

A Systems Approach to ESIA Effectiveness

NCEA/ISBN 978-90-718-8700-0

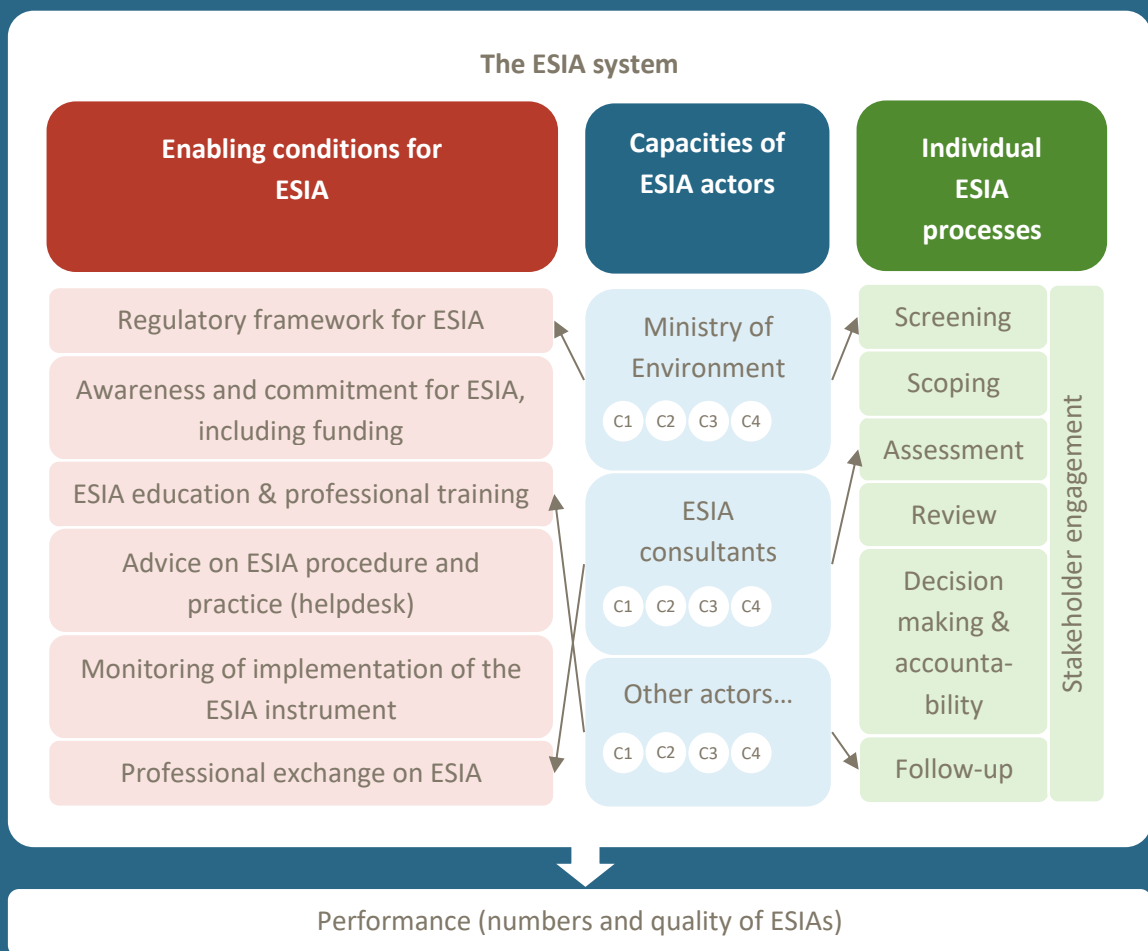


Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
2. CHARACTERISING THE SYSTEMS APPROACH TO ESIA EFFECTIVENESS	2
2.1 Better enabling conditions for ESIA: How to track improvement?.....	2
2.2 More ESIA capacity: How to determine when it is sufficient?.....	4
2.3 Better ESIA processes: When has an individual ESIA improved?.....	6
2.4 Better system performance: When has ESIA practice improved?.....	7
3. APPLICATION OF THE ESIA SYSTEM APPROACH IN PRACTICE	8
3.1 Links between enabling conditions, capacities and ESIA processes	8
3.2 How does NCEA apply the systems approach in practice?	8
3.3 Opportunities and threats: Cooperation activities in their context.....	10
3.4 Using the indicators to measure the NCEA's performance.....	10
4. THE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	11
4.1 ESIA performance indicators – Enabling conditions level	12
4.2 ESIA performance indicators – Actor level.....	16
4.3 ESIA performance indicators – Process level	22
4.4 ESIA performance indicators – System performance.....	24

1. Introduction

The Netherlands Commission for Environmental Assessment (NCEA) has been involved in Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) practice in the Netherlands for over 30 years, and in international cooperation for 25 years. Within the Netherlands, the NCEA provides independent quality assurance and operates as an ESIA/SEA knowledge centre. Outside the Netherlands, the NCEA supports ESIA/SEA capacity development, in addition to advice on quality assurance and knowledge sharing.

The NCEA makes its knowledge, experience and lessons learned available to its direct partners, and to a wider audience of ESIA/SEA practitioners, scientists and the general public, through a variety of channels: the NCEA website, newsletters, the NCEA-Views & Experiences series, (joint) publications and key sheets.

This updated publication introduces the reader to an ambitious endeavour the NCEA has embarked on in 2012: the translation of its practice experience into a so-called *systems approach*. This approach is intended to be used both for analysing existing ESIA and SEA systems in the countries with whom the NCEA cooperates, as well as for measuring the results of the contribution that the NCEA makes to improving these systems.

The system approach has been developed for both ESIA and SEA. This publication, however, concentrates solely on ESIA, in a separate publication the systems approach is detailed for SEA¹.

Below, in chapter 2, the systems approach is further explained. In chapter 3 we set out how we apply this approach in practice. The last chapter contains a series of tables with a detailed overview of the ESIA system results, indicators and means of verification we have defined for the systems approach.

It is important to emphasise that this systems approach to ESIA and SEA is a work in progress. We adapt the approach as we gain practical experience with this way of working, and in response to feedback we receive from the partners we work with. In line with this, this current publication is an update of the original 2014 and 2018 versions. A new edition of this publication will be prepared when our understanding of the systems approach has evolved further.

¹ See: NCEA, 2022, A Systems Approach to SEA Effectiveness.

2. Characterising the systems approach to ESIA effectiveness

In its international work, the NCEA strives to contribute to 'better enabling conditions for ESIA, more ESIA capacity and better ESIA processes' in the countries with which it cooperates. In 2012, we were challenged by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which subsidizes the majority of our international programmes, to make these objectives more tangible and measurable. In response, the international section of the NCEA made an effort to translate the lessons learned from practice into the 'ESIA systems approach' presented here.

Starting point for this approach is the idea that if we want to understand ESIA effectiveness, we need to take into view the whole ESIA system, rather than looking solely at different components such as ESIA regulation. We distinguish three levels in our systems approach: the enabling conditions level (see par. 2.1), the actor level (2.2) and the process level (2.3). At the enabling conditions level we look at key conditions that should be fulfilled within a system to enable good practice ESIA. The actor level is about the capacities of actors that have a role in the ESIA system. At the process level, we look at how individual ESIA processes are undertaken.

In keeping with the overall NCEA objective to contribute to 'better enabling conditions for ESIA, more ESIA capacity and better ESIA processes', we have identified key results that should be achieved at each level. Each result is subsequently translated into a set of indicators, including the means of verification that allow assessment of the progress on that result. More detail is provided in chapter 4. In most cases, the assessment is qualitative, although some indicators are assessed quantitatively. Note that, in some instances, the means of verification refer to separate methods that the NCEA has developed, or which are currently under development. These methods are not elaborated in great detail in this publication, but more information is available elsewhere (see www.eia.nl).

2.1 Better enabling conditions for ESIA: How to track improvement?

The NCEA considers an ESIA system as having a number of 'enabling conditions' that are necessary for effective ESIA practice. The system can be considered to be improved, when one or more of these conditions have been strengthened. An ESIA system is generally bounded by country borders, but in a country where ESIA is decentralised, the system could also be specific to a region, province or district. Similarly, where countries have co-ordinated their ESIA approaches, a supra-national ESIA system could be considered. At the enabling conditions level, we have identified six key conditions (see figure 1 below).

In the view of the NCEA, these six conditions need to be fulfilled for an ESIA system to be effective. For each of the six conditions we have formulated the results that we would hope to see as we work with partners to ensure that each of the conditions is operational within their ESIA system. For each result we have defined a set of indicators to measure progress on these results, as well as means of verification.

For example:²

⇒ **Condition:** Provide a regulatory framework for ESIA & decision making
An important enabling condition within an ESIA system is the provision of a regulatory framework, for the ESIA process but also for the decision-making process that is based on the ESIA (which could be a project approval or environmental permitting decision, depending on the jurisdiction).

⇒ **Result:** Regulation is in place and of sufficient quality
This is a result the NCEA and its partners will jointly work towards in cooperation programmes. Indicators below measure the level of achievement of this result.

⇒ **Indicator:** ESIA regulation established (yes/no)

⇒ **Means of verification:** Analysis of legal documents, interviews

⇒ **Indicator:** Combination scores from ESIA map on law ESIA and law decision making

⇒ **Means of verification:** ESY map³



Figure 1

Another example would be:

⇒ **Condition:** Raise awareness, commitment and funding for ESIA.

Within an ESIA system there needs to be systematic effort to raise awareness on ESIA, to raise commitment for the instrument of ESIA, and to ensure that sufficient funding is available for ESIA.

⇒ **Result:** Relevant stakeholders are aware of the ESIA regulation

⇒ **Indicator:** scores for level of awareness NGOs, consultants, universities (learning institutes), knowledge institutes.

⇒ **Means of verification:** ESY map

⇒ **Result:** Sufficient budget is allocated to undertake ESIA related tasks at relevant actors, such as a Ministry for Environment

⇒ **Indicator:** earmarked ESIA budget in governmental budget exist (yes/no),
⇒ **Means of verification:** Interviews and (if available) analysis of government budgets

⇒ **Indicator:** Budget available for individual ESIA cases: (yes/no), rough estimate budgets & trends, budget considered sufficient?

⇒ **Means of verification:** Interview with (panel of) ESIA practitioners

² See chapter 4 for all six enabling conditions and all corresponding results and indicators.

³ For more information on ESY mapping, see the ESY mapping key sheet at www.eia.nl

2.2 More ESIA capacity: How to determine when it is sufficient?

Capacity development at actor level

It is essential for the effectiveness of an ESIA system that the actors that have a responsibility in this system have the capacity to perform their role. This applies both to governmental actors with formal roles in the system, and to non-governmental actors that have more informal roles, such as NGOs and Universities. In the NCEA systems approach, the roles of actors are related to enabling conditions. See figure 2. Note that we use the term actor loosely. For example, a network such as that of consultants that undertake ESIA is included here as an actor that contributes to enabling conditions for ESIA.

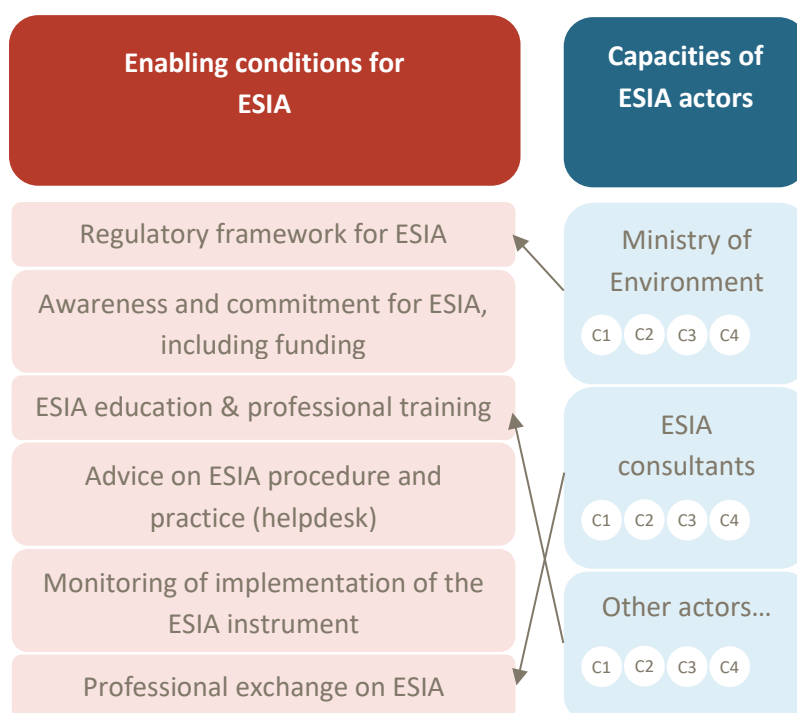


Figure 2

NB: The illustrated relations and actors in this figure are an example, the nature of the actors and their contribution to enabling conditions will vary depending on the context of a country.

But what does ‘capacity’ mean in this context? And when can it be concluded that an actor has sufficient capacity? In the past decade, the NCEA made use of the 5C capacity model⁴, in which actors need to have five distinct capacity, together making up the overall capacity of an actor or network of actors. After over ten years of using this model, we concluded that in practice, a regrouping and rephrasing of capacities would better fit the NCEAs actual operations as well as the partner’s realities. The newly (2022) adopted sets of NCEA indicators for actor’s capacity are the following:

- **Mandate, structure, and resources:** for example, does the actor have a clear mandate for what it tries to do? Is structural financing secured to execute this mandate? Etc

⁴ IOB evaluation No. 335: Facilitating resourcefulness. Evaluation of Dutch support to capacity development (2011).

- **Management:** does the actor have a clear vision of where to go to? Does it anticipate new developments? Does it have effective procedures instructing staff what should be done under which circumstances? Etc.
- **Knowledge and skills:** is sufficient expertise available to execute ESIA related tasks? Are financing and mechanisms in place to access external expertise if needed? Etc.
- **Maintaining strategic relations:** does the actor have access to an effective network? Does it effectively manage its relations? Does it justify its decisions? Etc.

To strengthen the capacity of the actors that have a role in the ESIA system, the NCEA needs to consider these four capacities. For each we have formulated ESIA specific indicators and means of verification. For example⁵:

- ⇒ **Capacity:** Mandate, structure and resources
 - ⇒ **Indicator:** Mandates clearly defined in legal texts (yes/no)
 - ⇒ **Means of verification:** Analysis of legal texts.

Another adjustment that we have made in this 2022 version of the Systems Approach for ESIA, is that the indicators have been specified for different sets of actors: Environment Agencies, Environmental and social assessment professionals (ESAPs), NGOs, CSOs and civil society, “Other government agencies” with a specific role in ESIA, and “Other actors” if relevant (see Chapter 4).

Capacity development of persons

Traditionally, some of the activities of the NCEA are targeted towards individuals, oftentimes a small selection of individuals from different organisations. These activities are geared towards supporting individual professional development to enable ESIA professionals to perform their specific tasks within the organisation or network that they operate. This usually involves training and/or coaching, often (preferably!) as components of actor capacity development interventions. For this reason, the NCEA has also identified a set of indicators that can track progress in capacity development at the level of an individual person. These are also further described in Chapter 4.

In its work the NCEA aims to help actors across the 4 capacities for actors, as well as strengthening capacity of individuals within organisations. The capacity of an actor is considered to have improved if an actor within the ESIA system scores better on the indicators for one or more of the 4 actor capacities and/or the indicators for individual capacity.

⁵ See for all four capacities and all corresponding results and indicators chapter 4.

2.3 Better ESIA processes: When has an individual ESIA improved?

Together the ESIA actors identified have the capacity both to run an effective ESIA system, and to deliver effective ESIA processes. See figure 3.

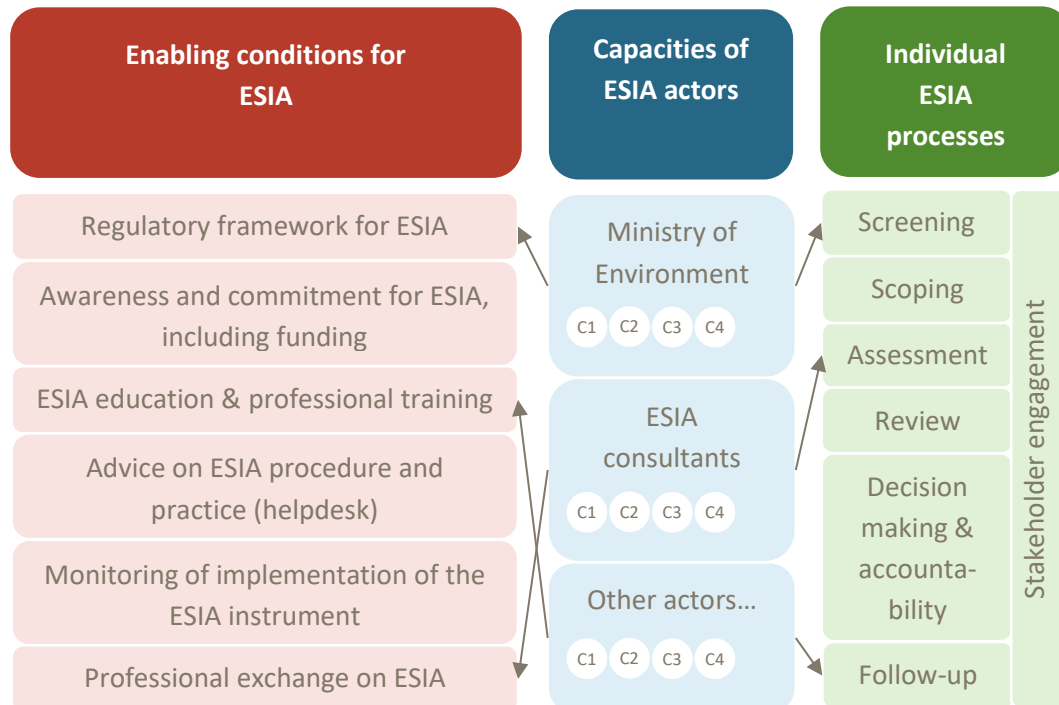


Figure 3

NB: The illustrated relations in this figure are an example, the nature of the actors and their contribution to enabling conditions and to the ESIA process will vary depending on the context of a country

For the process level the NCEA formulated the following six results that identify an effective ESIA process:

- **Good quality** of the ESIA report and process
- **Improved quality of the decision making** process
- Improved sustainability of the approved **project**
- **Improved capacity of actors** (learning through training on the job)
- **Rate of satisfaction with the NCEA advice.**
- **Improved governance, e.g. ESIA led to stronger collaboration between government agencies.**

In the same way as for the enabling conditions and actor levels, we have formulated indicators and means of verification for each result. For example:

- ⇒ **Result:** Good quality of ESIA report and process
 - ⇒ **Indicator:** Assessment is of complete and appropriate scope (yes/partially/no)
 - ⇒ **Means of verification:** NCEA review of ESIA report

To assess the results of its efforts at the level of an ESIA process the NCEA looks at both the 'product' (ESIA report) and the 'process' (ESIA process, including follow-up). Also, we look at the relationship between the ESIA and compliance and enforcement of the environmental

conditions that have been based on the ESIA. Within the means of verification we make use of monitoring forms that NCEA has developed earlier as part of its internal monitoring system.

2.4 Better system performance: When has ESIA practice improved?

The six enabling conditions, actor capacities, and individual processes, all contribute to the overall ESIA system performance in terms of the number and quality of ESIA that are produced. To track this performance, we have also defined specific system results that the NCEA wants to contribute to, as well as indicators and means of verification for these.

For example:

- ⇒ **Result:** Increase in quality of ESIA's
 - ⇒ **Indicator:** Proportion of ESIA's considered of sufficient quality
 - ⇒ **Indicator:** Proportion of ESIA's considered influential (on decision-making and project implementation)
 - ⇒ **Means of verification** (for both indicators.): Analysis of an ESIA sample and/or interviews (for example, with those responsible for ESIA review)
- ⇒ **Result:** Improved co-ordination between governmental agencies in ESIA processes takes place
 - ⇒ **Indicator:** % Cases that other government agencies/departments are consulted in screening, scoping etc (estimate)
 - ⇒ **Means of verification:** Interviews

3. Application of the ESIA system approach in practice

3.1 Links between enabling conditions, capacities and ESIA processes

Different actors or networks of actors contribute to different enabling conditions within the ESIA system. Sometimes, one specific actor has a dominant role in one condition, such as a Ministry of Environment might have in providing a regulatory framework for ESIA. In other cases, more actors contribute to a condition. For example for the condition *Provide ESIA education and professional training*, both professional EA associations and higher education institutes can play a role. The capacities of an actor determine how well the actor is able to contribute to an enabling condition. Ultimately, this will lead to better application of the instrument ESIA (coverage) and better quality ESIA processes.

Figure 4 illustrates the relationship between enabling conditions and actors. It depicts a possible outcome of an analysis of a given enabling condition for ESIA and actor capacity. The coloured circles with a “c”, stand for the capacities singled out for strengthening in a possible cooperation programme with the NCEA, see also 3.2.

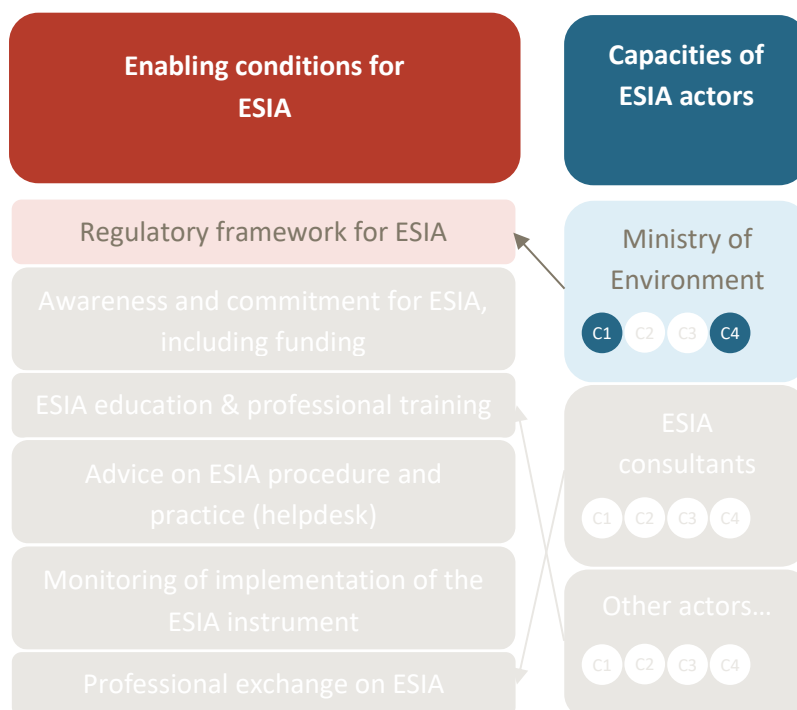


Figure 4

3.2 How does NCEA apply the systems approach in practice?

The ESIA system approach can provide a useful framework to analyse a country's ESIA system and identify those elements that need strengthening. When a multi-annual cooperation programme is being formulated, the NCEA usually starts with such a system-wide assessment. Together with our partners, we discuss the different enabling conditions that should be contained within an ESIA system. Jointly it is then decided which conditions need to be established or strengthened. In the next step, the actors are identified that play a role in

these enabling conditions. Depending on where possibilities for cooperation emerge, NCEA starts working on the conditions that have priority with the actors that are interested in cooperation.

When the NCEA starts a cooperation process with an actor, this actor is subsequently analysed according to the four capacities (see 2.2). Together with the actor, an action plan or programme is then developed to strengthen that particular actor. The cooperation programme addresses one or more of the actors' capacities (see for example the coloured circles within the Ministry of Environment box in figure 4 above).

Of course, it is rarely possible to take on all the capacity needs within a given ESIA system simultaneously. Choices have to be made depending on the scale of the cooperation and who the willing partners for cooperation are. Cooperation always starts with a request by the potential partner. Often the NCEA will work specifically with the actors and capacities that are more directly related to ESIA. In most cases, the activities supported by the NCEA concentrate on one or two levels of the ESIA system, but can lead to results at other levels. For instance, NCEA advice on a specific ESIA case may lead to changes in working procedures within an organisation or may lead to improvement in political commitment to ESIA. Similarly, as the NCEA partners strengthen their own capacities, the enabling conditions to which the partners contribute should also improve.

In box 1 below, we illustrate how the ESIA system approach influenced the design of a six year cooperation programme in Central Africa. This Central African programme was specifically intended to improve the capacity of the National Associations of ESIA professionals.

Box 1. ESIA systems approach in Central Africa

The programme that supports national associations for environmental and social impact assessment in Central Africa is known by its French acronym: PAANEEAC. PAANEEAC consisted of a small grants programme supported by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs which was implemented by the NCEA from 2008 until 2013. At the time that PAANEEAC was created, the NCEA's systems approach was not yet fully fleshed out, but the thinking behind the systems approach can be recognised in the programme design. PAANEEAC specifically supported national associations of ESIA professionals and their Secretariat for Environmental Evaluation in Central Africa (French acronym SEEAC).

These professional EA associations contribute to multiple levels in the ESIA systems they are part of, and are more stable than governmental agencies in the region which suffer a continuous turnover of staff. Through the small grant programme the associations were able to build up their capacities. For example, the associations developed in-house administrative skills, drafted annual plans and multi-year strategies, and tapped into sustainable financial resources. They could establish themselves as a credible organisation that contributed to their countries ESIA system by organising professional exchange and providing professional training opportunities, amongst others.

PAANEEAC enabled ESIA professionals to organise a platform for debate on 'steps toward better ESIA practice'. The professionals involved work in public administrations, NGOs, universities, and consultancies in Burundi, Cameroon, Congo Brazzaville, Central African Republic and Rwanda.

3.3 Opportunities and threats: Cooperation activities in their context

The NCEA's systems approach can help to identify opportunities for ESIA strengthening, to jointly with the partner decide on ambitions for change, and to define the results that partners want to achieve with the NCEA's support. Conversely, the systems view might also highlight impossibilities. For example, if the systems analysis shows specific enabling conditions or actor capacities to be a clear bottleneck for performance of the system, and there is little scope to change those, then the NCEA may opt to postpone cooperation activities until a more opportune time.

In addition, jointly with our cooperation partners, we will try to assess the context of an ESIA system to figure out if the cooperation activities are suitably timed. What is the political agenda? What is the administrative culture? Who has the power? The answers to these kinds of questions help to determine whether the proposed activities are likely to be successful in the given context. If important contextual factors are likely to be restrictive, the cooperation activities may need to be reconsidered.

3.4 Using the indicators to measure the NCEA's performance

As stated before, the original incentive to formulate the ESIA system approach was a request by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs to render the results of the NCEA's work more tangible and measurable. We have experimented with the systems approach in the NCEA working programme for 2013, and ever since. The intended results of planned activities were formulated along the lines of the criteria and indicators in the systems approach. The approach proved suitable for this use. The NCEA team is positive that the approach will also serve as a valid framework for measuring results during and at the end of a cooperation project. However more practical experience is needed to support this expectation.

Clearly, we will carefully need to focus our use of the performance indicators for each application. After all, in our country programmes we seldom work with all institutions relevant for the ESIA system, or each of the six functions of the system. So each time the NCEA will be following a limited set of results that relate to the activities that are relevant within a specific cooperation project or programme.

4. The performance indicators

In the tables on the next pages, the performance indicators are elaborated, for each of the levels (enabling conditions, actor (and individual), and process).

Note that the means of verifications are lined up with the indicator for which they are intended. If not, then the means of verification can be used for more than one of the indicators listed under that result.

If there is a reference to “partners” under means of verification, we are referring to our country partners in our cooperation activities, such as environmental protection agencies.

4.1 ESIA performance indicators – Enabling conditions level

Condition: Provide regulatory framework for ESIA & decision making		
Results	Indicators	Means of verification
ESIA regulation in place and of sufficient quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ESIA regulation established (yes/no) ▪ Combination scores from ESIA map on law ESIA and law decision making, OR: ▪ Combined result on good practice benchmark: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Scope of application consistent with ambition and capacity ○ Sufficient scope of assessment (including alternatives) ○ Participation included ○ ESIA quality control included ○ Transparency and access to information sufficiently addressed ○ Accountability sufficiently addressed ○ Clear roles, mandates & co-ordination arrangements (look also at possible unclear or overlapping competences due to decentralisation, permitting mandates etc) ○ Sufficient arrangements for compliance and enforcement ○ Relation to sectoral regulation exists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Document analysis ▪ Interviews ▪ ESIA map ▪ Assessment of regulation (of regulation changes) against benchmark (checklist approach – (yes/no) on each aspect supported by qualitative statement)
ESIA guidance exists, is widely accessible, and of sufficient quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Guidance exists (yes/no) ▪ ESIA guidance covers key sectors (yes/no) ▪ Estimation of % practitioners that have access to guidance ▪ Combined result of assessment quality against good practice benchmark: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Guidance developed in iterative and consultative process ○ Guidance appropriate for level and nature of practice ○ Guidance is practical, includes case illustrations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Document analysis (sources: govt reporting) ▪ Interviews with (panel of) practitioners ▪ Quality assessment of guidance

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Guidance makes use of existing (international) resources 	
Condition: Raise awareness and commitment for ESIA, including funding		
Results	Indicators	Means of verification
Sufficient budget is allocated to undertake ESIA related tasks at relevant organisations, such as Ministry for Environment (differentiate between donor and country budget)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Earmarked ESIA budget in governmental budgets exists (yes/no), rough estimate budgets & trends, budget considered sufficient? ▪ Budget available for individual ESIA cases: (yes/no), rough estimate budgets & trends, budget considered sufficient? ▪ Score on law decision-making. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interviews and (if available) analysis of govt budgets ▪ Interview with (panel of) ESIA practitioners ▪ ESIA map
ESIA is given attention in the public domain	Level of media coverage on ESIA	Media analysis, or more anecdotal (partners collect "cuttings")
ESIA is on political agenda, and high level decision-makers are involved in ESIA practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Government has explicit policy on development ESIA instrument (yes/no). ▪ Other agencies have explicit policy (yes/no) – and nr of policies). ▪ Nr. of times ESIA appears on relevant agenda for Cabinet meetings, or other relevant agendas, etc. (per year) ▪ Nr. of intervention moments by decision-makers in individual ESIA processes. ▪ Nr. of times decision-makers are physically present at ESIA related events. 	Reporting by partner
Sufficient level of interest and participation in ESIA related events (seminars, etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Turn-out: Nr. of participants, and ratio target audience versus who attended ▪ Appreciation for event ▪ Level of questions and discussion at event (basic/advanced) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reporting on events ▪ Where feasible: feedback from participants (evaluation forms) ▪ Analysis/interview organisers
Relevant stakeholders are aware of ESIA regulation	Scores for level of awareness NGOs, consultants, universities (learning institutes), knowledge institutes	ESIA map

There is recognizable, accepted, and effective leadership on ESIA	ESIA practitioners can identify ESIA leaders pushing/motivating better practice when asked (yes/no)	Interview with (panel of) ESIA practitioners
Condition: Provide ESIA education and professional training (NB: education = tertiary level ESIA teaching at academic institutions, training = professional development)		
Results	Indicators	Means of verification
ESIA education is available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Curricula established at teaching institutions (yes/no) ▪ Nr. of degree programmes where ESIA is taught 	Internet search (+interviews if needed)
ESIA education is of sufficient quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nr. of institutes where ESIA is taught with good reputation (academic ranking) ▪ ESIA teaching is co-ordinated or under quality control (unified curriculum etc) (yes/no), ▪ Participants/students are able to contribute to good practice? (yes/no) ▪ High scores on education participants evaluations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Internet search ▪ Interviews with ex students ▪ Interviews with (panel of) practitioners ▪ Analysis of existing course evaluations
Professional training is available (i.e. indicator is not about one-off training but about regularly organized workshops etc for ESIA professionals to further develop their skills & knowledge)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training available (yes/no) ▪ Nr. of ESIA training opportunities on annual basis (workshops etc) available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Internet search ▪ interviews with selection of practitioners if needed
Condition: Provide advice on ESIA procedure and practice (ESIA helpdesk)		
Results	Indicators	Means of verification
Helpdesk for ESIA established, accessible and used	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Helpdesk established (yes/no) ▪ Nr. of queries received ▪ Customer friendliness (see scores under quality of customer guidance in the ESIA mapping tool) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Partner reporting (tracking system helpdesk and/or interview with helpdesk experts) ▪ ESIA map
Helpdesk facilitates access to data and information relevant for ESIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Helpdesk identifies relevant (external) data bases and sources of information and brings client in contact with owner/manager (yes/no) ▪ Information management system exists giving access to (external) data bases and sources of information (yes/no) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Partner reporting (tracking system helpdesk and/or interview with helpdesk experts)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nr. of queries received 	
Helpdesk effective in influencing practice	Level of effectiveness (%) allocated by practitioners	Interviews with (panel of) ESIA practitioners
Condition: Monitor implementation ESIA instrument		
Results	Indicators	Means of verification
Adequate monitoring of ESIA implementation takes place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring activities are undertaken (yes/no) Budget is available for monitoring (yes/no) (Public) reporting on progress takes place (yes/no) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analysis Interviews
An ESIA database is maintained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Database is established (yes/no) Database is regularly updated (yes/no) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews Database analysis
Monitoring leads to ESIA improvement efforts	Nr. of actions undertaken on monitoring conclusions (feedback and follow-up)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews Partner reporting
Condition: Enable professional exchange on ESIA		
Results	Indicators	Means of verification
Professional exchange platform is established and operational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Platform exists (yes/no) Average turn-out for activities (nr. or high/medium/low) Level of activity (nr. of events or high/medium/low) % effective in influencing practice Network recognizes and promotes good practice (yes/no) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner (professional ESIA association) reporting Interview with (panel of) practitioners
ESIA professionals identify and share data and information relevant for ESIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existence of (external) data bases and sources of information actively shared (yes/no) Access to (external) data bases and sources of information facilitated among ESIA professionals (yes/no) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner (professional ESIA association) reporting Interview with (panel of) practitioners

4.2 ESIA performance indicators – Actor level

Capacity of the Environment agency (i.e. administrative agency for ESIA)		
Results	Indicators	Means of verification
Mandate, structure and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mandate clearly defined in legal texts ▪ Structural financing secured to execute mandate ▪ The actor has committed and stable leadership ▪ The actor has clear and functional organisational structure ▪ Offices established, facilities and equipment needed available ▪ Number of staff available sufficient to perform tasks ▪ Information management system exists giving access to information required to perform tasks ▪ Tools/guidance available to support tasks (working procedures, checklists, etc) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Analysis of legal texts ▪ State budget/ organisation's budget ▪ Human resources policy ▪ Workload assessment ▪ Document analysis (including guidance documents) ▪ Interviews (separately with management and work floor)
Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vision/Strategy/multi-annual plan exists and informs the work of the actor ▪ Vision/strategy/planning documents accessible and known ▪ Decisions are taken, communicated and acted upon ▪ Regular planning/ coordination meetings are held ▪ Management encourages exchange and learning ▪ Management anticipates new developments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Document analysis (including guidance documents) ▪ IMS6/data base analysis ▪ Interviews (separately with management and work floor)

⁶ Information Management System

<p>Knowledge and skills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expertise available to perform all ESIA administrative tasks (can be split into indicators for specific tasks relevant for organisation, depending on role of the actor in the ESIA system, i.e. ESIA screening, ESIA review, field inspection, providing ESIA advice to practitioners, stakeholder engagement, follow-up) ▪ Staff regularly trained and effort made to maintain knowledge and skills for tasks and institutional memory ▪ Appropriate finances and mechanisms available to access external expertise if needed (such as for ESIA review) ▪ Finances and mechanisms available to access (external) data bases and sources of information if needed (specifically for ESIA baseline and impact assessment) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ State budget/ organisations budget ▪ Interviews (separately with management and work floor)
<p>Maintaining strategic relations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Co-ordination/co-operation with relevant partners takes place ▪ Leadership in ESIA of organisation duly recognised by partners ▪ Platforms/networks/coalitions for exchange (both national and international) identified by actor, and the actor (pro)actively participates in these ▪ Actor willingly shares data and information ▪ Status of environmental agency in the government hierarchy ▪ Actor justifies decisions made to external stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interviews (separately with people inside and outside the organisation itself)

Capacity of environmental and social assessment professionals (ESAPs)		
Results	Indicators	Means of verification
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of ESAPs available is sufficient to meet the demand for ESIA work ▪ ESAPs have access to data, maps, etc required to undertake ESIA work ▪ There are tools available to support ESIA work (formats, checklists, etc)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Document analysis (including guidance documents) ▪ Interviews (separately with management and work floor)
Knowledge and skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ESAPs have expertise available to do ESIA work (can be split into indicators for specific tasks relevant for organisation, depending on role of the actor in the ESIA system, i.e. ESIA screening, ESIA review, field inspection, providing ESIA advice to practitioners, stakeholder engagement, follow-up) ▪ ESAPs are regularly trained and have opportunity to develop career as a professional in ESIA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interviews (separately with management and work floor)
Maintaining strategic relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ESAPs work together with CSOs, government agencies, and knowledge institutes in their ESIA work ▪ ESAPs partake in platforms/networks/coalitions for ESIA (if these exist). ▪ ESAPs share data and information to improve ESIA practice, among each other but also with government or other external parties. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interviews (separately with people inside and outside the organisation itself)

Capacity of NGOs, CSOs, civil society		
Results	Indicators	Means of verification
Mandate (role), structure and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The role of CSOs in ESIA is clearly defined in legal texts ▪ Structural financing secured for CSOs to execute their role in ESIA practice ▪ CSOs have offices established, facilities and equipment needed available ▪ Number of CSOs active in ESIA is sufficient to fulfil CSO role ▪ CSOs have access to databases, maps, etc required to be involved in ESIA ▪ There are tools available to support CSOs in their role in ESIA (formats, checklists, etc)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Analysis of legal texts ▪ Organisation's budget ▪ Human resources policy ▪ Workload assessment ▪ Document analysis (including guidance documents) ▪ Interviews (separately with management and work floor)
Knowledge and skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CSOs have expertise needed to perform role in ESIA (can be split into indicators for specific tasks relevant for organisation, depending on role of the actor in the ESIA system, i.e. ESIA screening, ESIA review, field inspection, providing ESIA advice to practitioners, stakeholder engagement, follow-up) ▪ CSO staff are trained on ESIA and have opportunity to specialise in ESIA work ▪ Finances and mechanisms are available to CSOs to access external expertise if needed (such as for ESIA review) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organisation's budget ▪ Interviews (separately with management and work floor)
Maintaining strategic relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CSOs work together with ESAPs, government agencies, and knowledge institutes within ESIA processes ▪ CSOs partake in platforms/networks/coalitions for ESIA (if these exist). ▪ CSOs share data and information to improve ESIA practice, among each other but also with ESAPs, government or other external parties. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interviews (separately with people inside and outside the organisation itself)

Capacity of other government agency (with specific role in ESIA)		
Results	Indicators	Means of verification
Mandate, structure and resources for ESIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mandates clearly defined in legal texts ▪ Structural financing secured to execute mandate ▪ Staff, facilities and equipment available are sufficient ▪ Information management system exists giving access to information required to perform tasks ▪ Tools/guidance available to support tasks (working procedures, checklists, etc) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Analysis of legal texts ▪ State budget/ organisation's budget ▪ Human resources policy ▪ Workload assessment ▪ Document analysis (including guidance documents) ▪ Interviews (separately with management and work floor)
Management of ESIA tasks (input, advice, review, comment, implement, follow up)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Decisions regarding ESIA are taken, communicated and acted upon ▪ Regular planning/coordination meetings are held ▪ Management encourages exchange and learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Document analysis (including guidance documents) ▪ IMS7/data base analysis ▪ Interviews (separately with management and work floor)
Knowledge and skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expertise available to perform their ESIA tasks (can be split into indicators for specific tasks relevant for organisation, depending on role of the actor in the ESIA system, i.e. ESIA screening, ESIA review, field inspection, providing ESIA advice to practitioners, stakeholder engagement, follow-up) (yes/no) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ State budget/ organisations budget ▪ Interviews (separately with management and work floor)

⁷ Information Management System

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff regularly trained and effort made to maintain knowledge and skills 	
Maintaining strategic relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Co-ordination/co-operation with relevant partners takes place ▪ Proactive participation in platforms/networks ▪ Organisation willingly shares data and information ▪ Organisation justifies decisions made to external stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interviews (separately with people inside and outside the organisation itself)

Other capacities if relevant		
Result	Indicators	Means of verification
	Other 'group' with a role in ESIA? If so, discuss the most relevant questions above and select suitable indicators and means of verification.	

Capacity of specific individual to perform his/her ESIA related task		
Results	Indicator	Means of verification
ESIA Professional fully capable of performing task	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Knowledge & expertise needed to perform task sufficient & up to date (yes/no) ▪ Person feels confident to perform task (yes/no) ▪ Access to knowledge and information secured (yes/no) ▪ Position of staff duly recognised and respected (yes/no) ▪ Enabling atmosphere to openly exchange and discuss (yes/no) ▪ Leadership respects and defends staff technical stand points (yes/no) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training evaluation results ▪ Coaching reports ▪ Evaluations of quality of work ▪ Interviews ▪ Analysis of decisions

4.3 ESIA performance indicators – Process level

For the process level, two different types of indicators can be used, with different purposes.

Firstly, an assessment can be made of the general procedure followed for ESIA processes within a certain system. In this case, the process steps (see frontpage of this document) should be further specified, since each system has its own procedure. Because generalisation is not possible here, there is no standardised set of indicators available. The NCEA's ESY mapping tool (see www.eia.nl) can be used for this purpose.

Secondly, an assessment can be made of the quality and results of an individual ESIA process. For this purpose, the indicators below can be used. These indicators have been designed to assess the results of the NCEA's advisory work in concrete ESIA processes and are used to track the results of the NCEA's Terms of Reference (ToR) and ESIA review advice, as well as to coaching. Note that M1, M2 and M3 denote monitoring forms previously developed within the NCEA. The forms are designed to collect monitoring information on results achievement.

Individual ESIA process		
Results	Indicator	Means of verification
Improved ESIA report and process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NCEA advice followed, including advice on which impacts to address (yes/partially/no) ▪ Assessment complete and of appropriate scope (yes/partially/no) ▪ Alternatives identified and compared (yes/partially/no) ▪ ESIA addressed risks through monitoring/management (yes/partially/no) ▪ Process sufficiently transparent, and participation opportunities given to relevant stakeholders (yes/partially/no) ▪ ESIA integrated in process of project design (yes/partially/no) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NCEA review of ESIA report (when relevant) ▪ M2 form administered as interview and/or written questionnaire
Improved decision-making on project (project approval and/or environmental permitting)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Formal decision made (precondition indicator) (yes/no) ▪ ESIA recommendations taking into consideration in decision statement (yes/no) ▪ Support for project has increased through ESIA (yes/no) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ M3 form administered as interview and/or written questionnaire ▪ Decision analysis

More sustainable project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New alternatives incorporated into project (yes/partially/no) ▪ Mitigation measures incorporated in EMP⁸ (yes/partially/no) ▪ Stakeholder concerns incorporated into project (yes/partially/no) ▪ ESIA facilitated coordination between govt. agencies (yes/partially/no) ▪ Project is more environmentally friendly and socially acceptable (yes/partially/no) ▪ Mitigation measures incorporated in EMP approach (yes/partially/no) ▪ Management structure to deal with environmental risks are planned or in place (yes/partially/no) 	Follow up interview(s) to update M3 form, with focus on implementation
Improved capacity (if ESIA had additional aim of learning, such as joint review with counterpart team to demonstrate how to do review or by involving experts (e.g. Dutch and local water expert))	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Relevant staff exposed to/participated in new way of working (Nr. of relevant people participated in counterpart team) ▪ Way of working incorporated in own practice (yes/partially/no) ▪ Case used for training/education or as practice benchmark (yes/no) 	Interviews
Satisfactory advice has been delivered and has led to concrete action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Level of satisfaction on content of advice (high/medium/low) ▪ Level of satisfaction on timing of advice ((high/medium/low) ▪ Distribution of advice (% stakeholders involved in drafting advisory ToR versus stakeholders having received final ToR) ▪ Adoption of advice (yes/partially/no) ▪ Concrete actions on advice taken (consider specifically any change in budget allocated to ESIA) (yes/no) 	M1 form administered as interview and/or written questionnaire
Improved governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support/awareness for project increased through ESIA (more participation/transparency of project development process) (yes/partially/no) ▪ ESIA facilitated collaboration between govt. agencies (yes/partially/no) 	

⁸ Environmental Management Plan

	- Institutional arrangements (monitoring plan, capacity, etc) to deal with environmental and social risks during project implementation are planned or in place (yes/partially/no)	
--	--	--

4.4 ESIA performance indicators – System performance

The six functions, organisational capacities, and individual processes all contribute to ESIA system performance in terms of the number and quality of ESIA's. System performance is tracked through the results and indicators below. Note that the results are formulated in terms of relative changes rather than as absolute qualities. This is because the determination of what constitutes sufficient quality of ESIA practice, adequate level of ESIA application or a good practice ESIA, will be relative to the starting point in the system concerned, as well as on the ambitions set for that specific ESIA system.

System performance: numbers and quality of ESIA's		
Results	Indicators	Means of verification
Improved quality of ESIA practice overall	scores reality ESIA/Decision-making	ESIA map
More co-ordination between governmental agencies takes place within ESIA processes	% cases that other govt agencies/departments are consulted in screening, scoping etc (estimate)	Interviews
Improved application of ESIA (Note: depending on ambitions for ESIA, in some cases lower nr. of ESIA's over time could signal an improvement)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nr. of ESIA's annually ▪ % of projects that fall under ESIA requirement which are actually subject to ESIA in practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESIA tracking system (partner responsibility) • ESIA map
Better ESIA's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proportion of ESIA's considered of sufficient quality ▪ Proportion of ESIA's considered influential (on decision-making and implementation) 	Analysis of ESIA sample and/or interviews (for example, with those responsible for ESIA review)



Netherlands Commission for
Environmental Assessment

