



BRIDGE
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“THERE CANNOT BE A GOOD PLAN FOR ECONOMIC PROGRESS
WITHOUT ADEQUATE DATA AND THERE CANNOT BE ADEQUATE
DATA WITHOUT A GOOD PLAN FOR COLLECTING THEM...”

-P.C MAHALANOBIS, SCIENTIST

ENVIRONMENT IMPACT ASSESSMENT

DEFINITION AND SPIRIT

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (“EIA”), BROADLY, IS AN EFFORT TO “ANTICIPATE, MEASURE AND WEIGH THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND BIOPHYSICAL CHANGES THAT MAY RESULT FROM A PROPOSED PROJECT.

BY CONSIDERING THE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF THE PROJECT AND THEIR MITIGATION EARLY IN THE PROJECT PLANNING CYCLE, ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT HAS MANY BENEFITS, SUCH AS PROTECTION OF ENVIRONMENT, OPTIMUM UTILISATION OF RESOURCES AND SAVING OF TIME AND COST OF THE PROJECT.



CORE IDEA

The Core Idea of EIA is to balance the *Right to Clean Environment* provided under *Right to Life* and developing adequate measures so ecological resources can be utilised for development without harming local communities surrounding it. Its a preventative instrument that seeks to monitor and mitigate damage to scarce ecological resources.



AND

PURPOSE

Purpose of EIA was to proactively manage development projects which seek to assess the potential impacts of a project on the environment.

In the same manner, EIA incorporated environmental consideration into development planning before the project even started.

OBJECTIVES OF EIA

01 MITIGATE HARM TO
ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS

02 ANCHOR DEVELOPMENT TO
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENTAL
GOALS

03 MAINTAIN BLANCE BETWEEN
DEVELOPMENT AND ECOLOGICAL
INTEGRITY

04 TO HEAR LOCAL COMMUNITIES
LIKELY TO BE AFFECTED BY
DEVELOPMENTAL PROJECTS





EIA OVER THE YEARS

01

EIA 1994 - On 27 January 1994, the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests (MEF), under Environment Protection Act promulgated an EIA notification making Environmental Clearance (EC) mandatory for expansion or modernisation of any activity or for setting up new projects listed in Schedule 1 of the notification.

02

EIA 2006 - The EIA Notification of 2006 updated and expanded upon previous regulations such as expanding projects under its scope and dividing projects in sub-categories. It was one of the most prolific amendments that sought to anchor our developmental goals to Sustainable Development and a clean environment.

03

In March 2020, the MoEF&CC inserted Appendix IX into the EIA Notification, exempting several types of activities from prior environmental clearance. These gaps have resulted in misuse, as developers have exploited the exemption to circumvent clearance processes, even in areas where significant ecological disruption has occurred.

04

The March 2026 draft proposes the creation of two new institutional mechanisms: The Standing Authority on Environment Impact Assessment (SAEIA) and the Standing Committee on Environment Impact Appraisal (SCEIA). These bodies are intended to assume the functions of the State Environment Impact Assessment Authorities (SEIAA) and State Expert Appraisal Committees (SEAC) whenever those state-level institutions become non functional because of the expiry of their tenure or delays in reconstitution.

VANSHAKTI V. UNION OF INDIA

The Supreme Court's landmark decision in Vanashakti v. Union of India categorically bars ex-post facto environmental clearances, signalling a decisive shift toward stricter, rule-based environmental governance in India

The Court underscored that the Environmental Impact Assessment process is not designed to retrospectively analyse damage, it is a forward-looking instrument meant to prevent irreversible harm. Accordingly, granting environmental clearance after a project has already commenced violates the very rationale of the EIA framework and is fundamentally incompatible with the precautionary principle, which forms a part of the environmental rule of law in India.



POLICY SUGGESTIONS

Expert level scrutiny should not be bypassed to streamline developmental process

Environmental principles should always be anchored to foundational principles and Fundamental Rights

Amendments must fix administrative delays without promoting administrative bypass

Timely reconstitution and effective functioning of State Environment Impact Assessment Authorities and State Expert Appraisal Committees.





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YOUR
IDEAS TO
SANKHYA?**

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QUESTIONS AT**

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