

EIA Factsheet

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is important because it ensures that the likely effects of a proposed development on the environment are understood.

National Grid is committed to minimising, so far as practicable, the impact of its proposals on the environment and communities. We take the information obtained from the EIA fully into account before a decision is made as to whether a proposed development can go ahead.

For certain types of project an EIA is not required. Even when this is the case, we will always carry out environmental impact studies and produce an Environmental Report.

Aspects of the environment likely to be considered as part of the EIA include:

- Population
- Flora and fauna
- Soil
- Water
- Air
- Climatic factors
- Architectural and archaeological heritage
- Landscape
- The inter-relationship between the above factors

We work closely with statutory consultees such as the Environment Agency, as well as a wide range of local environment groups, landowners and communities to discuss any issues raised and to decide whether some factors should carry more weight than others. For example, we would need to look more closely at a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) than an area of land without official designation.

The assessments are conducted by qualified experts in ecology, archaeology and landscape who undertake field surveys to establish the potential impacts of any development.

Ecological field surveys

Our qualified ecologists carry out detailed surveys to gather information about protected species and habitats, identify plant species and record any particular areas of interest. This is to ensure that the effects of National Grid's proposals on local wildlife and plant species can be avoided or minimised.

Habitat surveys

Habitat surveys can be carried out all year round, although plant species are most readily identifiable in spring and summer. If signs of important plant species are found in areas which are likely to be affected by the proposed development, further detailed surveys may be undertaken at the appropriate time of year.

We talk to nature conservation bodies about our surveys to identify protected species, for example, badgers; bats; dormice; great crested newts; reptiles; otters and water voles, and carry out breeding bird and winter and migratory bird surveys.

Archaeological field surveys

Our professional archaeologists conduct field surveys to consider features such as scheduled monuments, conservation areas and listed buildings. We identify areas of local archaeological interest or areas of potential interest which have not been previously recorded. The information collected from the survey is used to ensure effects on local archaeology can be avoided or minimised.

We talk to local planning authorities and historical environmental organisations and obtain permission from landowners and tenants before beginning any work on their land. If we need to dig trial trenches they are carefully backfilled following examination and the land is fully reinstated to its previous condition.

Landscape field surveys

National Grid landscape architects carry out surveys to gather information about the local landscape. We look at how the landscape is valued, its condition and quality and how sensitive it is to the proposed development to ensure that any adverse effects can be avoided or minimised.

The surveys can take place at any time during the year as seasonal differences are taken into consideration.

Environmental Statement

The findings of the EIA are presented in an Environmental Statement (ES). This provides information about the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by a proposed development and any measures which may need to be taken to minimise, mitigate and, where necessary, compensate for any significant adverse effects.

For further information see:

The Infrastructure Planning
(Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2009
http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2009/uksi_20092263_en_1

Environmental Impact Assessment: A guide to procedures
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/environmentalimpactassessment>

