



Netherlands Commission for
Environmental Assessment



ESY-MAP: a tool to analyse country ESIA Systems

ESY-MAP is a diagnostic tool for assessing the quality of a national Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) system. Practitioners and stakeholders involved in ESIA in a country jointly apply the tool in an interactive workshop. They analyse ESIA requirements and performance with the help of a standard set of questions. The outcome is a graphical representation of the quality of the current ESIA system. This informs a shared view on strong and weak points, and where action is most needed.

How does it work?

At the heart of the ESY-MAP is a questionnaire that addresses key elements of the ESIA system. It consists of two levels. There are 37 *Quick Scan* questions that address the ESIA system more generally. Each of these questions is linked to the second level: a set of 150 detailed questions for more refined analysis. These 150 questions make up the *Detailed Scan* of the ESIA system. The ESY-MAP explores both regulatory requirements and practice. It considers ESIA steps prior to project approval, but also at what happens afterwards in decision making and during



project implementation. The mapping questionnaire is presented in an excel workbook of interlinked spreadsheets. When completed, the ESY-MAP presents in a series of graphs both statistics on ESIA and the stakeholders' expert judgement scores on ESIA quality.

ESIA Process



When to use it?

Firstly, when there is a need to get insight into what works well in ESIA, and what are the **priorities for improvement**. The stakeholders in the room jointly identify topics to be strengthened to increase the effectiveness of ESIA application. Secondly, to **track the development** of the ESIA system of a particular jurisdiction. For example, in a number of Central African countries, a series of mappings was undertaken in 2005/06 and then again in 2013. Comparison of the results revealed a significant evolution, both in terms of the legislative framework for ESIA and of performance in practice. For example, there were improvements in the production of ESIA reports as well as in environmental and social authorisation.

Flexible benchmark

The questionnaire is based on the NCEAs and SAIEA's (Southern African Institute for Environmental Assessment) understanding of good practice in ESIA systems. It is also informed by the standards for ESIA applied by international financing institutions. However, the ESY-map is not intended to be normative; there is not one ESIA system that is the best for all countries. ESIA arrangements should fit the specific country situation. The ESY-map facilitates the discussion on what the priorities for ESIA improvement are, given the context.

A work in progress

The ESY-MAP is the result of combining two existing tools: *ESIA Mapping* developed by the NCEA and the *ESIA Barometer*, developed by SAIEA. Before 2019, these mapping tools have been applied over 40 times in many different countries. Each application brought new lessons about the tools' effectiveness. This led to regular updating and revising, and finally the integration of the two tools into the ESY MAP. In the coming years we will continue to apply and improve the ESY-MAP, including developing a comparable tool for Strategic Environmental Assessment.



What is needed to run the ESY MAP?

- Preparation:** An ESY-MAP session requires preparation. The ESIA administration needs to gather statistical data and procedural details on ESIA, in advance. Also, the workshop logistics should be taken care of.
- Moderator:** Preferably two experienced ESY-MAP moderators should facilitate the mapping session.
- Participants:** Representatives of all relevant stakeholder groups in the ESIA system should be invited to the session, including: the ESIA administration, sectoral administrations (ministries), local governments, members of the civil society, consultancies, investors and their banks, academics. Practice has shown that a group of approximately 20 participants works best.
- Time:** A Detailed Scan workshop takes 2 days, preferably consecutive days. A Quick Scan session can be done in less time.

Quick Scan	Section I ESIA process	Section II Enabling conditions	Section III Capacities	Section IV ESIA performance	Section V Context
Detailed Scan					
Dashboard					
Tables					
Question No.	Quick Scan			Score	
SECTION I – ESIA PROCESS					
1	Screening Is there a screening mechanism that is effective in practice in ensuring that high risk projects are subjected to an ESIA and low risks projects are not?				

Contact

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