

The title 'Environmental Impact Assessment' is written in a large, bold, white sans-serif font, centered on the page. The background is a composite image featuring a bald eagle in flight at the top, a scenic view of a river winding through a forested valley, and two workers in safety vests and hard hats using surveying equipment on a rocky bank. The entire scene is overlaid with semi-transparent circular shapes.

by

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When Environmental Impacts Became a Financial Decision



In the early 1960s, if you wanted to build a dam, highway, or a power plant, the process was refreshingly, and dangerously, simple. You hired engineers, moved the earth, and largely ignored the protests. The environment was seen as an infinite resource, and "social impact" was a phrase yet to be mentioned.

But in 1970, the tide began to turn with the US National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which birthed the first **Environmental Impact Assessments**. For decades, these remained 'tick-the-box' exercises to appease local bureaucrats. A group of the world's largest banks realised that ignoring environmental and social risks wasn't just bad for the planet - it was bad for reputation and their balance sheet. To address growing criticism regarding the negative impacts of large-scale projects on people and ecosystems in 2003 they launched the **Equator Principles** as a way to identify, assess, and manage environmental and social risks in project financing effectively providing a minimum standard to be met by developers seeking project financing.

Today, if you're looking at a giga-project or major infrastructure, insufficient consideration of project environmental and social impacts is a fast-track to... a rejected loan application.

In the modern market, local regulatory ESIA's are often just the starting line. International lenders - from the International Finance Corporation (IFC) to national development banks now demand a level of rigor that would have been unimaginable twenty years ago. Obtaining an environmental permit is no longer enough to unlock capital; banks are looking for much more, such as:

- Closing Gaps and Raising Standards: Moving beyond local laws to meet the IFC's eight **Performance Standards**.
- Social Performance: Real community engagement and evidence of community consent, not just a flyer in a town hall.
- Biodiversity & Climate: Comprehensive seasonal surveys and climate change risk assessments that look decades into the future.

What sets a consultant apart in this landscape? Although most can recite the IFC standards, few live by them. At Egis, we don't just advise on these benchmarks; we are governed by them.

Egis has aligned our entire corporate strategy with the **Net Zero Initiative** and the **Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi)**. In late 2024, our decarbonisation trajectory was formally validated by the SBTi, committing us to:

- A 54.6% reduction in absolute Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 2033.
- Full Net Zero status by 2050.



Egis has more than a green vision, we also have a financial obligation through sustainability-linked loans totaling over €950 million. Our own interest rates are tied to greenhouse gas reductions and eco-design KPIs. If we don't hit our targets, our financing becomes more expensive. This internal rigor ensures that when we help you navigate lender requirements, we understand!



In the Middle East, the landscape is shifting at remarkable speed. With Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 and the net-zero targets of the UAE and Oman, giga-projects are increasingly turning to "blended financing" and Green Sukuks.

Egis supports this transition by holding Saudi Arabia's top NCEC Environmental License Class A, and registered as an Environmental Consultancy in key UAE Emirates. We bridge the gap between local regulatory needs and understanding to the stringent demands of international financiers. Whether it's human rights due diligence and community engagement or critical habitat and climate risk assessments, our extensive global experience can ensure your project is bankable from day one.

In a world of increasingly disciplined capital, what's the cost of not thinking about your project's environmental impact?

Connect with us to find out how we can help you.



IMAGINE. CREATE. ACHIEVE.

a sustainable future

Egis is an international player active in architecture, consulting, construction engineering and mobility services. We create and operate intelligent infrastructure and buildings that respond to the climate emergency and contribute to more balanced, sustainable and resilient territorial development.

Operating in 70+ countries, Egis puts the expertise of its 23,500 employees at the service of our clients and develops cutting-edge innovations accessible to all projects. Through our wide range of activities, Egis is a key player in the collective organisation of society and the living environment of citizens all over the world.

Our operations in the Middle East are underpinned by key strategic acquisitions and a deep understanding of local market conditions. Egis' long and distinguished history, providing a comprehensive suite of engineering, consulting, and project management services makes us a trusted partner for the region's governments, investors, and developers alike.

With 4,000+ employees, across 8 countries in the Middle East, Egis has successfully delivered over 700 complex development projects in the region, stimulating economic growth and enhancing quality of life. We are firmly committed to sustainable development, positioning us as one of the top five firms, according to the Engineering News Record (ENR) rankings.

Our locations



Our publications



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