



GOVERNMENT OF  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

# How to prepare an Environmental Review Document Instructions

Environmental Protection Authority

December 2025

Version	Change	Date
1.0	Version aligned with EP Act amendments 2020	29 October 2021
1.1	Minor corrections	23 March 2022
1.2	Updated with new Environment Online submission and contact details; and minor corrections	March 2024
2.0	Version updated to align with the Environmental Impact Assessment Practice Guide 2024 Assessment of Proposals in Western Australia under Part IV of the Environmental Protection Act 1986	23 December 2025

As EPA documents are updated from time to time, users should consult the EPA website to ensure they have the most recent version.

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*Instruction: How to prepare an Environmental Review Document*, EPA, Western Australia.  
This document is available in alternative formats upon request. National Relay Service  
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## 1. Purpose of these instructions

To set out the form and standard environmental impact assessment content required for an Environmental Review Document (ERD) to ensure consistency for Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) decision-making and to set out the expectations for proponents and the community. The ERD is required as supporting documentation for all referrals, as well as during the assessment stage if the EPA determines to assess a proposal.

## 2. Purpose of an Environmental Review Document

The proponent prepares an ERD to provide all relevant environmental impact assessment (EIA) information to the EPA to enable referral decisions and assessment of a proposal under Part IV of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (EP Act). All ERDs are made publicly available (for 7 days during the referral stage) and therefore should also facilitate consultation regarding environmental impacts of a proposal.

When the EPA determines to assess a proposal, it will usually require the proponent to undertake an environmental review in accordance with s. 40(2)(b) of the EP Act, and the ERD is the report required under this provision. Section 40(3) of the EP Act also allows the EPA to specify the form, content, indicative timing, and procedure of the environmental review.

The [Environmental Impact Assessment Practice Guide: Assessment of Proposals in Western Australia under Part IV of the Environmental Protection Act 1986](#) (EIA Practice Guide) and this instruction specify the standard form, content and procedural requirements of an environmental review. The ERD should therefore be consistent with the requirements prescribed in these two documents.

## 3. How to prepare an Environmental Review Document

### ERD Template

The ERD template ([ERD Template](#)) provides a structure and guidance regarding the required content. The ERD template also includes required tables and figures. To ensure consistency, the EPA requires proponents to address the ERD template for all ERDs. Additional proposal-specific form, content and timing requirements may be set through in the Environmental Scoping Document (ESD) or through a Request for Information (RFI), and the ERD must address those requirements in addition to this instruction.

### ERD submission and update requirements at each stage of assessment

Table 1 outlines the ERD requirements at each stage of assessment. An ERD is required with the referral, which is then updated, as required, through the assessment process.

**Table 1:** ERD requirements at each stage of assessment

Stage	ERD requirement
<b>Stage 1 &amp; 2 – EPA consideration of referred proposal</b>	<b>Provide ERD with referral</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Proponent provides an ERD for all referrals</li></ul>

Stage	ERD requirement
	<p><b>Update ERD (if required)</b></p> <p>The proponent must update the ERD provided at referral and submit it to the EPA in any or all of the following circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>proposal amendment: if the proponent requests to amend the proposal under s. 38C, the ERD is updated to support this application (see <a href="#">Instructions: Request to amend proposal under s38C</a>)</li> <li>additional information: if the EPA issues a request for further information (RFI) to the proponent.</li> </ul>
<b>Stage 2 – Decision on referred proposal</b>	<p>At the end of stage 2, the EPA decides whether to assess the proposal under s. 38G, based on the information about the proposal in the ERD provided at referral (and any other information provided during Stage 1 and 2).</p>
<b>Stage 3 – Assessment of proposals</b>	<p><b>Update ERD (if required)</b></p> <p>If the EPA's decision is to assess the proposal, the proponent must update the ERD provided at referral and submit it to the EPA in any or all of the following circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ESD: if an ESD is required in the level of assessment determination under s. 39(b), the ERD must be updated to include the information required by the ESD.</li> <li>Proposal amendment: if a proponent request to amend a proposal under s. 43A is approved by the EPA (see <a href="#">Instructions: request to amend proposal under s43A</a>) prior to a public review period commencing, if one is specified in the EPA's level of assessment determination under s. 39(b).</li> <li>Additional information: if the EPA issues an RFI to the proponent and the proponent cannot demonstrate that the information is in the ERD (and/or supporting appendices), the ERD must be updated to include the information required by the RFI.</li> </ul> <p>If public review of the proposal is required (recorded as part of the level of assessment determination), the ERD and supporting appendices is what is published and will be the documents that public comment is made on.</p> <p>Following public review, the proponent will usually be required to prepare a Response to Submissions. This is a separate document that will also be published. A proponent may choose to update the ERD as part of its Response to Submissions to consolidate all assessment and proposal information, but this is not required. Both the ERD and Response to Submissions are considered by the EPA in their assessment.</p>
<b>Stage 4 EPA report on the assessment of a proposal, and Stage 5 Decision on, and implementation of proposals</b>	<p>No updates to an ERD are required.</p>

## Proposal information and ERD level of detail

The ERD should contain the appropriate level of detail to demonstrate a robust and scientifically sound assessment of the impacts on the environment from the proposal. The EPA expects proponents to consider and apply the relevant Environmental Factor Guidelines and Technical Guidance for each environmental factor relevant to the assessment. The EPA also expects that a rationale for any variations from guidance, conclusions reached regarding potential impacts and its significance, and the effectiveness of mitigations should be clear and supported by evidence.

Proponents are advised that the quality of information provided to the EPA in the ERD, the nature of proposal elements and the likely environmental effects associated with the proposal may affect timeframes. There may be delays to indicative timeframes if adequate information (as required by this Instruction and any ESD and RFI requirements) is not provided in the ERD, and the EPA may also require additional RFIs.

The [EIA Practice Guide](#) provides guidance on tailoring the ERD provided at each stage to support the EPA decision that needs to be made. It also includes tips to avoid RFIs.

### *ERD provided during referral*

The EPA requires sufficient information about the proposal and the effects of the proposal on the environment to decide whether or not to assess a proposal, and if so, to determine the level of assessment, the preliminary key environmental factors and any additional information required. The level of detail in an ERD provided at referral will therefore depend on the environmental complexity of the proposal and whether the proponent expects the EPA to assess the proposal:

- Expected 'Not assessed' decision: ERD needs to provide sufficient information on relevant environmental factors to demonstrate that:
  - there is not likely to be a significant impact on the environment and/or
  - other statutory decision-making processes can effectively mitigate the potential impacts of a proposal on the environment in a manner that results in an outcome that is consistent with the EPA's environmental objectives.
- Expected 'Assess' decision: the proponent can decide which of the following ERD approaches is appropriate:
  - detailed ERD: provide all information on the relevant environmental factors at referral with the aim of minimising the amount of additional information EPA may require through an RFI or ESD
  - streamlined ERD: briefly identify potential impacts and outline where information will be provided in a future revision of the ERD following the scoping process.

Regardless of the anticipated assessment decisions, all ERDs provided at referral should fully define the proposal content and spatial extent.

### *ERD updated (if required) during assessment*

When the EPA decides to assess a proposal, the EPA will usually require the proponent to undertake an environmental review in accordance with s. 40(2)(b) of the EP Act, and the ERD is the report required under this provision. The ERD is therefore the primary document that the EPA uses to inform its assessment of a proposal. It is also used to support public review and

should therefore include all relevant EIA information in a readable format to support these purposes.

As outlined in Table 1, the ERD provided at referral is required to be updated in response to scoping, changes to a proposal prior to public review and in response to any request for information (including minor clarifications) that are issued to the proponent.

When updating an ERD, the proponent should clearly identify the sections and/or text that have been updated (e.g. providing a ‘track changed’ or highlighted document). This will aid in the review of the updated ERD and support efficient and timely EIA, particularly where changes have been made in response to a RFI (including minor clarifications). If a streamlined ERD was submitted at referral and an ESD subsequently issued, then a simplified method of identifying these changes may be acceptable.

## Requirements for different types of proposals

The EPA requires that proponents prepare ERDs and use the ERD template for all types of proposals. Additional guidance has been provided for specific types of proposals:

- significant amendments: see additional guidance in ERD template content (1.1 Proposal summary, 1.2 Approved proposal/s, 3.6.2 Combined effects and 3.7 Environmental outcomes)
- derived proposals: see additional guidance in ERD template content (3.7 Environmental outcomes)
- proposal under an assessed planning scheme: see additional guidance in ERD template content (1.2 Assessed planning scheme).

Proponents should discuss specific requirements for ERDs for strategic proposals, derived proposals and proposals under an assessed planning scheme with EPA Services within the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER), prior to preparing the ERD.

## Advice

Proponents may contact EPA Services to discuss ERD information requirements. Proponents may request a meeting with the EPA Services prior to submitting an ERD.

Refer also to the EPA’s [EIA Practice Guide](#) for information about the processes relating to ERDs.

## 4. ERD general requirements

### Focus of the ERD

The focus of the ERD content must be on the following:

1. *Proportionate information*: Information provided should be proportionate to the significance of potential environmental impacts and risks.
2. *Potential significant impacts of a proposal*: The ERD should focus on potential significant impacts, however, the ERD will still need to provide clearly justified evidence to support conclusions that impacts are unlikely or are not expected to be significant.
3. *Proposal-specific information*: The ERD should only contain information relevant to the environmental impact assessment of the proposal. Do not include general information that is not directly relevant to the EPA’s assessment or repeat content in the EPA’s procedures



and guidelines.

4. *Environmental outcomes*: The ERD must include expected outcomes established through the assessment, refer to the EPA's [Interim Guidance - Outcomes and Outcomes-based conditions](#).

## Style and formatting

Provide all information in the ERD and supporting appendices so it is clear and easy to understand:

- use plain English
- use concise language and use tables and figures where appropriate, to minimise the amount of text
- use consistent terminology and units, especially for study areas, proposal boundaries and footprints (see [Instructions and Template: How to identify the content of a proposal](#), Proposal Content Document (PCD) Instructions and Template).

## Spatial data and figures

Provide spatial data in GIS format that is geo-referenced and conforms to the following parameters:

- Data type: closed polygons that represent proposal boundaries, including the development envelope and footprint, and other relevant boundaries such as avoidance areas and offset areas.
- Attribution: name the development envelope and the footprint/s in the attribute table of the spatial data.
- Format: ESRI geodatabase or shapefile.
- Coordinate System: GDA2020 (datum) (or as updated) and projected into the appropriate Map Grid of Australia (MGA) zone.

Provide maps and figures that are clear and readable, of appropriate scale, in either jpeg or pdf format and at a resolution greater than 300 ppi.

“Flatten” figures to reduce the size of the ERD.

## 5. ERD template content

The following guidance is provided to assist proponents to prepare an ERD. The following sections are aligned with the headings in the [ERD template](#) for ease of completion.

### Cover page

Include: Proposal title, proponent, date, author, and assessment number (if relevant).

### Document control

Include a table at the front of the ERD with version, date and authorisation (name and signature), and identify the purpose of each ERD update (e.g. for referral, to address an ESD, updated to address an RFI etc.).

If someone other than the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) (including a consultant) submits the ERD, provide evidence of authority to act on behalf of the CEO.

### Invitation to make a submission (if public review required during assessment)

If public review of the ERD is required in the level of assessment recorded under s. 39(b), include the Invitation to make a submission text in the ERD Template. Format the background of the invitation pages in a different colour.

### Table of Contents

Include a Table of Contents with key headings and appendices and lists of tables and figures.

### Summary

Include a short and concise summary of the proposal and the key outcomes of the impact assessment (ERD Template Table S1). Don't replicate the PCD tables in this section but instead describe the proposal and identify only the key proposal elements and extents, e.g. a 50 Mtpa below water table mine and haul road.

## 1. Proposal

### 1.1 Proposal description

Include a description of the proposal. As a minimum, include the ERD Template tables 1 and 2 (which must be the same as the content in the PCD provided with the referral or an approved amendment under s. 38C or s. 43A), which identifies the maximum extent of key environmentally relevant proposal elements. The description may include further detail to provide context for the proposal. For example, for a marina proposal, the proposal summary may include the number of boat pens as this provides context in relation to the use of the proposal, but this may not be an environmentally relevant element that needs to be specified in the PCD.

Provide maps of the proposal clearly outlining the proposed development envelope and indicative footprint and relevant local and regional extent (see [ERD template](#) Figures for example titles). Include key features to show the proposal location within the region and WA, for example, towns and roads.



### *Significant amendments only:*

If the proposal is a significant amendment, also identify the type of amendment. That is, identify whether the significant amendment relates to an amendment to the approved proposal, amendment to implementation conditions of an approved proposal, or both.

## 1.2 Approved proposal/s

Provide information about the approved proposal/s so the environmental effects of the significant amendment may be considered in the context of the approved proposal. Include the following:

- summary of the approved proposal/s including approval date, map of approved boundary and key activities and elements
- describe the stage of implementation of the proposal (e.g. planning, construction, operations, closure).

### 1.2.1 Previous changes to the approved proposal/s and implementation conditions

Provide details of the proposal as originally approved and any approved amendments (and/or changes) under s. 45C and/or s. 46 in a table(s), including approval dates. Include any significant amendments which have been approved.

### 1.2.2 Compliance

Provide the history (five years) and current status of compliance with the Ministerial statement/s (this may be provided as a table). This can include reference to the most recent Compliance Assessment Report if it is less than one year old, provided any potential non-compliance since that time is also discussed.

### 1.2.3 Environmental performance

Provide a summary of the current environmental performance of the approved proposal/s against the EPA's objectives for environmental factors relevant to the requested amendment, and any Ministerial statement implementation condition, environmental outcomes and/or objectives (this may be provided as a table). This can include reference to a recent Compliance Assessment Report if it is less than one year old, provided it discusses environmental performance against the EPA's objectives for environmental factors and any implementation condition environmental outcomes and/or objectives.

Where relevant, include details of any monitoring results, data and any supporting documentation (e.g. complaints).

Note: It is expected that the EPA's current objectives, procedures, instructions and guidance will be considered in reporting on current environmental performance, rather than the objectives, procedures, instructions and guidance at time the original proposal was approved.

**TIP:** This subsection is about the environmental performance of an approved proposal and achievement of environmental outcomes. To avoid repetition with the requested content in Section 1.2.2, do not discuss compliance with Ministerial statement conditions here.

## *Proposal under an assessed planning scheme only:*

### 1.2 Assessed planning scheme

If the referred proposal is a proposal under an assessed planning scheme, the Responsible Authority should also include the following additional requirements.

#### Environmental issues

Provide detail on what new environmental issues are raised by the proposal that were not assessed during the assessment of the planning scheme.

#### Environmental effects

Outline how the proposal does not comply with the assessed scheme and/or environmental conditions in the assessed planning scheme.

### 1.3 Proposal alternatives

To the extent reasonably practicable, describe any feasible alternatives to the proposal, including a comparison of the environmental impacts of each alternative, and sufficient detail to make it clear why any alternative is preferred to another.

When describing alternatives, consider:

- other technologies or options
- location options
- whether there are proposal alternatives which are likely to have a reduced environmental impact but are not preferred and the reasons why.

Do not include mitigation options in this subsection.

### 1.4 Local and regional context

Discuss how the proposal fits within the local and regional area, for example:

- proximity to other developments
- tenure, including Native Title Determinations
- relevant social surroundings aspects such as populations centres, recreational areas, industrial zones
- existing environment, including proximity to environmental values such as National Parks, Marine Parks, conservation reserves, biodiversity hotspots, rivers and Ramsar wetlands.

Include a figure/s showing the key local and regional context information discussed in the text.

**TIP:** Only include context information referred to and relevant to the assessment of potential impacts. Do not include generic information and common knowledge, such as 'proposal is located in a Mediterranean climate'.

## 2. Stakeholder engagement

### 2.1 Key stakeholders

The EPA expects the proponent to have meaningful engagement with stakeholders who are affected by or are interested in the proposal. This includes the decision-making authorities, other relevant state (and Commonwealth) government agencies and local government authorities, Traditional Owners, the local community and environmental non-government organisations. List the key stakeholders for the proposal.

### 2.2 Stakeholder engagement process

Discuss the process for stakeholder engagement for the proposal, including ongoing consultation, consistent with the EPA's expectations outlined in the EPA's [Statement of environmental principles, factors, objectives and aims of EIA](#) and [Stakeholder Engagement Plan](#).

### 2.3 Stakeholder consultation outcomes

Identify who was consulted, summary of discussions, key issues / matters raised, outcomes and whether matters raised were resolved or outstanding. Include a response to issues raised by stakeholders (or reference the section in the ERD where they are addressed) and outcomes of consultation (see ERD Template Table 3).

If a proponent considers that another decision-making process may be able to mitigate the potential impacts of a proposal on the environment, clearly documenting discussions and providing sufficient detail regarding the other processes (also refer to 3.7 Environmental outcomes and Appendix 2 as appropriate). Do not include generic discussions with decision-making authorities.

Justify if consultation has not been undertaken with a particular stakeholder/s.

### *Environmental factor assessments*

For an ERD provided at referral, proponents should identify and assess the relevant environmental factors for the environmental review.

If the EPA decides to assess the proposal, the EPA will identify the preliminary key environmental factors in the record of the decision of whether to assess. If an ESD is required, factors may be amended (factors added or removed in the ESD). For ERDs during assessment, the EPA expects detailed assessment for the preliminary key environmental factors only, unless new significant environmental issues emerge during the assessment.

## 3. Environmental factor

For each relevant environmental factor (at referral) /preliminary key environmental factor (during assessment), include a separate assessment chapter and provide the information in the following subsections.

### 3.1 EPA Environmental factor/s and objective/s

State the key environmental factor/s and objective/s (see the EPA's [Statement of environmental principles, factors, objectives and aims of EIA](#)).

## 3.2 Relevant policy and guidance

Complete ERD Template Table 4 for the list of relevant EPA policy and technical guidance for each factor (see the EPA's [Framework for environmental considerations in EIA](#)). Include other State or Commonwealth policy or guidance, if relevant.

**TIP:** In the appropriate sections of the ERD, discuss the application of the relevant policy, guidance and legislation and provide justification if it is not followed and/or why the information provided is fit for purpose to inform the EPA's assessment.

The EPA expects that proponents will describe how they have considered the relevant policy and guidance, both State and Commonwealth, and reference it throughout the ERD to demonstrate it has been given adequate consideration.

## 3.3 Receiving environment

### 3.3.1 Surveys and studies

Identify and summarise studies and survey efforts undertaken for the proposal:

- Provide dates and timing of the studies and surveys, and maps of consolidated survey effort in relation to the proposal impact areas.
- Discuss whether surveys are consistent with EPA technical guidance and if not, justify inconsistencies, and provide information to support why the surveys are appropriate to inform the assessment of the proposal.
- Where there are a number of historical surveys, consolidate the surveys into one report, ensuring that information is current and consistent. If relying on older studies only, justify why they remain relevant.
- If studies or surveys recommend further work be undertaken, state whether these recommendations are supported and if not, justify why not.
- Confirm that relevant biodiversity and marine survey reports and associated spatial information have been submitted using the Index of Surveys for Assessment (ISA) via Environment Online [Index of Surveys for Assessments](#), following the appropriate ISA procedures and data standards.

When designing survey/study areas, consider all areas that may be impacted by the proposal, including:

- direct impact areas: footprint and development envelope (e.g. disturbance area, pits, infrastructure)
- indirect impact areas (e.g. areas affected by noise, light, vibration, habitat fragmentation, dust, hydrological changes, weeds)
- local combined impacts for project expansions or extensions
- regional and cumulative impact areas.

### 3.3.2 Existing environment

Provide a description of the existing environmental values (including matters of national environmental significance (MNES) if relevant) that are likely to be impacted by the proposal (including regional context for those values where applicable), referencing the sources. Include:

- description of the area as it relates to the factor, for example, IBRA regions for flora and fauna, catchments for inland waters
- background information only where it adds important context for potential significant impacts, for example, geology is relevant to subterranean fauna habitat
- discussion of whether there are current environmental impacts to values from existing threatening processes (for example, fire) or existing developments.

Provide sufficient maps and figures showing the proposal development envelope overlain with local and regional environmental values relating to the factor (ERD Template Figure 3).

**TIP:** Only include information relevant to the assessment. Generic information that does not add context to the assessment and is not referred to again should be avoided.

## 3.4 Proposed mitigation

Demonstrate how the mitigation hierarchy has been applied, as defined in the [Statement of environmental principles, factors objectives and aims of EIA](#). The aim of mitigation is to ensure potential significant environmental impacts on environmental value/s are avoided or the residual impact is not significant.

### *Mitigation hierarchy*

#### Avoid

Outline how measures have been applied to avoid impacts to environmental values.

#### Minimise

Describe the key proposed minimisation measures:

- Include a description of the measures proposed that will be implemented to minimise the impacts of the proposal on the environment.
- Discuss whether the proposed measures are industry standard and best practice, and the degree of certainty about their effectiveness.
- Discuss whether any environmental management plans (EMPs) are proposed (and include as appendices to the ERD).

The EPA's preference is for potential significant impacts to be controlled by outcome-based conditions (and only where required, supported by outcomes-based EMPs which contain triggers and thresholds).

Proponents should only propose objectives-based EMPs (which include management actions and targets) if outcomes cannot be defined or are not practical, or where a management response matter is novel and so detailed explanation of how the impact will be managed is

required. In these cases, the proponent should justify why the objectives-based EMP is proposed.

All EMPs must be prepared in accordance with the [Instruction and template: How to prepare Part IV Environmental Management Plans](#) and submitted as appendices to the ERD.

### Rehabilitate

Describe how rehabilitation, decommissioning and closure measures are proposed to be implemented to reduce the spatial or temporal extent of the impacts of the proposal on the environment, and the likely environmental outcomes of this.

For mining proposals, rehabilitation, decommissioning and closure measures and outcomes may be provided in a Mine Closure Plan (MCP), or other plan/s. Where proponents provide a MCP, they should follow the Department of Mines, Petroleum and Exploration [Mining Development and Closure Proposals Framework](#).

### Greenhouse gas emissions factor hierarchy

The greenhouse gas emissions environmental factor hierarchy is avoid, reduce and offset. Proponents should refer to the EPA's [Environmental Factor Guideline - Greenhouse Gas Emissions](#) for details.

Proponents should then discuss the appropriate regulation of the key proposed mitigation measures in Section 3.7 Outcomes.

**TIP:** In this subsection, proponents should provide clear information on *what* key project-specific measures they will be implementing that will have a tangible ability to reduce the impacts on the environment. Do not include a list of standard business mitigation actions.

## 3.5 Potential environmental impacts

### 3.5.1 Identified environmental impacts

Identify (dot point list or table) the potential impacts on environmental values and briefly justify whether or not they are relevant to the proposal, e.g. the proposal may be unlikely to have an impact on a particular environmental value, or the potential impacts are considered unlikely to require detailed assessment. This provides transparency and enables the proponent to clearly articulate to the EPA and stakeholders what are considered the relevant matters for the assessment.

### 3.5.2 Predicted environmental impacts

Quantify the predicted impacts (direct, indirect, and cumulative) on the environmental values (including MNES if relevant) for each environmental factor in a local and regional context, using actual data and predictions. The focus of the quantification should be on environmental values where a potential significant impact is identified (in Section 3.5.1).

Include tables (and brief text, if required) showing predicted impacts (in absolute and relative (%) terms) as follows:

- known extent of the existing environmental value/s in both a local and regional context
- direct impact of this proposal to the existing environmental value/s

- indirect impact of this proposal to the existing environmental value/s
- total of the direct and indirect impact of this proposal to the existing environmental value/s
- total (direct and indirect; combined) impact of other proposals to the existing environmental value/s
- cumulative environmental effects – see [Statement of environmental principles, factors and objectives, and aims of EIA](#)
- discuss the level of certainty regarding a predicted impact.

Include impacts in all areas that may be affected by the implementation of the proposal. This includes the likely extent of direct and indirect impacts, and cumulative impacts.

If a development envelope has been proposed to provide flexibility as to the location of the final proposal footprint, quantify impacts to all areas within the development envelope where development or disturbance may occur, not just within the indicative proposal footprint.

Provide a map/s (e.g. ERD Template Figure 4) showing the extent of the environmental value/s (including MNES if relevant) overlaid by the development envelope and the predicted direct and indirect impacts.

The ERD should be a standalone document that collates the information gathered and provides sufficient detail in the environmental factor chapters on the predictions of potential impacts on the environment. Supporting detail may be referred to in technical appendices. For example, where modelling has been undertaken to inform impact predictions, summarise the modelling undertaken and why it is fit for purpose, noting key limitations and assumptions to inform the level of confidence in the predictions.

**TIP:** This subsection is about quantifying the impacts (i.e how much, how far etc.). To avoid repetition with the requested content in Section 3.6 Assessment of potential significant impacts, do not discuss the significance of the predicted impacts here.

### 3.6 Assessment of significance of residual impacts

This section brings the receiving environment, predicted impacts and mitigation sections together. Consistent with the [EIA Practice Guide](#), proponents should assess both the impacts of the proposal (physical change) and the significance of the of the environmental effect (consequence that the impact may have on the affected value).

Assess the significance of the predicted impacts (direct and indirect) on the environmental factor and environmental values in a local and regional context. Identify whether there are any residual impacts after application of the avoidance, minimisation and rehabilitation elements of the mitigation hierarchy and whether these are significant. Where significant residual impacts remain, identify whether offsets are proposed. As proposed offsets often address multiple environmental values, to avoid repetition present information on proposed offsets (if relevant) in section 4 only.

For guidance on what the EPA may have regard to in its consideration of ‘significance’ refer to the [Statement of environmental principles, factors objectives and aims of EIA](#).

Assess impacts in all areas which may be affected by the implementation of the proposal (as outlined in 3.5.2 Predicted environmental impacts).



### 3.6.1 Proposal

Assess the significance of the predicted impacts of the proposal on the environmental value/s, considering the effect that impact may have on the environmental value.

### 3.6.2 Combined effects (for Significant Amendments only)

For significant amendments, assess the combined effects that implementation of the approved proposal and the significant amendment might have on the environmental value/s, to enable the EPA to assess the significant amendment in the context of the approved proposal and have regard to their combined effect on an environmental factor.

### 3.6.3 Cumulative impacts

Provide an assessment of the cumulative environmental impacts for the environmental factor, consistent with the EPA's [\*Statement of environmental principles, factors and objectives, and aims of EIA\*](#), considering the following:

- Have relevant future activities and pressures (e.g. fire, climate change, land clearing) been considered in relation to the relevant factor and environmental value?
- Would the cumulative impacts mean that the environmental values in the region (of the proposal) be considered more significant or more important for ecological functioning?
- Given existing cumulative impacts, would the addition of the proposal impact, likely to take the environmental value to an ecological or management threshold, e.g. change in conservation status?

## 3.7 Environmental outcomes

Identify the expected environmental outcomes due to the implementation of the proposal, considering residual impacts, mitigation (including offsets) and their effect on the receiving environment. In identifying the expected environmental outcomes, analyse the level of certainty that an outcome will be able to be achieved with reference to appropriate evidence or experience from other proposals. See [\*Interim Guidance - Outcomes and Outcomes-based conditions\*](#) for guidance.

Discuss whether the expected environmental outcomes are consistent with the EPA's objectives for environmental factors.

Discuss whether and how the expected environmental outcome can be assured by any of the following:

- another statutory decision-making process which can mitigate the specific potential impacts of the proposal on the environment to be consistent with the EPA's factor objectives (see also Appendix 2-2 requirements)
- limits on the extent of the proposal
- outcomes-based conditions including monitoring and reporting or including an outcomes-based management plan, if required
- objectives-based environmental management plan conditions (including justification for why an objective-based EMP is considered appropriate)
- prescriptive conditions.

Describe how the expected environmental outcomes will be monitored:

- Describe the baseline environmental condition and proposed indicators, response actions, reporting and adaptive management approaches in relation to proposed environmental outcomes.
- If an outcomes-based Environmental Management Plan is considered necessary, it must include indicators, trigger criteria, threshold criteria, trigger level actions and threshold contingency actions consistent with the EPA's [\*Instruction and template: How to prepare Environmental Protection Act 1986 Part IV Environmental Management Plans\*](#).
- Where practical, proposed monitoring for related environmental factors can be provided in the same outcomes-based Environmental Management Plan.

The proponent may also wish to propose outcome-based condition/s (and other conditions, where relevant) for consideration by the EPA.

### *Significant amendments only*

#### Existing implementation conditions

Provide an analysis of the existing implementation conditions relating to the approved proposal/s and whether the proponent considers they should be inquired into. Include information on the following:

- whether the existing conditions are still relevant for the significant amendment or are no longer required (e.g. should they be replaced by a different condition or have been completed/closed out and can be deleted)
- whether the existing implementation conditions are adequate to ensure the proposal's ongoing elements are consistent with the EPA's environmental factor objectives.

This information can be provided in an appendix table, particularly where there are numerous approved proposal conditions and/or more than one approved proposal relating to the significant amendment.

#### Control of implementation of significant amendment

Discuss whether the combined environmental effects of the amendment with the approved proposal are likely to be met by currently conditioned environmental outcomes, and/or are likely to be able to be managed to meet currently conditioned environmental objectives (i.e. the current implementation conditions for the approved proposal). Discuss whether any new or amended environmental outcomes need to be conditioned.

Discuss whether any objectives-based environmental management plans required by any existing approved proposal implementation conditions will need to be amended to manage the proposed amendment. If amendments to objectives-based environmental management plans are required:

- discuss whether an outcomes-based condition setting arrangement can replace the objectives-based management plan
- summarise the content of any proposed management plan amendments
- summarise how the amendments to the management plan will manage the impacts of the proposed amendment

- summarise any consultation and endorsement requirements relating to management plans
- provide revised management plans highlighting proposed changes.

### *Derived proposals only*

#### Environmental outcomes

Demonstrate how the proposal will meet the environmental outcomes defined through the assessment of the strategic proposal.

#### Implementation conditions

Provide an analysis of the existing implementation conditions of the related strategic proposal in relation to the derived proposal. This should include consideration of whether the existing implementation conditions are adequate to ensure consistency of the elements of the derived proposal with the EPA's environmental factor objectives.

## 4. Offsets

### 4.1 Summary of significant residual impacts

Summarise and quantify (dot points) any significant residual impacts resulting from the assessment of an environmental factor.

For all significant residual impacts identified, include a detailed assessment of whether proposed offsets are likely to counterbalance the significant residual environmental impacts.

### 4.2 Details of proposed offsets

Proponents must follow the relevant offset guidance. If the proposal relates to a significant amendment of an approved proposal, current offsets practice applies.

There are two streams of offset guidance:

- guidance for biodiversity factors
- guidance for Greenhouse gas emission factor:

The current offsets guidance for biodiversity factors and for the Greenhouse gas emissions factor is outlined in the EPA's [\*Statement of environmental principles, factors, objectives and aims of EIA\*](#).

Provide details of the proposed offset including but not limited to:

- maps and spatial data for offset areas
- objectives and outcomes
- description of actions to be undertaken
- specific and measurable success criteria
- timelines and milestones
- monitoring to assess offset implementation

- reporting details and timing
- financial arrangements
- risks and contingency measures
- governance arrangements including responsibilities and legal obligations.

### *Biodiversity offsets*

Offsets are not appropriate for all proposals. They should usually only be considered as the final step in the mitigation hierarchy, and only for significant residual impacts for environmental factors.

Additional information on biodiversity offsets is in the EPA's Public Advice [\*Considering Environmental Offsets at a Regional Scale\*](#).

Proponents must provide sufficient evidence about and assess whether (and how) an offset is likely to counter-balance a significant residual impact. Identify and quantify the significant residual impacts and proposed offsets, consistent with the [\*DWER WA environmental offsets calculator\*](#), guideline [\*Environmental offsets metric - Quantifying environmental offsets in WA\*](#) and draft procedure [\*DRAFT Procedure for environmental offsets metric inputs\*](#). Consider the [\*residual impact significance model table\*](#) (an example is on Page 11 of the [\*WA Environmental Offsets Guideline\*](#)).

Include the following:

- Provide evidence of consultation on offset with relevant stakeholders.
- Assess whether and how the proposed offset will counterbalance the significant residual impact, providing sufficient evidence to support conclusions (this cannot be based on assumptions or conjecture).
- Demonstrate consideration of the six Principles outlined in the [\*WA Environmental Offsets Policy and WA Environmental Offset Guideline\*](#), and the EPA's Public Advice [\*Considering Environmental Offsets at a Regional Scale\*](#).
- Outline how the offset aligns with relevant plans and policies, such as recovery plans.
- Provide evidence that supports the success or viability of the offset (include as an appendix where required).
- For proposals within the Pilbara region also provide an Impact Reconciliation Procedure, including the relevant spatial data, prepared in accordance with [\*Instructions: Preparing Impact Reconciliation Procedures and Impact Reconciliation Reports\*](#).

The EPA must be satisfied that an offset is both available and it will be able to counterbalance the significant residual impact for each environmental value.

### *Greenhouse Gas Emissions offsets*

Include the requirements in the EPA's [\*Environmental Factor Guideline: Greenhouse Gas Emissions\*](#).

## 5. Matters of National Environmental Significance

This section is required for ERDs during assessment if the EPA is also assessing the proposal under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) and for ERDs provided at referral if the proponent has or intends to refer the proposal under the EPBC Act and a controlled action decision is expected. Address any specific matters required by the EPBC Act and/or raised by the Australian Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW). Include the following (or reference the relevant factor chapter/s if the information is provided there, to avoid duplication):

- List the controlled action provisions.
- List the relevant policy and guidance for the MNES.
- Provide a summary of the existing environmental value(s) that relate to the MNES.
- Summarise the potential impacts (direct, indirect, and cumulative) on the MNES.
- Provide relevant tables and maps (e.g. Template Figure 5).
- Summarise the assessment on the relevant environmental factor/s to determine the level of significance of the impact on the MNES. Discuss impacts in the context of recovery plan requirements and include how the mitigation hierarchy has been applied.
- Summarise any proposed mitigation.
- Summarise whether offsets are required in relation to the MNES and if so, provide details of the proposed offset and how the offset addresses the EPBC Act [Environmental Offset Policy](#).

## References

Use the [Australian Government Style Guide](#) for referencing as it is a more accessible format.

List references in alphabetical order (and date order where there are multiple references from the same author).

Include relevant policy and guidance.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Scoping – required work (if ESD required)

If an ESD is required in the level of assessment recorded under s. 39(b), complete the *Scoping Checklist - required work table* (ERD Template Table A1-1) and provide section references and page numbers where the ERD adequately addresses the work required in the ESD.

### Appendix 2: Legislative context

#### A2-1 Environmental impact assessment process

Discuss key legislative requirements relating to the proposal, including:

- Part IV of the EP Act: For example, type of proposal; when the proposal was referred; level of assessment requirements; any approved proposal amendments etc.
- EPBC Act: For example, whether the proposal has been referred; assessment decision; if decision is a Controlled Action, whether it will be assessed under Section 45 (Bilateral Agreement) or s. 87 (Accredited assessment).

Information can be provided as a table, where appropriate.

**TIP:** Only include specific information about how the process relates to the proposal. Do not repeat content in EPA and/or DCCEE procedures documents.

#### A2-2 Other approvals and regulation

Provide information on relevant decision-making authorities, legislation and other approvals required (via parallel processing or at a later date) (see ERD Template Table A2-1: Other decision-making authority approvals).

Provide a brief description of the land tenure including existing zoning, tenements and/or lease types. Specify if the proponent has legal access to the land.

If the proponent considers another decision-making process could mitigate the potential impacts of the proposal on the environment, complete ERD Template Table A2-2, consistent with the EPA's [Taking decision making processes into account in EIA: Interim Guidance](#).

#### A2-3 Object and principles of the EP Act

Complete ERD Template Table 4 showing how the EP Act object and principles have been considered in relation to the proposal.

### Appendix 3: Other environmental factors or matters

Assess the proposal's potential impacts on other relevant environmental factors or matters against the EPA's objectives/s for environmental factors, providing sufficient information to justify why any environmental factors are not considered to be preliminary key environmental factors. Other environmental or factors matters are those considered relevant to the assessment but not covered as part of the preliminary key environmental factors discussion, for example, where identified:

- in the ESD and/or

- during stakeholder engagement.

Other environmental factors or matters may be summarised in a tabular format.

## Appendix 4: Relevant technical studies and investigations

Include all supporting documents, such as studies, investigations, and reports, used to prepare the ERD.

Where supporting documents are publicly available, a link to the document may be used in place of an appendix; for example, a Ministerial statement.

## Appendix 5: Environmental Management Plans

Where an environmental management plan has been identified as required, include as an appendix.

## Other information

### Disclaimers

Any disclaimers included in the ERD should not prevent the EPA from using the ERD for its assessment. This includes providing copies to decision-making authorities and other agencies, and members of the public, and using and reproducing information to prepare the EPA's assessment report.

### Confidential information

Consider whether the ERD contains sensitive information that is not appropriate to be provided as part of the public review process, for example, sensitive cultural information regarding Aboriginal Cultural Heritage (including the location of specific sites). Please discuss with EPA Services if identified sensitive information should be redacted in any documents made available for public review.

The Environmental Protection Regulations Amendment (Publication and Confidentiality) Regulations 2021 make provision for maintaining the confidentiality of certain documents.

A proponent may, at the time of referral or at any subsequent time, ask the EPA to keep any part or the whole proposal confidential in the public record of referred proposals.

If a request is made, the EPA will not release the information until it has dealt with the request. Once the EPA has done so it will either:

- agree the information satisfies the criteria for confidentiality and will not include it in the public record (i.e. does not publish the information on the EPA website), or
- disagrees the information is confidential and includes it in the public record (i.e. may publish the information on the EPA website).



## Submitting an ERD

Ensure that the ERD and supporting documentation contains all the required information in the ERD Template and Instructions. It is preferred that ERDs are submitted via Environment Online; however, emailed and postal submissions will be accepted. For assistance in using Environment Online, please contact [EOsupport@dwer.wa.gov.au](mailto:EOsupport@dwer.wa.gov.au).

### Submissions

EO portal: [environmentonline.dwer.wa.gov.au](http://environmentonline.dwer.wa.gov.au)

Email: [EOsupport@dwer.wa.gov.au](mailto:EOsupport@dwer.wa.gov.au)

Post: EPA Services  
Department of Water and Environmental Regulation  
Locked Bag 10, Joondalup DC, WA 6919

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