



Guidelines for Conducting Integrated Environmental Assessments



GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING INTEGRATED ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS

Foreword

UN Environment is pleased to provide new Guidelines for Conducting Integrated Environmental Assessments. With the leadership of the Assessment Methodologies, Data and Information Group under the Global Environment Outlook, the participation of several of its members in the drafting and review process as well as a core group of authors, these Guidelines are now available for application by Integrated Environmental Assessment Practitioners and for consultation by the Integrated Environmental Assessment user community.

This document is the result of UN Environment Member State requests in both Governing Council and the UN Environment Assembly and is meant to provide guidance for a wide range of different types of Integrated Environmental Assessments. These can range from global to regional to rapid response assessments and emerging issues assessments. The Guidelines should be considered a 'living document' since they will be used and improved throughout on-going assessment processes.

We hope that Practitioners and Users alike will find the Guidelines informative and user friendly. We look forward to your thoughts and suggestions for improving them.

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Glossary

Some key terms used in the text below are defined here. The remaining sections of the glossary can be found here [link to glossary at the back of the document]

Advisory Bodies – Groups of individuals with particular expertise or responsibility in areas of interest in the Integrated Environmental Assessment. These groups may have policy, technical or scientific expertise and will guide the Secretariat and Practitioners on key questions and decision points during the Integrated Environmental Assessment process.

Assessment Findings – These can include: facts, data and information that establish the state of the environment; options for action that address the identified environmental challenges; pathways which might be chosen to achieve particular environmental objectives in the future.

Commissioning Entity – The body that establishes the mandate for the Integrated Environmental Assessment. This typically includes the definition of the timeline for the Integrated Environmental Assessment and the provision of funding to carry out the assessment.

Data: Consists of facts, numerical observations and statistics that describe some aspect of the environment and society, such as water quality and demographics (Abdel-Kader 1997). A basic component of indicator data needs to be processed so that it can be used to interpret changes in the state of the environment, the economy or the social aspects of society (Segnestam 2002).

Environmental Assessment - The entire process of undertaking an objective evaluation and analysis of information designed to support environmental decision making. It applies the judgment of experts to existing knowledge to provide scientifically credible answers to policy –relevant questions, quantifying where possible the level of confidence. It reduces complexity but adds value by summarizing, synthesizing and building scenarios, and identifies consensus by sorting out what is known and widely accepted from what is not known or not agreed. It sensitizes the scientific community to policy needs and the policy community to the scientific basis for action. (UNEP 2010)

Grey Literature – According to the Scientific Advisory Panel of the sixth Global Environment Outlook report, these are documents that have not gone through peer review for publication. They are also products which are created and distributed in order to disseminate knowledge (ideas, facts, opinions) rather than to sell for a profit, and are thus not distributed by commercial publishing organizations

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