



World Heritage and Environmental Assessments

An IUCN perspective

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http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/wcpa_worldheritage/policies/env_assessment/



Environmental Assessment - Overview

- Identify, evaluate, avoid and mitigate environmental and social impacts of development proposals;
- Before taking a decision on funding or implementation;
- Assess alternatives, including 'no project' option

Benefits:

- Early consideration of environmental and social issues in project design and planning processes;
- Greater certainty for local communities and developers about future development;
- Greater opportunities for local communities to participate in consultation and decision-making processes;
- Achieve better environmental and social outcomes;
- Address cumulative impacts at landscape scale



Environmental Assessment – Overview

Types of Environmental Assessment:

- Environmental (and Social) Impact Assessment – E(S)IA:
 - Individual projects → less suited to assess cumulative impacts of multiple projects or to identify ‘strategic’ alternatives
 - Regulated by EIA Directive (EU) and Espoo Convention (international)
 - Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA):
 - Policies, plans and programmes (i.e. multiple or very large projects)
 - Assess (cumulative) impacts on landscape and regional scale
 - Identify economically viable alternatives
 - Regulated by SEA Directive (EU) and SEA Protocol (international)

Other types exist (eg. *Appropriate Assessments (AA)* under the Natura 2000 framework) → largely similar in purpose and scope to either EIA or SEA



World Heritage and Environmental Assessment

Paragraph 172, *Operational Guidelines* → submit relevant documentation, eg. EIA

Effective integration of natural World Heritage sites in Environmental Assessments may be complicated by:

- Limited resources and staff capacity;
- Barriers to communication across government agencies;
- Unclear processes for issuing development permits;
- Limited stakeholder consultation processes;
- Lack of information about World Heritage procedures

Integrating World Heritage sites is critical to:

- equip decision-makers with the information necessary to preserve World Heritage sites for future generations
- ensure consideration of potential adverse impacts on a site's ***Outstanding Universal Value (OUV)***, including values, integrity and protection and management;
- recognize that natural World Heritage sites cannot be considered separately from the wider ecosystem.



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IUCN's position:

“...infrastructure and other development proposals and/or concessions located within, or outside the boundaries of a natural World Heritage Site, should be considered in terms of whether they are compatible with the long-term objective of preserving the Outstanding Universal Value of the site for future generations. Those proposals that are not compatible with this objective should not be permitted within these sites.”

- World Heritage Committee considers extractive activities and concessions to be incompatible with World Heritage status → no-go principle
- Developments affecting a natural World Heritage Site require rigorous Environmental Assessment
 - Consultation with International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA) members to develop IUCN Advice Note
 - 8 World Heritage Impact Assessment Principles
 - Reasonable alternatives to be identified, including ‘no project’ option



World Heritage Impact Assessment Principles

- **Principle 1:** Undertake rigorous Environmental Assessment early in the decision-making process
- **Principle 2:** Closely involve experts with World Heritage, protected area and biodiversity knowledge
- **Principle 3:** Assess environmental and societal impacts on Outstanding Universal Value, including direct, indirect and cumulative effects
- **Principle 4:** Identify and assess alternatives in order to recommend the most sustainable option to decision-makers



World Heritage Impact Assessment Principles

- **Principle 5:** Identify mitigation measures in line with the mitigation hierarchy
- **Principle 6:** Include a separate chapter on World Heritage
- **Principle 7:** Thorough public consultation at different stages, and public disclosure of assessment
- **Principle 8:** Propose and implement environmental management plan, subject to independent audit

Step-by-step guidance on application of Principles in annexes to IUCN Advice Note



IUCN's review process

- Documents (eg. EIA) received from SP by WH Centre transmitted to IUCN;
- IUCN evaluates whether the 8 World Heritage Impact Assessment Principles are met;
- IUCN consults network of experts (WCPA, SSC, etc);
- IUCN's brief technical comments transmitted to SP, through WH Centre;
- IUCN's review incorporated in SOC reports;
- If draft EIA includes no separate chapter on World Heritage, it cannot be reviewed by IUCN → assessment considered inadequate

Independent review can be commissioned through IUCN's network (please contact whconservation@iucn.org) → does not constitute IUCN's official position



Issues and next steps

Issues:

- Paragraph 172 OG not consistently implemented by all States Parties → draft Environmental Assessments often submitted late;
- Environmental Assessment practitioners often unaware of World Heritage requirements;
- Legal implications.

Next steps:

- States Parties to inform WH Committee of proposed developments at an early stage;
- Improve communication between different government agencies;
- Register and identify all natural World Heritage Sites in land-use planning information systems;
- Review of legal provisions to facilitate integration of WH in Environmental Assessment



Case study: Rwenzori Mountains National Park (Uganda)

Kakaka Small Hydropower project, located 400 m inside property boundary on River Rwimi

- IUCN provided comments on original EIA in August 2014:
 - A number of WH Impact Assessment Principles not met;
 - No specific assessment of impacts on OUV;
- An updated EIA was received by IUCN in September 2014:
 - Including an assessment of impacts on OUV;
 - Potential impacts on OUV assessed as medium to large negative, even after mitigation;
- IUCN concluded the proposed development would not be compatible with conservation of OUV, based on EIA findings



Case study: Niokolo-Koba National Park (Senegal)

Mako Gold Mining Project, located 1 km outside property boundaries:

- EIA received by IUCN on 27 October 2015;
 - Meets WH Impact Assessment Principles;
 - Separate chapter on WH summarises relevant findings from detailed assessments (biological impacts, physical impacts, etc)
 - IUCN review on-going;
- EIA goes beyond legal requirements in Senegal, which do not include provisions for assessment of impacts on OUV



Case study: Te Wāhipounamu – South West New Zealand (New Zealand)

Two proposals: Fiordland Link Experience (mono rail) and Milford Dart Tunnel

- Original EIAs (2012) did not include assessment of impacts on OUV;
- Following advice from IUCN, additional assessments of impacts on OUV were undertaken;
- In part based on findings from these additional assessments:
 - Milford Dart Tunnel rejected in July 2013
 - Fiordland Link Experience rejected in May 2014