defined by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), is an analytical process that systematically examines the possible environmental and climate change consequences of a project's implementation. The EIA provides a way of assessing key issues effectively and transparently, and highlights opportunities to achieve wider environmental objectives. An EIA is carried out for new projects that are likely to have significant adverse impacts on the environment. It is normally conducted by the project promoter prior to investment and submitted to the relevant regulatory authorities as part of development consent procedures. Subsequently, the authorities will grant permission to proceed, reject the project or demand mitigation measures. The EIA should be of high quality and look at alternatives that can minimise environmental impacts and maximise potential benefits. Based on the EIA, an Environmental Management Plan (EMP) is drawn up and serves to monitor mitigation actions. The EMP must be reflected in the project's contractual documents.

In some instances social impacts are addressed together with environmental impacts in the form of an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment.

Often national EIA systems are used, but the EU must ensure these are up to the EU standard; otherwise more rigorous assessments may be required. The EU standard is the EIA Directive (Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU).

- The environmental and climate change screening process in [Annex 3](#) of the mainstreaming guidelines (*Integrating the environment and climate change into EU international cooperation and development*) is used to decide on the need of preparing an EIA. [Annex 6](#) of the guidelines also provides a model ToR for an EIA.



Climate Risk Assessment (CRA)

A CRA is a prior assessment of a project to examine its climate risks in terms of project exposure, potential climate impacts and risk mitigation capacity. The CRA results in recommendations concerning measures to reduce a variety of climate-related risks and optimise opportunities for ensuring that a project contributes to environmental and economic sustainability in the face of climate change. Based on the CRA, a climate risk management plan (CRMP) is drawn up and serves to monitor mitigating actions. In many cases, it is possible to carry out a simplified CRA, which is based on rapid screening using available evidence. The CRMP should be reflected in the contractual documents.

- The environmental and climate change screening process in [Annex 3](#) of the mainstreaming guidelines (*Integrating the environment and climate change into EU international cooperation and development*) is used to decide on the need of preparing a CRA. [Annex 9](#) of the guidelines also provides a model ToR for a CRA.