



Egis Insights | Thought Leadership

What Happens After Environmental Approval? _

Turning environmental commitments into action.

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Environmental approval is often treated as the final step in an environmental consultant's role. In reality, it marks the point where assessment moves into implementation .

In a typical project, an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), or its equivalent, is submitted to the relevant regulatory authority. Once approved, an environmental permit is issued, setting out the requirements, commitments and conditions that must be carried through the project's design, construction and operation.

These requirements are not simply regulatory obligations to be filed away. Their value depends on how effectively they are translated into design decisions, construction controls and operational practices and how they are reassessed as project conditions evolve. This is where environmental consultancy can have its greatest impact.

Influencing the Design

The design stage offers one of the greatest opportunities to influence a project's environmental performance . Since the project is still at its earlier stages, environmental considerations can be incorporated into the design rather than after the designs are locked and decisions made.

Environmental consultants connect the findings of the environmental assessment with the wider design team. Working closely with architects, landscape designers and technical specialists, they translate environmental risks, constraints, opportunities and permit commitments into practical design considerations.

Examples of design considerations coordinated by our teams have included:

Noise

Identifying areas of high noise impacts on nearby communities and sensitive receptors, and working with architects, façade consultants, and acoustics engineers to ensure appropriate design considerations are implemented. This has included strategic building placement and the use of landscaped buffers to help reduce noise impacts.

Ecology and Landscape

Working with landscape consultants and urban designers to incorporate the restoration of wadis, ecological corridors, and green areas into a masterplan.

Habitat Protection

Coordinating the safe translocation of critical habitat species where avoidance is not possible, to ensure that conservation measures are incorporated into project planning and delivery.

Waste Infrastructure

Designing a waste infrastructure at master planning level which includes segregation strategies, storage and collection to promote effective waste management throughout the operational stages of a project.

The previous examples demonstrate how environmental consultants can influence the design. The earlier environmental considerations are identified and incorporated into the design, the greater the opportunity to avoid or reduce impacts before they occur . Ultimately, this will reduce the cost of mitigation, remediation or compensation later during the project life cycle.

Turning Commitments into Action

A mitigation measure written in an EIA has little value if it never makes its way to the real world.



A typical EIA will contain a range of mitigation and monitoring measures to be implemented during the construction and operational stages of the project. These measures, along with conditions outlined in the environmental permit, need to be translated into actions during construction, and project operation.

During construction, the environmental consultant's role extends beyond checking whether the measures identified in the EIA have been implemented. Environmental consultants work with the contractor and wider project team to assess what is happening on the ground and respond to changing conditions . This can include:

- Identify problems before they become environmental incidents
- Introduce additional monitoring measures to suit project needs
- Adapt exist ing mitigation measures when site conditions change.

For example, if a protected species is unexpectedly encountered during construction, the environmental consultant on site may need to pause the works in the area, introduce a species-specific translocation or protection and management plan. Additionally, the consultant will coordinate with the environmental regulatory authority to ensure the measures are adequate and agree on any additional protection measures before resuming construction works.

Environmental monitoring, site inspections, compliance audits, and corrective actions are examples of tools used to assist the environmental consultant in making assessments and taking decisions. As such, the environmental consultant's role during construction is dynamic , so they are expected to continuously assess the situation on the ground and determine whether the environmental measures identified at the EIA stage remain appropriate for the current site conditions, or whether additional action is required.



And implementation does not stop when construction is complete.

Environmental management continues throughout the operational life of a project. At this stage, the role of the environmental consultant will mostly be to use inspections, audits, and monitoring results and assess whether the measures put in place are still effective and appropriate for the project, and its operating conditions. This includes checking whether:

- ✓ **Mitigation measures are still effective**
- ✓ **Permit conditions are being followed**
- ✓ **Monitoring requirements remain appropriate, and are being adhered to**

Importantly, the consultant also needs to consider whether the operating environment itself has changed. Any changes in operations, surrounding developments, environmental conditions, or regulatory requirements can alter the risks identified during the original assessment, and will require additional assessments and measures to be undertaken.

For example, if a new residential development is built closer to the project when it is in its operational phase, the noise and air quality impacts – previously assessed and mitigated – might need to be reassessed after the introduction of new sensitive receptors. This could introduce additional mitigation measures which were not applicable at the time of the original EIA assessment.

Another example would be when the regulatory thresholds for emissions are tightened after the project is operational. The environmental consultant will, therefore, need to reassess the existing controls in place, and may need to introduce additional mitigation and monitoring measures.

This demonstrates the dynamic nature of environmental consultancy: It is not about making a decision at one point in the project lifecycle and assuming it will remain valid indefinitely, but rather continuing to monitor, assess, and reevaluate environmental conditions to ensure the decisions taken are still valid and representative.



Measuring What Changed

So, while the environmental approval is an important milestone, it is only one measure of success . The greater value of environmental consultancy is realised through the outcomes that environmental considerations bring to the project. Measuring this impact means looking beyond the approval of the EIA and asking whether the environmental inputs – through the design, construction, and operation – have changed the project decisions, reduced the environmental impacts, and costs over time .

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Did the environmental assessment influence the design?

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Did the design integration help avoid or reduce an environmental impact?

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Were the commitments made during the EIA implemented during construction?

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Did the monitoring lead to a changed assessment more suitable to the project current conditions?

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Are the mitigation measures still effective during operation?

These are some of the questions that move environmental consultancy beyond approvals and towards measurable impact.

Ultimately, the true measure of environmental consultancy is not only whether an approval was obtained, but what changed because we were involved.



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