

Biodiversity Impact Assessment (BIA) Guidelines

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Table of Contents

| | | |
|-------|--|----|
| 1 | Introduction..... | 5 |
| 1.1 | What Is a BIA and How Is It Related to an EIA?..... | 6 |
| 1.2 | What Does a BIA Report Contain? | 7 |
| 1.3 | Objectives..... | 7 |
| 1.4 | How to Use this Booklet | 8 |
| 2 | Conducting Baseline Studies for Terrestrial Sites..... | 9 |
| 2.1 | Study Area | 10 |
| 2.2 | Habitat Baseline Study..... | 11 |
| 2.2.1 | Vegetation Mapping | 11 |
| 2.2.2 | Habitat Mapping | 11 |
| 2.2.3 | Hydrology | 14 |
| 2.3 | Target Species Groups' Baseline Study..... | 17 |
| 2.3.1 | Vascular Plants..... | 19 |
| 2.3.2 | Birds..... | 21 |
| 2.3.3 | Reptiles and Amphibians..... | 23 |
| 2.3.4 | Mammals (Except Bats)..... | 27 |
| 2.3.5 | Bats..... | 29 |
| 2.3.6 | Butterflies | 31 |
| 2.3.7 | Odonates..... | 32 |
| 2.3.8 | Freshwater Organisms..... | 33 |
| 2.4 | Identifying High Conservation Priority Areas | 35 |
| 3 | Conducting Baseline Studies for Marine Sites..... | 37 |
| 3.1 | Study Area..... | 38 |
| 3.2 | Habitat Baseline Study..... | 39 |
| 3.2.1 | Habitat Mapping | 39 |
| 3.2.2 | Physical Parameters..... | 41 |
| 3.3 | Marine Biodiversity Community Surveys..... | 43 |
| 3.3.1 | Mangrove Flora Community | 44 |
| 3.3.2 | Mangrove Faunal Community..... | 46 |
| 3.3.3 | Seagrass Community | 48 |
| 3.3.4 | Benthic and Infauna Community (Mudflats)..... | 50 |
| 3.3.5 | Coral Reef Community..... | 51 |
| 4 | Assessing Development Impacts..... | 54 |
| 4.1 | Identifying Types and Sources of Impacts..... | 57 |
| 4.2 | Establishing Environmental Quality Objectives..... | 58 |
| 4.3 | Classifying Levels of Impacts..... | 60 |

| | | |
|----------|--|-----------|
| 4.4 | Assessing Impact Significance | 62 |
| 4.4.1 | The RIAM method (modified from Pastakia and Jesen, 1998) | 63 |
| 4.4.2 | The Risk-based Impact Assessment Matrix | 65 |
| 4.4.3 | The Leopold Matrix (Leopold, Clarke, Hanshaw & Balsley, 1971) .. | 67 |
| 4.5 | Assessing Residual Impacts..... | 68 |
| 4.6 | Reporting the Final Impact Assessment | 68 |
| 5 | Developing Mitigation Measures | 69 |
| 5.1 | What are Mitigation Measures..... | 70 |
| 5.2 | When are Mitigation Measures Required | 72 |
| 5.3 | Developing Mitigation Measures | 73 |
| 6 | Developing an Environmental Management and Monitoring Plan (EMMP) | 74 |
| 6.1 | What is an EMMP and How is it Related to a BIA? | 75 |
| 6.2 | What to Include in an EMMP | 77 |
| 6.2.1 | Project Description | 78 |
| 6.2.2 | Environmental Objectives..... | 78 |
| 6.2.3 | Potential Environmental Impacts and Risks..... | 78 |
| 6.2.4 | Environmental Management Measures | 78 |
| 6.2.5 | Environmental Management Roles and Responsibilities..... | 80 |
| 6.2.6 | Reporting | 80 |
| 6.2.7 | Environmental Training | 81 |
| 6.2.8 | Emergency Contacts and Procedures..... | 81 |
| 6.2.9 | Review, Audit, and Change Management | 82 |
| 7 | Conclusion | 83 |
| | References..... | 85 |
| | Additional Reading | 86 |
| | Baseline Studies and Monitoring..... | 86 |
| | Impact Assessment Tools | 86 |
| | Regulated Environmental Limits in Singapore..... | 87 |
| | Annex A: List of Relevant Acts and Regulations | 88 |

A photograph of a lush tropical forest. A large, prominent tree with a reddish-brown trunk and a wide, spreading green canopy stands in the center-left. Its reflection is clearly visible in the calm water of a river or lake in the foreground. The water is a deep blue-grey color. The background is filled with dense green foliage and other trees. The sky is a clear, bright blue. In the bottom right corner, there are some dark green leaves and branches, possibly from a tree in the foreground. A semi-transparent dark green rectangular box is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the text "1. Introduction" in white.

1. Introduction

1. Introduction

1.1 What Is a BIA and How Is It Related to an EIA?

An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is a process of evaluating the likely environmental impacts of a proposed project or development, taking into account inter-related socio-economic, cultural and human-health impacts, both beneficial and adverse (Convention on Biological Diversity, n.d.). The EIA aims to predict environmental impacts at an early stage in project planning and design, find ways and means to reduce adverse impacts to reasonably practical levels, shape projects to suit the local environment and present the predictions and options to decision-makers (Convention on Biological Diversity, n.d.)

A Biodiversity Impact Assessment (BIA) is the biodiversity component of a full EIA. Development projects that are in or near to sensitive areas such as Nature Reserves, Nature Areas, areas of biodiversity interest, and all coastal and marine development projects, will have their impacts on biodiversity be subject to greater scrutiny. The terms EIA and BIA are used for both the process and the resulting documentation (the EIA and BIA reports).

1.2 What Does a BIA report Contain?

A typical BIA report contains the following sections:

- Non-Technical Summary
- Project Description
- Literature Review and Baseline Survey Findings (raw data can be attached as appendices)
- Impact Assessment
- Mitigation Measures
- Environmental Monitoring and Management Plan

As the technical agency on biodiversity, NParks advises on the scope of the BIA. This includes but is not limited to: scoping the study area, the time frame or seasons for the study, highlighting particular impacts to be studied, the taxonomic groups to be surveyed, minimum Environmental Quality Objectives (EQOs), and other aspects that may be relevant. Once the scope of the BIA has been set out, consultants typically submit an inception report detailing proposed survey methods and report content to NParks for endorsement.

1.3 Objectives

The main objectives of these guidelines are to:

- Serve as a self-learning tool for developers, and environmental consultants new to conducting BIAs
- Provide suggested methods for conducting baseline surveys
- Explain the key components to a robust impact assessment related to biodiversity
- Share best practices on biodiversity impact assessments conducted around the world
- Offer guidance on assessment matrix and mitigation measures
- Provide information on developing the biodiversity component of an environmental management and monitoring plan (EMMP)

These guidelines are non-prescriptive and are meant to provide information on how biodiversity related impact assessments are carried out. For non-biodiversity related aspects of an EIA, please refer to the resource section at the back of the booklet.

1.4 How to Use this Booklet

Chapter 2 covers the **baseline physical and ecological studies** typically required for terrestrial sites, and provides commonly used survey methods to conduct baseline studies on both habitats and target species groups. This will also give developers a better understanding of the range of studies required, and help developers plan their project timeline to accommodate the studies.

Chapter 3 covers the **baseline physical and ecological studies** typically required for marine sites, and provides commonly used survey methods to conduct baseline studies on various parameters which are typically linked to habitat quality. This will also give developers a better understanding on the range of studies required, and help developers plan their project timeline to accommodate the studies.

Chapter 4 illustrates various methods to conduct a robust **impact assessment**.

Chapters 5 provides guidelines for developing appropriate **mitigation measures** to minimise impacts in terrestrial and marine developments respectively.

Chapter 6 outlines the considerations for the **Environmental Management and Monitoring Plan (EMMP)** which must be implemented by the developer's contractor. The EMMP provides a checklist of monitoring measures to ensure that the mitigation measures recommended in the BIA report are adhered to and are effective.



2. Conducting Baseline Studies for Terrestrial Sites

2. Conducting Baseline Studies for Terrestrial Sites

This chapter outlines the expectations of conducting and reporting the results of baseline studies. Baseline studies are typically split into two components – the habitat baseline study, and the target species group's baseline study. The former establishes the types and locations of habitats found on site including waterbodies, while the latter establishes the presence and behaviour of target species groups on site.

Various survey methods have been suggested in this chapter, however the developer/consultant should note that these methods are not prescriptive and are only suggestions for consideration. Consultants will have to take into account the nature of the development project, site constraints, and the specific physical and chemical features of the environment to select the most suitable methods, as well as the appropriate number of replicates. Nevertheless, the choice of standardised methods will facilitate comparisons before and after, as well as between projects and sites. Further reading is listed under "Additional Reading" at the end of this booklet.

2.1 Study Area

This section of the BIA should include the following:

- Map of the study area, as defined by the agencies' scope
- Short description of the study area, highlighting relevant information such as the dominant vegetation type and species of conservation interest based on literature review and analysis of past land use based on historical reports (if available)

2.2 Habitat Baseline Study

2.2.1 Vegetation Mapping

This section typically includes an inventory and map of plant species within the study area. Depending on the study area and scope, minimally, trees of > 1 m girth are to be identified and mapped out. In Nature Reserves and sites with known sensitive habitats, quadrat sampling of all vascular plants may be requested by NParks. Plants with local conservation status according to the latest "Singapore Red Data Book" (Davison, Ng, & Ho, 2008) or relevant local published statuses such as in "A Checklist of the Total Vascular Plant Flora of Singapore" (Chong, Tan, & Corlett, 2009) should be mapped using GPS tagging to a 95% confidence level where possible and highlighted in the report. Suggestions on plant survey methods can be found in Section 2.3.1.

2.2.2 Habitat Mapping

Based on the identified plant species and past land use of the site, the consultant should also produce a map showing the boundaries of various habitat types on site. The total area and observed health for each habitat type should also be included. Table 2.1 contains a list of habitat types found in Singapore.

Table 2.1: Main Habitat Types in Singapore

| Habitat Type | Description Based on Vegetation and/or Physical Environment |
|---|--|
| Primary Forest | Contains an emergent layer that has dipterocarp trees such as <i>Shorea</i> and <i>Dipterocarpus</i> . Has a continuous layer of tall native trees, a sub-canopy consisting of smaller trees, and an understorey dominated by saplings of big tree species interspersed with other shrubs and treelets (Tan, Chou, Yeo, & Ng, 2007). |
| Native-dominated Young Secondary Forest | Developed on land cleared not long before the 1960s, or on degraded soils and not near other native-dominated forests. Dominated by native pioneer trees such as <i>Adinandra</i> , <i>Macaranga</i> , <i>Mallotus</i> and <i>Trema</i> (Yee, Chong, Neo, & Tan, 2016). |
| Native-dominated Old Secondary Forest | Developed on land cleared much earlier than the 1950s, often on less degraded soil and with higher species richness than early successional native dominated secondary forest. Common species found in the canopy layer include <i>Alstonia</i> , <i>Calophyllum</i> , <i>Campnosperma</i> , <i>Elaeocarpus</i> , <i>Garcinia</i> , <i>Litsea</i> , <i>Rhodamnia</i> and <i>Syzygium</i> . Common understorey plants include <i>Anisophyllea disticha</i> and <i>Agrostistachys borneensis</i> (Yee et al., 2016). |
| Exotic-dominated Secondary Forest | Regrown on land that was recently cleared, usually after the 1960s. Typically dominated by <i>Acacia auriculiformis</i> and <i>Falcataria moluccana</i> , and in recent years, <i>Cecropia pachystachya</i> and <i>Leucaena leucocephala</i> , depending on the seed sources available from the surroundings during the time of clearance and succession. |
| Abandoned Kampung | Developed from an abandoned kampung or orchard, usually dominated by fruit trees such as Durian (<i>Durio zibethinus</i>) or Rambutan (<i>Nephelium lappaceum</i>), or ornamental plants such as <i>Spathodea campanulata</i> , <i>Aglaonema commutatum</i> , <i>Dieffenbachia seguine</i> and <i>Heliconia</i> spp. (Yee et al., 2016). |
| Abandoned Plantation | Developed from an abandoned plantation, usually dominated by Pará Rubber (<i>Hevea brasiliensis</i>) (Yee et al., 2016). |
| Scrubland / Grassland | Exposed areas with very little tree cover, typically dominated by grasses, shrubs and herbs (Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum, 2017b). |

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Freshwater Swamp Forest | Formed where slowflowing streams drain into shallow valleys. The swamp is flooded periodically or semi-permanently, resulting in water-logged soils that are anaerobic and unstable. Dominated by plants with special adaptations such as stilt roots, planklike buttresses and pneumatophores. Examples include <i>Xylocarpus fusca</i> and <i>Palaquium xanthochyllum</i> (Tan, 2007). |
| Freshwater Marsh or Pond | A wetland which is covered by water and typically dominated by grasses, sedges and other herbaceous plants or hydrophytes that are able to tolerate flooding (Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum, 2017a). |
| Natural Stream | A well-shaded stream which is shallow, cool, and typically has mildly acidic waters (pH 6–7). Typically flows along natural topographical gradients over sand, clay or mud substrate with accumulations of leaf litter and woody debris (Yeo, Wang, & Lim, 2010). |
| Naturalised Stream | A stream which is warm and typically has less acidic water than natural streams (slightly less than pH 7). Typically modified from pre-existing natural streams and is often linear. Flows through natural earth or open grassy banks, lacking leaf litter and woody debris (Yeo et al., 2010). |
| Mangrove Forest | A tidal habitat consisting of flora that normally grows above mean sea level in the intertidal zone of marine environments and estuarine margins. Common species include <i>Rhizophora</i> , <i>Bruguiera</i> , <i>Avicennia</i> and <i>Sonneratia</i> trees which have roots that provide structural and respiratory support in the soft anaerobic sediments of the habitat (Ng, Corlett, & Tan, 2011). |
| Coastal Vegetation | Found along unreclaimed coasts where the forest is on sandy or rocky substrate. Dominated by hardy plants which can withstand higher temperatures, strong winds and salt sprays. Common species include <i>Casuarina equisetifolia</i> , <i>Cerbera</i> spp., and <i>Barringtonia</i> spp. (Tan et al., 2007) |
| Urban Vegetation | Consists of turf, shrubs or trees (often mostly non-native) which are planted by humans. This type of vegetation is typically managed for aesthetic purposes. |

2.2.3 Hydrology

This section may be requested by technical agencies if either of the following conditions are met:

- i) There are waterbodies (e.g. streams, ponds, ephemeral bodies, phytotelms) on site; or
- ii) If the development may impact important hydrological processes of adjacent aquatic habitats (e.g. freshwater stream, mangrove). For this type of development, hydrological baselines should include the status of groundwater across the study area. Hydrological modelling may be required to understand the relationship between surface water, groundwater and rainfall events, so that potential negative impacts could be properly assessed.

Depending on the scope of the study as defined by agencies and the sensitivity of the development, not all of the following subsections may be required.

2.2.3.1 Waterbody Mapping

This section should include a map of the locations and edges of all permanent waterbodies on site (e.g. streams, drains, ponds, swamps). The boundaries of the waterbodies should be captured using GPS to a 95% confidence level where possible, and should capture any significant bends in streams.

The material of the waterbody bed should also be included (e.g. clay, sand). This can often be determined by visual observation.

2.2.3.2 Water Conditions

This section should include an assessment of the baseline water conditions of the waterbodies on site, including surface water and groundwater. The surface water measurements should be taken at 50 m intervals along the stream or edge of the waterbody, while at least four groundwater sampling points should be taken, covering headwater (source), upper, middle and lower reaches of the impacted stream course. The samplings should be conducted to cover the wet and dry period during different local seasons, if possible:

- Northeast Monsoon (December to early March)
- Southwest Monsoon (June to September)
- Inter-Monsoon (late March to May; October to November)

2.2.3.3 Water Quantity

Cross-sections

The cross-section area of the stream should be estimated. This can be derived by calculating areas of trapeziums, which includes measuring the width of the stream section with measuring tape, followed by the depth of the stream at regular intervals.

Stream Velocity and Flow Rate

For streams, the velocity and flow rate should be measured using a flow meter and the following formula:

$$\text{Average Velocity (m/s)} = \text{Average} \times (\text{Left} - \text{centre}, \text{Centre}, \text{Right} - \text{centre})$$

$$\text{Flow rate (m}^3\text{/s)} = \text{Cross-section (m}^2\text{)} \times \text{Average Velocity}$$

Groundwater Table

The groundwater levels within the study site should be provided. These can be measured by instruments such as piezometers.

2.2.3.4 Water Quality

The typical water quality parameters that should be measured for both surface water and groundwater should include, but are not limited to:

- Temperature
- Salinity
- pH
- Chemical O₂ Demand (COD)
- Total Dissolved Solids (TDS)
- Conductivity
- Turbidity
- Dissolved Oxygen
- Total Nitrogen (TN)
- Total Phosphorus (TP)
- Ammoniacal Nitrogen (AN)
- Nitrate (NO₃)
- Orthophosphate (PO₄)
- Total Suspended Solids (TSS)
- Total Organic Carbon (TOC)
- Bacteria such as *Enterococcus* species
- Heavy metals such as lead

2.3 Target Species Groups' Baseline Study

The main objectives of conducting a baseline study for target species groups are to:

- Identify and map known locations of species of conservation interest, keystone species, and species that function as bioindicators
- Record and understand their interactions with the habitat

Species of conservation interest are species which have been identified to have high extinction risk and therefore have higher conservation priority. There are two levels at which species are of conservation interest – at the global and/or local level. Species with global status are listed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), while species with local status are listed in the “Singapore Red Data Book” (Davison et al., 2008) or other relevant locally published statuses, such as “The Dragonflies of Singapore” (Ngiam & Loong, 2016) and “The Checklist of the Total Vascular Plant Flora of Singapore” (Chong et al., 2009). Each species recorded in the baseline study will need to have both its global and local conservation status listed in all BIAs.

A keystone species is a species that has disproportionately large effects on its environment relative to its abundance (Paine, 1995). Consultants should refer to available literature to identify local keystone species, or propose species which fit the keystone species criteria based on their understanding of the site.

Bioindicators are species which can be used to reveal the health or status of the particular ecosystem they are found in. Again, consultants should refer to available literature to identify local bioindicator species. Bioindicators can also be used to monitor development impacts to the environment.

This information will help to predict areas of high conservation priority and/or identify appropriate locations for refuge of target species groups within a development site. Should it be impractical to study all species within the development site, at least a few key species groups should be studied instead. Depending on the scope of the study as defined by agencies and the sensitivity of the development, fewer or more groups than what are listed below may need to be studied. The amount of time required for the baseline will also be dependent on the scope set out by agencies, though the final routes and appropriate number of replicates for each survey should be determined by the consultant. This can be justified using species accumulation curves (Ugland, Gray, & Ellingsen, 2003) to determine sampling adequacy.

It should be noted that the methods listed in this chapter are not exhaustive. Other methods can be proposed depending on the context of the site and the amount of information required for the baseline study. As mentioned in Chapter 1, NParks helps to scope the study and will review the methods proposed by the consultant during the inception report stage.

Typical species groups studied:

- Vascular plants
- Birds
- Reptiles and amphibians
- Mammals and/or bats
- Butterflies
- Odonates*
- Freshwater organisms (fish, crustaceans, molluscs and other invertebrates) *

* Add-on surveys for sites with freshwater elements

2.3.1 Vascular Plants

This section should establish the diversity of vascular plants (including pteridophytes, climbers and vascular epiphytes) at the site, and should include the global and local conservation status of the various species. It differs from the vegetation mapping for the habitat baseline study (refer to Section 2.2.1), which focuses on establishing the vegetation types within the site. The suggested method is to use modified gentry plots.

Table 2.2: Modified Gentry Plots as a Survey Method (Conservation International, 2016)

| Suggested Method | Modified Gentry Plots |
|------------------|--|
| Description | <p>The layout of each plot can be adapted to the site. Figure 2.1 shows an example of a possible layout; each grid or subplot size can be adjusted accordingly.</p> <p>Each Modified Gentry Plot will cover about 0.1 ha within a 100 m × 200 m sampling grid. Ten 2 m × 50 m subplots should be established, with six 1 m × 1 m square plots to be set up adjacent to each of the 10 subplots (refer to Figure 2.1).</p> <p>Each woody plant rooted within the subplot area and with a diameter at breast height (DBH) of ≥ 2.5 cm should be identified or classified to the species level, if possible. When necessary, diameters will need to be measured 50 cm above buttresses and other stem irregularities. Surveyors should also inspect each tree for epiphytes and record them accordingly.</p> <p>Within each 1 m × 1 m subplot, each individual herbaceous plant should be identified or classified to the species level, if possible.</p> |
| Spread | The number of Modified Gentry Plots should be randomly spread out such that 10 – 15% of each vegetation type is sampled. |
| Duration | N/A |
| Timing | N/A |
| Frequency | Once per site |
| Notes | The Herbarium of the Singapore Botanic Gardens should be consulted for identification of unknown plants based on samples (leaf cuttings, flowers) and photographs. |

The following outcomes should be included in the report:

- Species list of vascular plants found on site, including their global and local conservation status, whether each species is native, exotic or invasive, and whether the species is likely from cultivation
- Plant girth sizes
- Information on whether the plants are flowering or fruiting
- Numbers of each tree species identified on site. Herbaceous plants can be estimated by number or percentage groundcover
- Map indicating plot location and locations of species of conservation interest
- Photographs of rare species and/or species of conservation interest should be taken and incorporated into the report

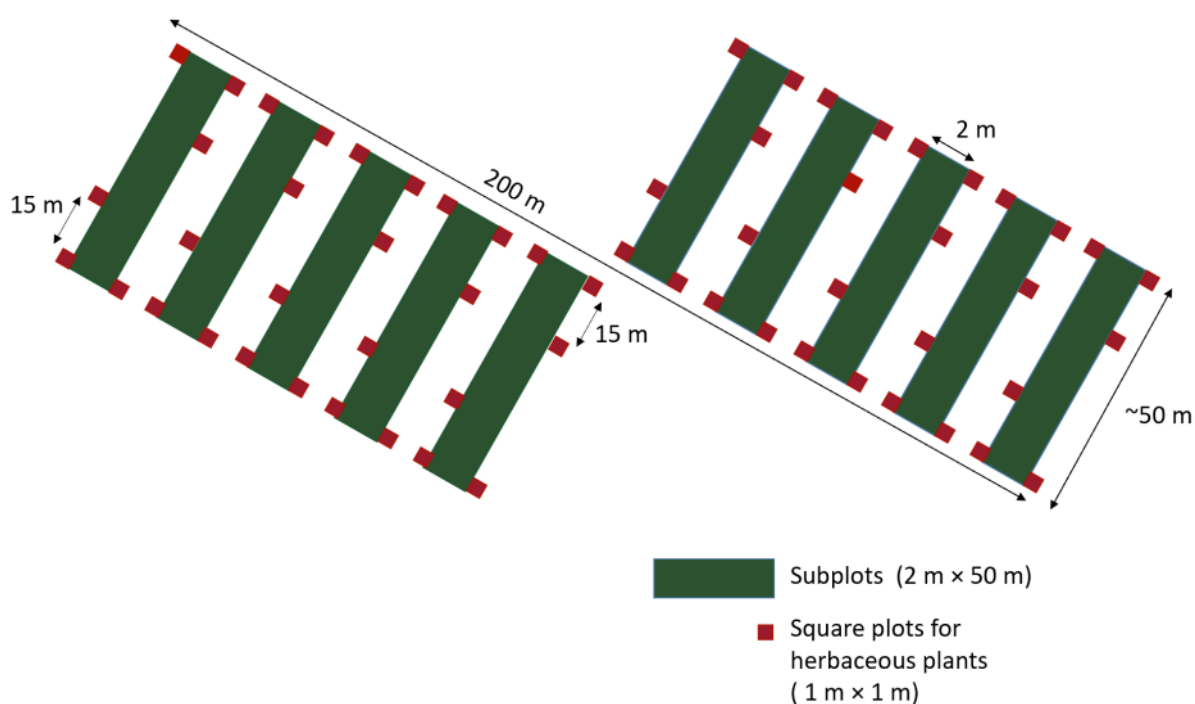


Figure 2.1: Modified Gentry Plot (adapted from Conservation International, 2016)

2.3.2 Birds

This section should establish the diversity of birds at the site, and include their global and local conservation status. The suggested methods are using point counts and/or line transects.

Table 2.3: Point Counts as a Survey Method

| Suggested Method | Point Counts |
|-------------------------|--|
| Description | Surveyor to stand at various points across the site and record all birds heard and seen within 50 m of each point. Sex (male or female) and age class (adult or juvenile) should also be noted if possible. |
| Spread | Spaced approximately 100 m apart |
| Duration | 10 mins at each point |
| Timing | 7 am to 9 am |
| Frequency | Each point should minimally be sampled once during local breeding season (December to June), and once during migratory season (September to March) |
| Notes | Selected points should be at least 100 m from line transects |

Table 2.4: Line Transects as a Survey Method

| Suggested Method | Line Transects |
|-------------------------|--|
| Description | Surveyors should walk along the transect at a steady pace and record all the birds heard and seen within 50 m of either side of the transect and 50 m ahead. Sex (male or female) and age class (adult or juvenile) should also be noted if possible, along with any behaviours (e.g. foraging, nesting). |
| Spread | 200 m for each transect, spaced approximately 100 m apart |
| Duration | 30 mins per transect |
| Timing | Dawn (approximately 7 am to 10 am), dusk (7 pm to 9 pm) |
| Frequency | Each transect should minimally be sampled once during local breeding season (December to July), and once during migratory season (September to March) |
| Notes | Transects should be at least 100 m from point count locations |

The following outcomes should be included in the report:

- Species list of birds found on site, including their global and local conservation status, whether each species is native, exotic or invasive, and whether it is resident or migratory
- Numbers of each species observed at each point count location
- Noteworthy behaviour should be recorded and highlighted, especially for species of conservation interest (e.g. nesting behaviour such as adult birds with nesting material or feeding young birds should be noted)
- Map indicating point count and/or line transect locations and locations of species of conservation interest
- Where possible, photographs of rare species and/or species of conservation interest should be taken and incorporated into the report

2.3.3 Reptiles and Amphibians

This section should establish the diversity of herpetofauna at the site, and include their global and local conservation status. The suggested methods are line transects and/or pitfall traps.

Table 2.5: Line Transects as a Survey Method

| Suggested Method | Line Transects |
|------------------|---|
| Description | <p>Surveyors should walk along the transect at a steady pace and record each individual amphibian or reptile observed within 10 m on either side of the transect ahead. Surveyors should also turn logs and rocks, searching for potential refuges as they move along the transect, before returning the logs and rocks to their original position. Surveyors should also record the presence of calling frogs. The time of day that each animal is seen or heard should also be recorded.</p> <p>Sex (male or female) and age class (adult or juvenile) should also be noted if possible, along with any behaviours (e.g. foraging, nesting)</p> |
| Spread | 200 m for each transect, spaced approximately 50 m apart |
| Timing | <p>8 am to 10 am for morning surveys</p> <p>30 to 60 mins after dark for night surveys</p> |
| Frequency | Each transect should minimally be sampled once during the day and once at night |
| Notes | N/A |

Table 2.6: Pitfall traps as a Survey Method (Fisher et al., 2008)

| Suggested Method | Pitfall Traps |
|------------------|--|
| Description | <p>Pitfall traps should be arranged in arrays. A suggested array design consists of three 15 m-long arms of drift fence with seven pitfall traps (refer to Figure 2.2). Drift fences can be made using tarpaulin or silt fence material. 20-L buckets can be used as pitfall traps. One pitfall trap is to be placed in the center of the array, with the remaining six spread out over each of the three arms of the drift fence extending outward from the center trap.</p> <p>Traps should be placed flush to the ground, and a raised cover should be constructed for the traps to provide shade. Traps should be set away from direct sunlight (refer to Figure 2.3).</p> <p>To prevent drowning of any trapped animals during heavy rain, holes should be punctured in the buckets and a branch should be lodged midway inside the bucket for the animals to rest on.</p> <p>All organisms obtained should be counted and identified to the best of the surveyors' abilities and released on the spot.</p> |
| Spread | Minimum of one array per habitat type |
| Timing | Each pitfall trap should be checked by 9 am the following day and immediately after rain for trapped animals |
| Frequency | Each trap should minimally be sampled once during the day and once at night |
| Notes | Cover the traps when they are not activated |

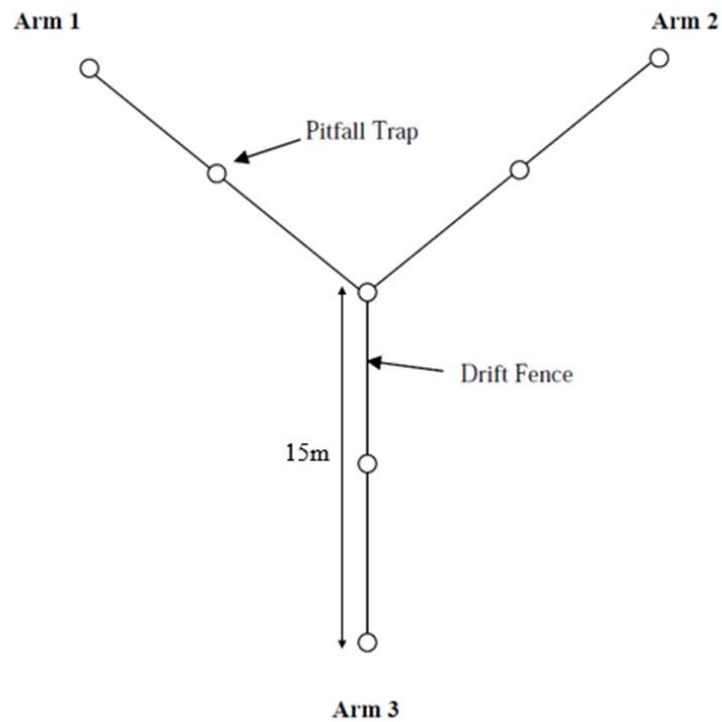


Figure 2.2: Pitfall Trap Array (adapted from Fisher et al., 2008)

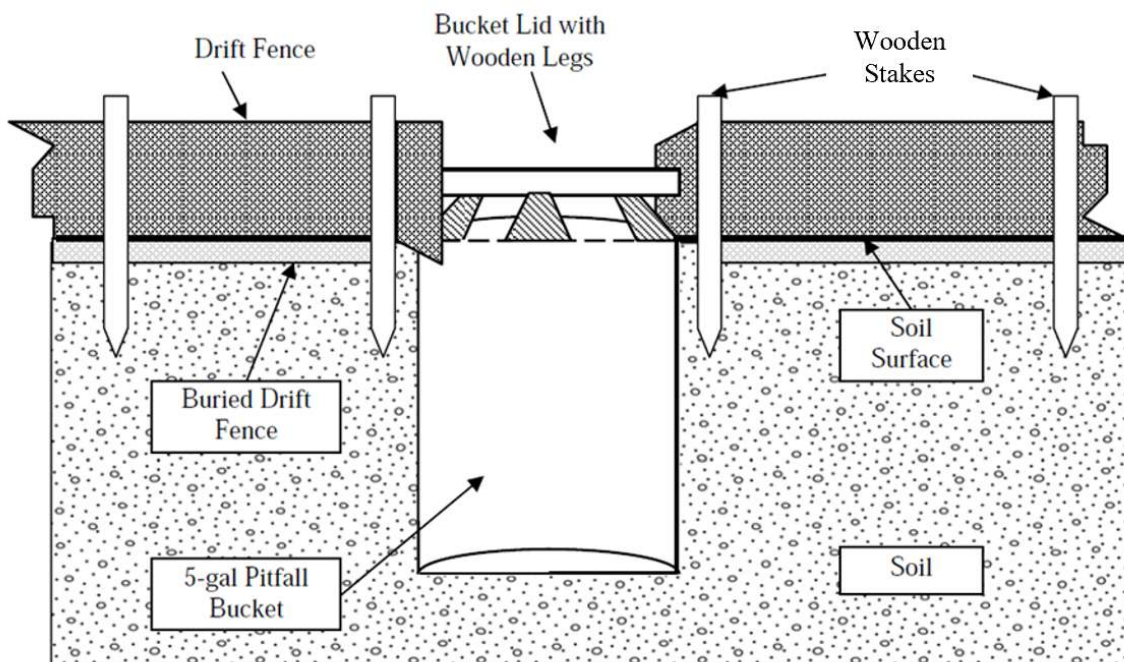


Figure 2.3: Example of a Pitfall Trap Design (Fisher et al., 2008)

The following outcomes should be included in the report:

- Species list of reptiles and amphibians found on site, including their global and local conservation status, and whether each species is native, exotic or invasive
- Numbers of each species observed for each transect and for each pitfall array
- Time of day that each species was discovered (for line transects)
- Map indicating locations of transects and species of conservation interest
- Where possible, photographs of rare species and/or species of conservation interest should be taken and incorporated into the report

2.3.4 Mammals (Except Bats)

This section should establish the diversity of mammals at the site, and include their global and local conservation status. The suggested methods are camera traps and/or line transects.

Table 2.7: Camera Traps as a Survey Method

| Suggested Method | Camera Traps |
|-------------------------|--|
| Description | <p>Camera traps should be mounted at a height of 30 to 50 cm off the ground. The angle of the camera should be such that there is a clear and direct field of view of a possible wildlife trail or of a relatively open area. Camera trap settings should be adjusted such that the trigger speed of cameras are 1/10th of a second or faster, and that colour photographs are taken during the day and infrared photographs are taken during the night.</p> <p>When the camera trap data is retrieved and reviewed, information such as the time and behaviour of the animal (e.g. foraging) should also be recorded.</p> |
| Spread | Spaced approximately 100 m apart |
| Timing | N/A |
| Frequency | N/A |
| Notes | Ensure understorey plants do not obscure the camera |

Table 2.8: Line Transects as a Survey Method

| Suggested Method | Line Transect |
|-------------------------|--|
| Description | <p>Surveyors should walk along the transect at a steady pace and record each individual mammal observed within 50 m on either side of the transect and 50 m ahead. At the same time, surveyors should also look out for indirect evidence of mammals, such as scat and tracks.</p> <p>Sex (male or female) and age class (adult or juvenile) should also be noted if possible, along with any behaviours (e.g. foraging, nesting).</p> |
| Spread | 200 m for each transect, spaced approximately 50 m apart and randomised within the site |
| Timing | <p>6 am to 10 am for morning surveys*</p> <p>7.30 pm to 10 pm for night surveys</p> <p>(*Note: 6 am to 7 am to record nocturnal mammals returning to their dens, 7 am to 10 am to record diurnal mammals)</p> |
| Frequency | Each transect should minimally be sampled once during the day and once at night |
| Notes | N/A |

The following outcomes should be included in the report:

- Species list of mammals found on site, including their global and local conservation status and whether each species is native, exotic, or invasive
- Numbers of each species observed for each transect and camera trap
- Time of day that each species was discovered
- Any noteworthy behaviour (e.g. foraging)
- Map indicating locations of camera traps, transects and species of conservation interest
- Photographs of rare species and/or species of conservation interest should be taken and incorporated into the report

2.3.5 Bats

This section should establish the diversity of bats at the site and include their global and local conservation status. The suggested methods are acoustic recording and/or harp traps.

Table 2.9: Acoustic Recording

| Suggested Method | Acoustic Recording |
|-------------------------|---|
| Description | Recording devices should be placed in an open area and elevated 3 m above ground on a secured pole. The devices should have flat (even) frequency response from the lowest (18 kHz) to highest (150 kHz) expected frequencies, and have a continuous minimum sampling rate of 384 kHz. The microphones on the devices should be oriented slightly less than horizontal so that moisture does not pool on the microphone membrane. |
| Spread | Spaced approximately 200 m apart |
| Timing | 7 pm to 7 am |
| Frequency | Each location should minimally be sampled once |
| Notes | When recording data is reviewed, the calls recorded should be measured and matched with known reference calls (refer to Pottie et al., 2005). |

Table 2.10: Harp Traps

| Suggested Method | Harp Traps (only to be used within forest habitats) |
|-------------------------|---|
| Description | <p>Harp traps should be set up at locations with over-hanging and closed side vegetation. The sides of each trap should be filled with material to prevent bats from going around or under the trap. Traps should be checked hourly.</p> <p>All organisms obtained will be counted and identified to the best of the surveyors' abilities and released on the spot.</p> |
| Spread | Spaced approximately 100 m apart along a fixed transect within the forested area of the site |
| Timing | 6 pm to 7 am |
| Frequency | Each location should minimally be sampled once |
| Notes | Traps placed near roosts should be checked every hour. If ants are seen anywhere near a harp trap, the trap must be taken down. If it rains, the traps must also be taken down, animals released, and data discarded. |

The following outcomes should be included in the report:

- Species list of bats found on site, including their global and local conservation status and whether each species is native, exotic or invasive
- Numbers of each species observed for each recording device or harp trap
- Map indicating locations of transects and/or harp traps and species of conservation interest
- Where possible, photographs of all observed species should be taken and incorporated into the report for verification. This is especially important for rare species and/or species of conservation interest.

2.3.6 Butterflies

This section should establish the diversity of butterflies at the site, and include their global and local conservation status. The suggested method is line transects.

Table 2.11: Line Transects

| Suggested Method | Line Transects |
|-------------------------|---|
| Description | <p>Surveyors should walk along the transect at a steady pace and record each individual butterfly observed within 5 m on either side of the transect and 5 m ahead.</p> <p>Sweep netting can be used to collect species that are difficult to identify in flight, and all butterflies caught should be released. If a butterfly caterpillar is found to be feeding on the plant, the plant should be identified and recorded as well.</p> |
| Spread | 200 m for each transect, spaced approximately 50 m apart |
| Timing | 10 am to 12 pm on sunny days |
| Frequency | Each location should minimally be sampled once |
| Notes | N/A |

The following outcomes should be included in the report:

- Species list of butterflies found on site, including their global and local conservation status
- Numbers of each species observed for each transect
- List of plants which the caterpillars were feeding on
- Map indicating locations of transects and species of conservation interest
- Where possible, photographs of all observed species should be taken and incorporated into the report for verification. This is especially important for rare species and/or species of conservation interest.

2.3.7 Odonates

This section should establish the diversity of odonates at the site, and include their global and local conservation status. The suggested method is line transects.

Table 2.12: Line Transects

| Suggested Method | Line Transects |
|-------------------------|---|
| Description | <p>Surveyors will slowly walk along the stream or around the water body and record the adult odonates seen within 5 m of either side of the transect and 5 m ahead.</p> <p>Sweep netting can be used to collect species that are difficult to identify in flight, and all odonates caught should be released.</p> |
| Spread | Full perimeter of pond/water body or full length of stream |
| Timing | <p>10 am to 12 pm on sunny days</p> <p>5 pm to 7 pm on sunny days</p> |
| Frequency | Each location should minimally be sampled once during late morning and once during dusk. |
| Notes | N/A |

For dragonfly larvae sampling, refer to section 2.3.8.

The following outcomes should be included in the report:

- Species list of odonates found on site, including their global and local conservation status
- Numbers of each species observed for each transect
- Map indicating locations of transects and species of conservation interest
- Where possible, photographs of all observed species should be taken and incorporated into the report for verification. This is especially important for rare species and/or species of conservation interest.

2.3.8 Freshwater Organisms

This section should establish the diversity of freshwater organisms such as fish, crustaceans, molluscs and other invertebrates at the site, and include their global and local conservation status. The suggested methods are net transects and baited traps.

Table 2.13: Net Transects as a Survey Method

| Suggested Method | Net Transects |
|-------------------------|--|
| Description | <p>During a fixed amount of time, surveyors will net as many freshwater organisms as possible. For streams, push netting and scoop netting are sufficient. For deeper water bodies such as ponds, cast netting may be deployed as well.</p> <p>All organisms obtained will be counted and identified to the best of the surveyors' abilities and released on the spot.</p> |
| Spread | 10 m for each transect, spaced approximately 50 m apart along a stream or the perimeter of a water body |
| Duration | 30 mins per transect |
| Timing | Daytime |
| Frequency | Each location should minimally be sampled once |
| Notes | Visual observations of organisms which may be too fast to catch can also be added to the survey results provided the surveyor is confident of the identification of the species. |

Table 2.14: Baited Traps as a Survey Method

| Suggested Method | Baited Traps |
|-------------------------|---|
| Description | <p>Commercial fish traps are baited with meat (e.g. kuning) and checked the following day.</p> <p>All organisms obtained will be counted and identified to the best of the surveyors' abilities and released on the spot.</p> |
| Spread | Every 50 m apart along a stream or the perimeter of a water body |
| Duration | Overnight |
| Timing | Each trap should be checked by noon the following day. |
| Frequency | Each stream or waterbody should minimally be sampled once. |
| Notes | Ensure that traps are not fully submerged as there are some local species of fish which breathe air and can drown if submerged for too long. |

The following outcomes should be included in the report:

- Species list of freshwater organisms found on site, arranged by taxa, including their global and local conservation status, whether each species is native, exotic or invasive, and whether the species is a generalist or specialist
- Local abundance of each species discovered, expressed in terms of catch per unit effort
- Map indicating locations of transects and/or baited traps and species of conservation interest
- Photographs of rare species and/or species of conservation interest should be taken and incorporated into the report

2.4 Identifying High Conservation Priority Areas

Upon completion of the baseline study, the consultant should overlay all the vegetation maps and maps indicating locations of species of conservation interest, keystone species, and bioindicator species. Areas with high conservation value such as critical or natural habitats should be highlighted as high conservation priority areas. Table 2.2 provides a guide to help determine what areas could be considered critical, natural, or modified habitats. Whether a habitat is classified as critical, natural, or modified depends on both its vegetation type and importance to species of conservation concern. However, much of this classification is dependent on site context, and what constitutes a high conservation priority area is typically further discussed among NParks and the consultant during the report refinement stage.

Table 2.15: Habitat Conservation Values (IFC, 2012)

| Habitat Classification | Description |
|------------------------|--|
| Critical Habitat* | <p>Critical habitats are areas with high biodiversity value, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) habitat of significant importance to locally and globally Critically Endangered and/or Endangered species; ii) habitat of significant importance to endemic and/or restricted-range species; iii) habitat supporting globally significant concentrations of migratory species and/or congregatory species; iv) highly threatened and/or unique ecosystems in the national and global context; and/or v) areas associated with key evolutionary processes (i.e. genetically distinct populations). |
| Natural Habitat* | Natural habitats are areas composed of viable assemblages of plant and/or animal species of largely native origin, and/or where human activity has not essentially modified an area's primary ecological function and species composition. |
| Modified Habitat | Modified habitats are areas that may contain a large proportion of plant and/or animal species of non-native origin, and/or where human activity has substantially modified an area's primary ecological functions and species composition. Modified habitats may include areas managed for agriculture, forest plantations, reclaimed coastal zones and reclaimed wetlands. |

*Habitats which are considered to have high conservation priority in Singapore

It is recommended that the consultants create a map indicating the location of habitats within the site (example in Figure 2.4). This should be in GIS format so that the information can be used by the developers or technical agencies, as they can help to guide decisions on where to site the development, which areas to retain for various purposes such as parks or nature corridors and what other mitigation measures are required (refer to Chapter 5).

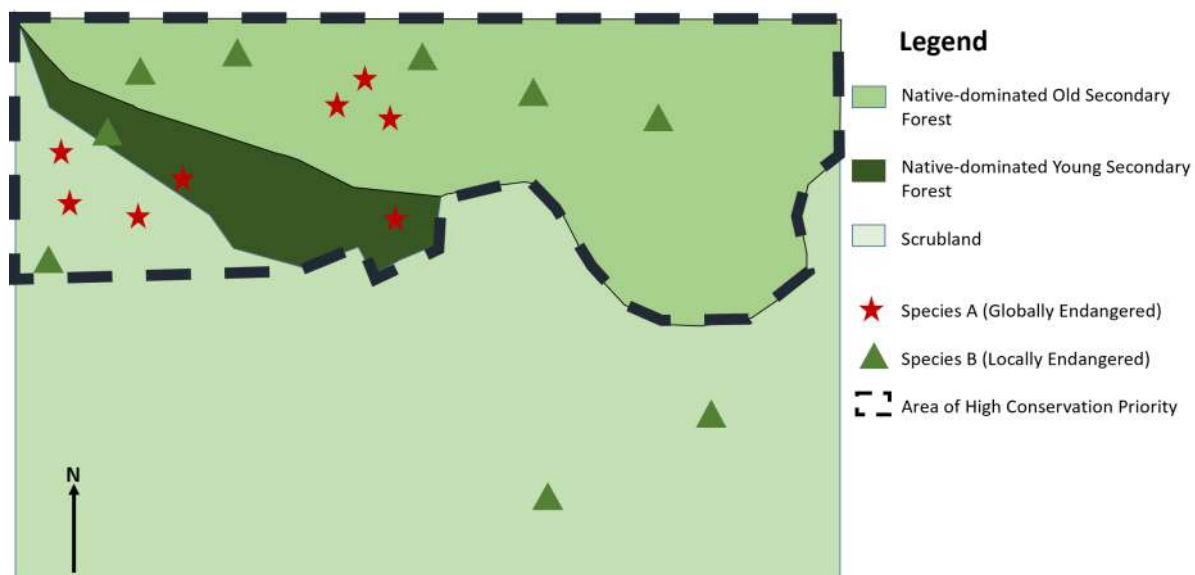


Figure 2.4: Example Map Indicating Habitat Types and Species of Conservation Interest

3. Conducting Baseline Studies for Marine Sites



3. Conducting Baseline Studies for Marine Sites

Any development at marine sites can have far-reaching impacts. As such, it is not sufficient to only consider the development footprint or even the development's immediate surroundings, but to also consider potential impacts to other connected areas, which may be adjacent to, or further afield from, the development.

Evaluating development impacts first requires robust baseline information. Baseline studies should consider the biodiversity in each habitat, water quality, hydrodynamics, the extent of the ecosystem, etc. being studied.

This chapter provides suggestions on how such baseline information can be collected.

3.1 Study Area

This section should include the following:

- Map of the study area as defined by agencies' scope. This typically includes the footprint of the development, all other areas linked to the development (such as staging areas), and the sites further afield that may be impacted by the development and its various activities
- Short description of the study area, highlighting relevant information such as justification for exclusion or inclusion of far-afield sites (i.e. sites outside the direct development footprint), the dominant biodiversity and species of conservation interest based on literature review (if available)

3.2 Habitat Baseline Study

3.2.1 Habitat Mapping

The habitats within the study area should be mapped through physical site surveys, and supplemented by the use of satellite imagery or aerial photos. The boundaries can also be supplemented by secondary sources like published papers.

The affected habitats should also be assessed in relation to the extent of such habitats within Singapore, as the proportion of the affected habitat to the extent of habitat may make a significant difference to the subsequent impact assessment.

The various types of marine environments in Singapore are described below:

Table 3.1 Marine Habitat Types in Singapore

| Habitat Type | Description of Habitat |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Mangrove Forests | <p>A mangrove forest is a tidal habitat that comprises flora that normally grows above mean sea level in the intertidal zone of marine environments and estuarine margins.</p> <p>Common species include <i>Rhizophora</i>, <i>Bruguiera</i>, <i>Avicennia</i> and <i>Sonneratia</i> trees which have roots that provide support in the soft anaerobic sediments of the habitat (Ng et al., 2011).</p> <p>Mangrove forests also serve as roosting and nursery grounds for many bird species and invertebrates, protect shorelines from erosion, mitigate the effects of tsunamis and are important carbon sinks.</p> |
| Mudflats / Soft-sediment Environments | <p>Soft-sediment habitats, typically non-vegetated, are found between mean high-water and mean low-water spring tide datums. Located in estuaries and other low-energy marine environments (Dyer, Christie, & Wright, 2000). Most of the biomass in mudflats is just below the surface, and the "infaunal" community therein serves as an important food source for shore birds.</p> |
| Sandy / Rocky Shores | <p>Sandy shores are loose deposits of sand, gravel and/or shells (Tope and Kotwicki, 2013). Rocky shores, on the other hand are composed of hard material (Nybakken, 1997). In the local context, rocky shores also apply to intertidal areas with loose rock fragments or coral rubble. These habitats may serve as feeding grounds for some shorebirds, and nursery habitats for fish and crustaceans.</p> |

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Seagrass Meadows | Seagrasses are flowering plants that live underwater (Nybakken, 1997). They are an important food source for dugongs and sea turtles and act as an important carbon sink, thus helping to mitigate climate change effects. |
| Coral Reefs | Coral reefs are diverse underwater ecosystems held together by calcium carbonate structures secreted by hard corals. While hard corals are animals, they live in symbiosis with an alga that provides them with the necessary energy to build up the coral reef structure (Nybakken, 1997). The coral reef systems of the world are an important source of food for coastal communities, and the carbon stored in the limestone structure acts as a carbon sink. |
| Lower Reef | In the local context, the lower reef typically occurs at depths of approximately 15 m. The lower reef is typically rich with other life forms or invertebrates, such as sea fans, sea whips, feather-stars and basket-stars, and houses a slightly different community of fishes. |
| Deep Seabed | In the local context, the deep seabed typically occurs at depths ranging beyond 20 m. The communities here are not well known, but recent studies indicate the presence of a diverse community of sessile and infaunal organisms not usually found in the shallow coral reef areas. |

3.2.2 Physical Parameters

The physical environment forms part of the habitat description. In the marine realm, water is the medium which connects sites, and is the medium by which pollutants can be spread. The common water-related processes and parameters that need to be studied are listed in Table 3.2. The list is by no means exhaustive nor prescriptive, and depends on the scope set out by technical agencies.

Table 3.2 Common Physical Parameters Descriptors

| Physical Parameter | Description |
|--|--|
| Tidal Flooding and Inundation | Particularly important in mangroves, as this, together with sediment type will determine distribution of mangrove tree species (English, Wilkinson, & Baker, 1997). |
| Hydrodynamics | The flow of sea water within the area of interest. The hydrodynamic study will form the basis for much of the dispersion models that follow. Resolution of the models will depend on the issues to be studied; typically a layered approach is taken, with 75 – 250 m grids for coarse resolution, and 10 – 25 m grids for finer resolution. Examples of hydrodynamic models include MIKE 2D, MIKE 3D, Delft 2D or Delft 3D. |
| Sediment Plumes | Typically arising from reclamation or dredging activities. Plumes may also result from sediment run-off from land into the sea, or be dispersed by river outflow. |
| Sediment Loading | Refers to the amount of sediment suspended in the water column, thereby reducing light penetration. Light penetration is important for photosynthetic processes (especially in coral reefs and seagrass areas). |
| Sedimentation | Refers to the settling of sediments onto receptor sites, increasing the risk of organismal death by smothering. Especially important for coral reefs and seagrass beds. |
| Sediment Transport | Refers to erosion and accretion, usually as a result of changes in the hydrodynamics. The changes to the movement of mud and sand within the marine environment need to be assessed in relation to the development. |
| Re-suspension of Sediment-bound Material | Typically, in areas with soft-sediment bottoms, the material bound in or onto the sediment could be released during dredging or reclamation. The bound material could be in the form of nutrients, heavy metals, other compounds or chemicals. |

| | |
|--|---|
| Water Quality | This includes potential changes to temperature, pH, salinity, dissolved oxygen, Chl A, and other water quality parameters, including pollutants and heavy metals, based on the ASEAN Water Quality Standards (or Singapore Water Quality Guidelines, if available). |
| Nutrient Plumes | Nutrients are typically released into the marine environment as a result of discharges. This can happen during both the development and operational phases. |
| Nutrient Loading | This refers to the concentration of nutrients in the water column. May be acute or chronic, depending on the level and frequency of the discharge. |
| Freshwater Discharges | Some drains and canals discharge directly into the marine environment. Increases in freshwater discharge may result from expansion of the catchment area, or increased discharge from industrial or housing areas along the waterway. Such discharges may cause acute or chronic impacts, depending on the level and frequency of the freshwater discharge. The freshwater will cause changes in salinity and pH (among other things), and may also cause erosion and/or accretion to adjacent areas. |
| Other Forms of Discharges (not exhaustive) | <p>Hypersaline wastewater (from desalination plants for example) will increase the salinity of the surrounding environment and disrupt osmoregulation of organisms.</p> <p>Heated wastewater discharge will impact the biological functions of organisms. For example, prolonged exposure of corals to heated water would cause bleaching, and ultimately, death.</p> <p>Conversely, prolonged exposure to cooled water would similarly cause disruption of biological functions of marine organisms.</p> |
| Ship Wakes | Ship wakes have the potential to increase erosion and re-suspend sediment, increasing the sediment load of the water and leading to reduced light penetration, ultimately affecting the photosynthetic functions of light-dependent organisms. |

3.3 Marine Biodiversity Community Surveys

Beyond identifying and mapping the habitat types, understanding the biodiversity community within each site is an important component of the baseline studies. Species of conservation interest should be identified as either at high risk of extinction on a local or global level, as indicated in the “Singapore Red Data Book” or on the IUCN Red List, respectively.

The typical marine communities of interest would include:

- Mangrove flora
- Mangrove fauna (insects and shorebirds)
- Sandy or rocky shores
- Mudflats (benthic and infauna)
- Seagrasses
- Coral reefs (benthic, mobile invertebrates and fishes)
- Seabed macrobenthic fauna
- Open water (including plankton, marine mammals, sea birds, etc.)

Brief descriptions of the methods to document these communities are provided in the subsequent sections, and references for detailed information on each method can be found on the Resources page at the end of the booklet. Do note that these methods are not prescribed, but provided as examples.

3.3.1 Mangrove Flora Community

This section should establish the diversity of mangrove flora at the site, and include their global and local conservation status. The suggested method is the transect line plot method.

Table 3.3: Transect Line Plot Method as a Survey Method

| Suggested Method | Transect Line Plot Method |
|------------------|---|
| Description | <p>Transect Line Plots Method (English et al., 1997) is recommended. Permanent plots should be established along transects through each distinct forest type or zone in mangroves (see Figure 3.1). Transect lines should be perpendicular to the shoreline and plots should be set up within each vegetation zone. Surveys of these plots will provide quantitative descriptions of the species composition and community structure of the mangrove forest, and will enable tracking of changes in forest structure over the long term. If the mangrove forest is too narrow to show any zonation, a number of plots within this “fringe” zone will suffice. Each permanent plot should be no less than 10 m × 10 m, comprising up to 100 trees in each plot.</p> <p>Any tree larger than 4 cm in diameter at breast height (DBH) should be identified and recorded, and the girth documented. Species and the number of saplings (diameter < 4 cm) and seedlings (height < 1 m) should be recorded.</p> <p>All other vascular plants encountered during the survey should also be identified and counted.</p> |
| Spread | Variable, depends on the size of mangrove forest |
| Duration | N/A |
| Timing | Daytime |
| Frequency | The plots should be sampled for the baseline study, and can be re-sampled throughout the lifespan of the project. Minimally, the plots should be sampled at least once pre-development, at least once during development, and at least once every five years post-development. |
| Notes | Visual observations of other mobile organisms can also be added to the survey results provided the surveyor is confident of the identification of the species. |

The following should be included in the report (in no particular order):

- Species list of mangrove plants, arranged by taxa, including their global and local conservation status
- Abundance of each species observed
- Map indicating locations of transects and plots and species of conservation interest
- Where possible, photographs of rare species and/or species of conservation interest should be taken and incorporated into the report
- Number of seedlings of each species
- Number of saplings of each species
- Diameter at breast height of all trees larger than 4 cm in girth
- Qualitative observations can include:
 - * estimated tree height
 - * observations on flowering/fruiting
 - * number of fruits/propagules
 - * signs of health of mangrove plants

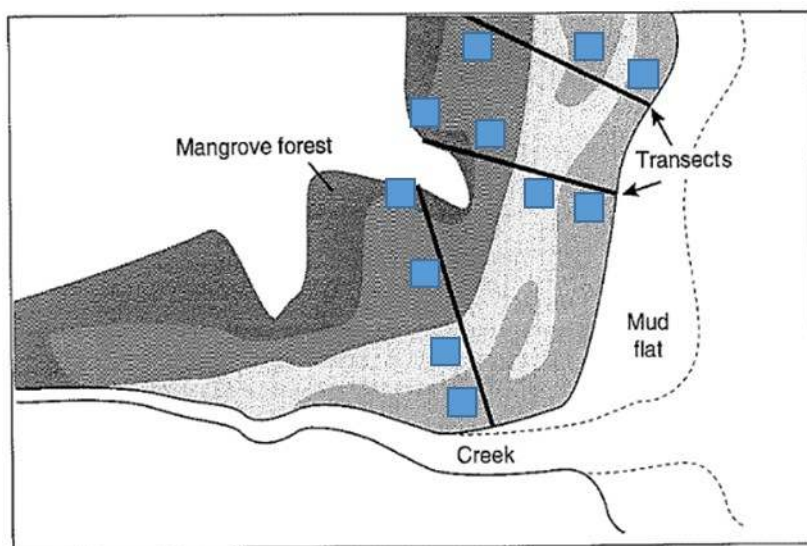


Figure 3.1: Transect Lines and Survey Plots in a Mangrove Forest (English et al., 1997). Habitat zones are indicated by the grey shaded areas and survey plots are indicated by the blue boxes.

3.3.2 Mangrove Faunal Community

This section should establish the diversity of mangrove fauna at the site, and include their global and local conservation status. There are various methods of surveys that are listed in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4: Suggested Survey Methods for the Mangrove Fauna

| Suggested Methods | |
|-------------------|--|
| Description* | <p>Methodologies will vary with the taxa in question, and may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual surveys along transects (e.g. for crustaceans and mudskippers); transect locations should be pin-pointed using GPS • Insect trapping, using malaise nets • Tray netting • Seine netting • Cast netting • Benthic traps • Gill nets |
| Spread | Variable, depends on the size of mangrove forest and the extent of the water bodies therein |
| Duration | N/A |
| Timing | Daytime; in the case of the insect traps, these can be left continuously in the field for up to a week |
| Frequency | The fauna surveys should be carried out as part of the baseline study, and can be re-sampled throughout the lifespan of the project. Typically, this should include pre-development, during development, and post-development phases. |
| Notes | Visual observations of other mobile organisms can also be added to the survey results provided the surveyor is confident of the identification of the species. |

*Birds are a major component of the mangrove forests and mudflats. See section 2.3.2 for suggested methods to document and monitor them

The following should be included in the report:

- Species list of mangrove fauna, arranged by taxa, including their global and local conservation status
- Age group of species of conservation status (to identify nursery areas that will be of higher conservation priority)
- Abundance of each species observed
- Map indicating locations of transects and species of conservation interest
- Where possible, photographs of rare species and/or species of conservation interest

3.3.3 Seagrass Community

This section should establish the diversity of the seagrass community at the site, and include their global and local conservation status. The suggested method is quadrat sampling.

Table 3.5: Quadrat Sampling as a Survey Method

| Suggested Method | Quadrat sampling |
|-------------------------|--|
| Description | Quadrat sampling of seagrass meadows is the most common method for monitoring seagrass condition (McKenzie, 2003). Typically, three perpendicular-to-shore, 50 m long transects are laid out in a 50 m × 50 m area. Standard quadrats of 50 cm × 50 cm are placed at an interval of every 5 m along the transect tape, and sediment composition, seagrass percent cover, species composition, canopy height and other variables are measured within the quadrats (see sample datasheet in Figure 3.2 on the following page). |
| Spread | Variable, depends on the size of seagrass meadow |
| Duration | 45 mins per transect |
| Timing | Daytime, although access to seagrass meadows may be limited by tidal conditions. |
| Frequency | Transects should be sampled for the baseline study, and can be re-sampled throughout the lifespan of the project. Typically, this should include pre-development, during development, and post-development phases. |
| Notes | Visual observations of other mobile organisms can also be added to the survey results provided the surveyor is confident of the identification of the species. |

SEAGRASS-WATCH MONITORING

ONE OF THESE SHEETS IS TO BE FILLED OUT FOR EACH TRANSECT YOU SURVEY

START of transect (GPS reading)
Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____

END of transect (GPS reading)
Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____

OBSERVER: _____ DATE: ____/____/____
LOCATION: _____
SITE code: _____ TRANSECT no.: _____
START TIME: _____ END TIME: _____

| Quadrat (meters from transect origin) | Sediment (e.g., mud/sand/shell) | Comments (e.g., 10% gastropods, 40 crab holes, deepening trails, herbivore species names below) | Seagrass (✓) | % Seagrass coverage | % Seagrass species composition | | | | | Canopy height (cm) | % Algae cover | % Epi- cover |
|--|------------------------------------|--|-----------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 (0m) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 (5m) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 (10m) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 (15m) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 (20m) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6 (25m) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7 (30m) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8 (35m) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 9 (40m) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10 (45m) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 11 (50m) | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Figure 3.2: Sample Seagrass Monitoring Datasheet (Seagrass-Watch, 2009)

The following should be included in the report:

- Species list of seagrasses, arranged by taxa, including their global and local conservation status
- Abundance of each species observed
- Map indicating locations of transects and quadrats and species of conservation interest
- Where possible, photographs of rare species and/or species of conservation interest should be taken and incorporated into the report

3.3.4 Benthic and Infauna Community (Mudflats)

Benthic and infauna communities are important food sources for shore birds. Thus, abundance and biomass of organisms in soft-sediment areas such as mudflats are important parameters to measure impacts. The different various survey methods will be described in Table 3.6.

Table 3.6: Grabs, Sledges, Dredges and Nets as Survey Methods

| Suggested Methods | Grabs, Sledges, Dredges and Nets |
|--------------------------|---|
| Description | Grabs, sledges, dredges and nets are common tools to sample the benthic community in soft-sediment and loose substrates (see English et al., 1997). Grabs are typically used in soft-sediment environments to sample the top 15 – 25 cm of the substrate, providing quantitative results due to fixed volume sampled. Sledges and dredges can be used in both soft-sediment and coarser sediment substrates, but give only semi-quantitative to qualitative results, as the area or volume of seabed sampled is more variable. In some situations, video monitoring of benthic communities can be considered. |
| Spread | Variable, depends on the size of the mudflat |
| Duration | N/A |
| Timing | Daytime; sampling may be limited by tides |
| Frequency | The sites should be sampled for the baseline study, and can be re-sampled throughout the lifespan of the project. Typically, this should include pre-development, during development, and post-development phases. |
| Notes | Visual observations of other mobile organisms can also be added to the survey results provided the surveyor is confident of the identification of the species. |

The following should be included in the report:

- Species list of benthic and infauna organisms, arranged by taxa, including their global and local conservation status
 - * In many cases, species identification may be impossible or very difficult, requiring very specialised expertise. In this case, identification to the lowest taxonomic level is permissible (e.g. to genus, family or order level).
- Abundance of each taxa observed
- Map indicating locations of transects and species of conservation interest
- Where possible, photographs of rare species and/or species of conservation interest should be taken and incorporated into the report

3.3.5 Coral Reef Community

There are four sub-communities that are of interest: benthic, fish and mobile invertebrate communities, and the lower reef community.

3.3.5.1 Benthic Community

This part should establish the diversity of the benthic community at the site, and include their global and local conservation status. The suggested survey methods are Line-intercept or Point-intercept methods.

Table 3.7: Line-intercept or Point-intercept methods as Survey Methods

| Suggested Methods | Line-intercept or Point-intercept Methods |
|--------------------------|--|
| Description | <p>The coral reef benthic community is typically surveyed using the line-intercept (English et al., 1997) or point-intercept (Hodgson, Hill, Kiene, & Maun, 2006; Tun, 2012) method, to provide percent cover of hard corals and other sessile, benthic organisms. The survey comprises four to five 20 m transects laid out parallel to the reef, at the crest (or shallows) and 3 m below the crest (the deep). Variables such as growth form (English et al., 1997), genus and species intersected by the transect line (see Figure 3.3) are recorded.</p> <p>Additional information can also be collected to quantify bleaching and substrate consolidation (Tun, 2012).</p> |
| Spread | Variable, in the local context, one island or patch reef can contain two to six sites, depending on the size of the reef |
| Duration | 45 mins per transect |
| Timing | Daytime; sampling may be limited by tidal flows |
| Frequency | The sites should be sampled for the baseline study, and can be re-sampled throughout the lifespan of the project. Typically, this should include pre-development, during development, and post-development phases. |
| Notes | Visual observations of other mobile organisms can also be added to the survey results provided the surveyor is confident of the identification of the species. |

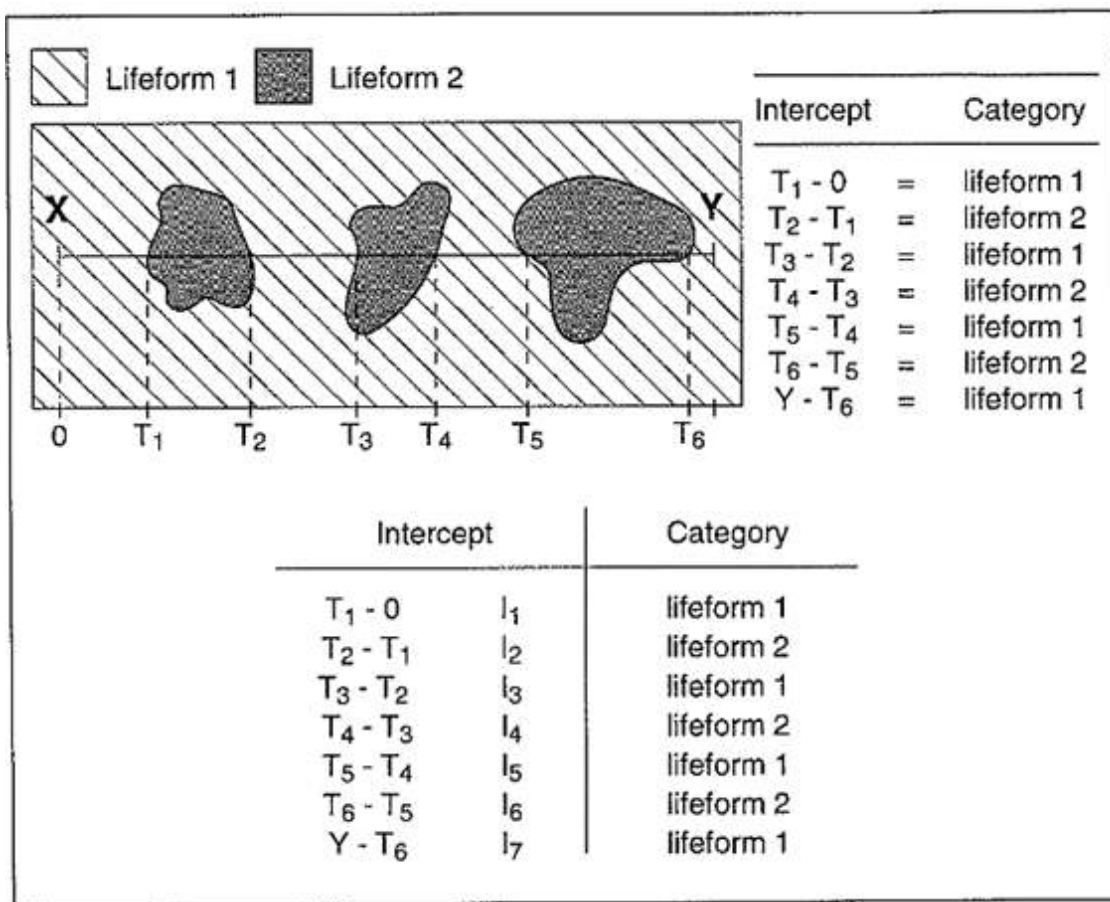


Figure 3.3: Schematic Diagram of a Transect Intersecting Lifeforms (English et al., 1997)

The following should be included in the report:

- Species list of benthic reef community (this includes the hard corals), arranged by taxa, including their global and local conservation status
- Abundance of each lifeform and/or taxa (expressed as percent cover), or species observed (as number of colonies)
- Map indicating locations of transects and species of conservation interest
- Where possible, photographs of rare species and/or species of conservation interest should be taken and incorporated into the report

3.3.5.2 Coral Reef Fish and Mobile Invertebrates

This part should establish the diversity of the coral reef fish and mobile invertebrates at the site, and include their global and local conservation status. The suggested survey method is using belt transects.

Table 3.8: Belt Transect as a Survey Method

| Suggested Method | Belt Transect |
|------------------|--|
| Description | Coral reef fish species and their abundance within a belt 5 m wide and centered along the line are recorded (English et al., 1997; see Figure 3.4). Similarly, mobile invertebrates within the 5 m belt are documented (Hodgson et al., 2006). |
| Spread | Variable; in the local context, one island or reef patch can contain two to six sites, depending on the size of the reef |
| Duration | 30 mins per transect |
| Timing | Daytime; sampling may be limited by tidal flows |
| Frequency | The sites should be sampled for the baseline study, and can be re-sampled throughout the lifespan of the project. Typically, this should include pre-development, during development, and post-development phases. |
| Notes | Visual observations of other mobile organisms can also be added to the survey results provided the surveyor is confident of the identification of the species. |

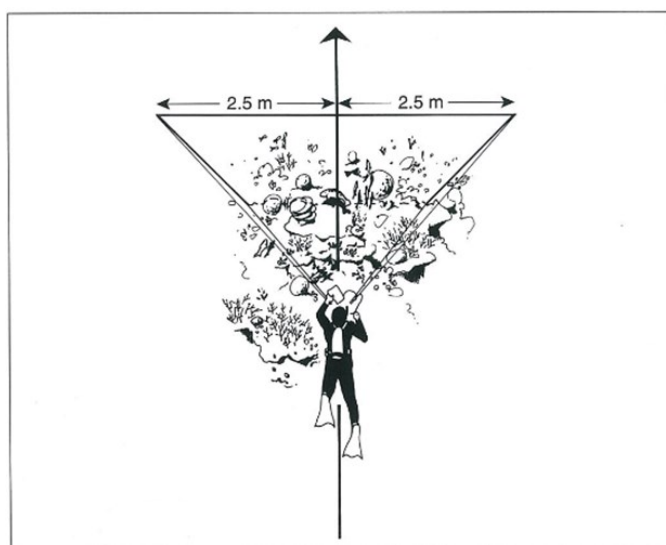


Figure 3.4: Diagrammatic Representation of a Belt Transect (adapted from English et al., 1997)

The following should be included in the report:

- Species list of reef fish and mobile invertebrates, arranged by taxa, including their global and local conservation status
- Abundance of each species observed
- Map indicating locations of transects and species of conservation interest
- Where possible, photographs of rare species and/or species of conservation interest should be taken and incorporated into the report

A photograph of a person standing on a paved path, looking through binoculars. The person is wearing a black shirt, dark pants, a backpack, and a face mask. In the background, there is a dense forest of green trees, a tall red and white lattice tower, and a city skyline under a cloudy sky. A dark green rectangular box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the text '4. Assessing Development Impacts' in white.

4. Assessing Development Impacts

4. Assessing Development Impacts

The purpose of this section in the BIA report is to explain how impact assessments are conducted. Typically, a consultant will first identify potential impacts of the development. This should take into account the physical footprint of the development as well as the working space, access, outputs from the development such as discharge, and cumulative impacts from other developments in the vicinity. Following which, the consultant will proceed to evaluate and classify the significance of the impact on the environment, which could potentially be wider than the actual physical development footprint. When the impact is higher than the environmental quality objective set, mitigation measures are set to reduce identified impacts to be as minimal as feasibly possible.

After taking into account the proposed mitigation measures, the residual impact significance is assessed. The residual impact assessment forms the basis for subsequent decisions on whether the development should proceed, or if there should be conditions stipulated to further reduce impacts (e.g. reduction in development scale), as part of the planning approval process.

The process flow for the impact assessment studies is outlined below:

- Identifying types and sources of impacts
- Establishing environmental quality objectives
- Classifying levels of impacts
- Assessing impact significance
- Proposing mitigation measures (covered in Chapter 5)
- Assessing residual impacts
- Reporting the final impact assessment

4.1 Identifying Types and Sources of Impacts

The types of impact of a development is dependent on the proposed scope of development works, as well as the existing condition of the site (as per the findings of the baseline studies). The source of impact is the action which causes the impact, and the type of impact is the resulting effect of the impact; for example, the removal of half of a forested area results in loss of flora and fauna and forest edge effects. Table 4.1 lists some of the typical ecological impacts for terrestrial and marine developments. The list is non-exhaustive.

Table 4.1: Common Types of Ecological Impacts from Terrestrial and Marine Developments

| Terrestrial Developments | Marine Developments |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of flora and fauna • Loss of ecosystem function • Loss of connectivity • Introduction of invasive species • Human-wildlife conflict • Forest edge effects • Change in soil quality • Change in water quality • Change in hydrology • Noise pollution • Light pollution • Vibration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of flora and fauna • Loss of ecosystem function • Loss of connectivity • Introduction of invasive species • Change in hydrodynamics • Change in water quality • Increased sedimentation • Increased seabed erosion • Noise pollution • Light pollution • Vibration |

4.2 Establishing Environmental Quality Objectives

Environmental Quality Objectives (EQOs) are set to define acceptable impact levels in a given environmental receptor. Environmental receptors can be living things (e.g. species of conservation concern) or physical parameters (e.g. water quality). EQOs are often pegged to existing legislation, such as NEA's air, water, soil, and noise pollution regulations (refer to Annex A for a list of relevant Acts and Regulations), or existing baseline conditions (i.e. ambient noise level). However, there is no existing legislation or international standards for flora and fauna EQOs. The consultant is to determine a reasonable EQO for impacts to flora and fauna, taking reference from similar existing developments or legislated EQOs. Table 4.2 lists some examples of EQOs.

Table 4.2: Examples of EQOs

| Ecological Impacts | EQO |
|---|--|
| Noise Pollution Affecting Animal Behaviour | Maximum noise level (project noise contribution) from 8 am to 6 pm: XXdB(A) Leq (5 min) Maximum noise level (project noise contribution) from 6 pm to 8 am: XXdB(A) Leq (5 min) |
| Light Pollution Affecting Animal Foraging and Behaviour | Maximum lux level: 100 lux |
| Discharge into the Sea Affecting Marine Ecosystems | Discharge must meet NEA's trade effluent water quality requirements for uncontrolled watercourses |
| Water Pollution Affecting Stream Ecosystems | Water quality parameters measured during development cannot differ more than 25% from baseline |
| Sediment Loading in Marine Environments | No impact to minor impacts, based on tolerance thresholds for specific habitat (see Table 4.4) |
| Sedimentation in Marine Environments | No impact to minor impacts, based on tolerance thresholds for specific habitat (see Table 4.4) |
| Temperature (for Marine Projects with Cooling Water Outfalls) | Heat to be dissipated within specified distance (dependent on site and environmental receptors) |

4.3 Classifying Levels of Impacts

Before conducting the impact assessment, consultants should first define what the various levels of impacts correspond to. The impact classification scheme should ideally be quantitative, and customised for each of the major types of impacts. Existing standards and thresholds can also be used as a basis for impact classification. There are many variations for impact classifications, and consultants should choose the most useful classification scheme, taking into account the subsequent impact assessment methodology. A generalised classification scheme is shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Impact Classification Scale (adapted from Doorn-Groen, 2007)

| Classification | Description |
|-----------------|---|
| No Impact | Changes are significantly below physical detection level and below the reliability of numerical models, so that no change to the quality or functionality of the receptor will occur. |
| Slight Impact | Changes can be resolved by numerical models, but are difficult to detect in the field as they are associated with changes that cause stress, not mortality, to ecosystems. Slight impacts may be recoverable once the stress factor has been removed. |
| Minor Impact | Changes can be resolved by numerical models and are likely to be detected in the field as localised mortalities, but to a spatial scale that is unlikely to have any secondary consequences. |
| Moderate Impact | Changes can be resolved by numerical models and are detectable in the field. Moderate impacts are expected to be locally significant. |
| Major Impact | Changes are detectable in the field and are likely to be related to complete habitat loss. Major impacts are likely to have secondary influences on other ecosystems. |

Common variations include the combination of “no impact” and “slight impact” to a classification of “negligible impact”, or an additional classification of “critical impact”. In some countries, impacts which are classified as critical require special attention.

In the marine environment, and especially for reclamation and dredging projects, sediment loading (suspended sediment) and sedimentation have been identified as key stressors, and are thus used as the main indicators of impacts. As different habitats have varying tolerances to stressors, the classification of impacts will need to be calibrated accordingly. For illustration, the suspended sediment and sedimentation thresholds for coral reefs and seagrasses are listed in Tables 4.4 and 4.5.

Table 4.4: Suspended Sediment Thresholds for Coral Reefs and Seagrasses in Singapore (adapted from Doorn-Groen, 2007)

| Severity | Coral Reefs | Seagrasses |
|-----------------|---|---|
| No Impact | Excess Suspended Sediment Concentration > 5 mg/L for less than 5% of the time | Excess Suspended Sediment Concentration > 5 mg/L for less than 20% of the time |
| Slight Impact | Excess Suspended Sediment Concentration > 5 mg/L for 5 to 20% of the time | Excess Suspended Sediment Concentration > 5 mg/L for more than 20% of the time |
| | Excess Suspended Sediment Concentration > 10 mg/L for less than 5% of the time | Excess Suspended Sediment Concentration > 10 mg/L for less than 20% of the time |
| Minor Impact | Excess Suspended Sediment Concentration > 5 mg/L for more than 20% of the time | Excess Suspended Sediment Concentration > 25 mg/L for less than 5% of the time |
| | Excess Suspended Sediment Concentration > 10 mg/L for less than 20% of the time | |
| Moderate Impact | Excess Suspended Sediment Concentration > 10 mg/L for more than 20% of the time | Excess Suspended Sediment Concentration > 25 mg/L for more than 20% of the time |
| | Excess Suspended Sediment Concentration > 25 mg/L for more than 5% of the time | Excess Suspended Sediment Concentration > 75 mg/L for more than 1% of the time |
| Major Impact | Excess Suspended Sediment Concentration > 25 mg/L for more than 20% of the time | Excess Suspended Sediment Concentration > 75 mg/L for more than 20% of the time |
| | Excess Suspended Sediment Concentration > 100 mg/L for more than 1% of the time | |

Table 4.5 Sedimentation Thresholds for Coral Reefs and Seagrasses in Singapore (adapted from Doorn-Groen, 2007)

| Severity | Coral Reefs | Seagrasses |
|-----------------|--|---|
| No Impact | Sedimentation < 0.05 kg/m ² /day (< 1.7 mm/14 days) | Sedimentation < 0.1 kg/m ² /day (< 0.25 mm/14 days) |
| Slight Impact | Sedimentation < 0.1 kg/m ² /day (< 3.5 mm/14 days) | Sedimentation < 0.25 kg/m ² /day (< 0.63 mm/14 days) |
| Minor Impact | Sedimentation < 0.2 kg/m ² /day (< 7.0 mm/14 days) | Sedimentation < 0.5 kg/m ² /day (< 1.25 mm/14 days) |
| Moderate Impact | Sedimentation < 0.5 kg/m ² /day (< 17.5 mm/14 days) | Sedimentation < 1.0 kg/m ² /day (< 2.5 mm/14 days) |
| Major Impact | Sedimentation > 0.5 kg/m ² /day (> 17.5 mm/14 days) | Sedimentation > 1.0 kg/m ² /day (> 2.5 mm/14 days) |

For development within marine environments, activities that have “slight to minor impact” are typically permitted in the area immediately adjacent to (within 500 m of) the work area, whilst “no impact to slight impact” is required for all environmental receptors remote from the work area.

4.4 Assessing Impact Significance

Quantitative methods are generally preferred to assess impact. Consultants should always try to utilise analytical tools first to assess changes in impact. However, where quantitative methods are not possible, qualitative methods can also be considered. There are various impact assessment matrices available to assist developers to conduct the impact assessment.

Three commonly used assessment methods are the Rapid Impact Assessment Matrix (RIAM), the Risk-based Impact Assessment Matrix and the Leopold Matrix. Each matrix has its merits:

- The **RIAM** is more comprehensive and is recommended for EIAs, i.e. environmental impact assessment of developments in a site.
- The **Risk-based Impact Assessment Matrix** is recommended for preliminary or desktop studies, and can be used for determining which site is the most suitable for development.
- The **Leopold Matrix** is also recommended for preliminary or desktop studies, and can be used for quickly identifying high impact activities which will require mitigation.

The three methods are elaborated in this chapter. Developers can use other methods not listed here as long as they are compatible with the development. More importantly, the method used to assess impacts has to be clearly defined and described in the report.

4.4.1 The RIAM method (modified from Pastakia and Jesen, 1998)

The RIAM method assigns an environmental score to each environmental impact and receptor (e.g. endangered or keystone species). The score is calculated as follows:

$$\text{Environmental Score (ES)} = \sum I_n * M_n * (P_n + R_n + C_n)$$

Scoring for each component is defined as follows:

Table 4.6: Score for Importance of Receptor

| Importance (I) | Score |
|---|--------------|
| Important to national/international interests | 5 |
| Important to regional/national interests | 4 |
| Important to areas immediately outside the local condition | 3 |
| Important to the local condition (within a large direct impact area) | 2 |
| Important only to the local condition (within a small direct impact area) | 1 |

Table 4.7: Score for Magnitude of Impact

| Magnitude (M) | Score |
|--|--------------|
| Major positive benefit or change | +4 |
| Moderate positive benefit or change | +3 |
| Minor positive benefit or change | +2 |
| Slight positive benefit or change | +1 |
| No change/status quo | 0 |
| Slight negative disadvantage or change | -1 |
| Minor negative disadvantage or change | -2 |
| Moderate negative disadvantage or change | -3 |
| Major negative disadvantage or change | -4 |

Table 4.8: Scores for Permanence, Recoverability and Cumulative Impact

| Permanence (P) | Recoverability (R) | Cumulative Impact (C) | Score |
|-----------------------|--|------------------------------|--------------|
| Temporary | Recoverable or controllable through EMMP | Non-cumulative/single | 2 |
| Permanent | Irrecoverable | Cumulative/multiple | 3 |

The resulting range of environmental scores based on the scoring system above, are shown in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9: Environmental scores for the impact of development

| Range | Impact Indicators | Description of Range Band |
|--------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 116 to 180 | D | Major positive change/impact |
| 81 to 115 | C | Moderate positive change/impact |
| 37 to 80 | B | Minor positive change/impact |
| 7 to 36 | A | Slight positive impact |
| -6 to +6 | N | No Impact/Status quo/Not Applicable |
| -7 to -36 | -A | Slight negative change/impact |
| -37 to -80 | -B | Minor negative change/impact |
| -81 to -115 | -C | Moderate negative change/impact |
| -116 to -180 | -D | Major negative change/impact |

4.4.2 The Risk-based Impact Assessment Matrix

This impact assessment matrix is based on methods that were originally used for risk assessments. The matrix is formed by comparing the magnitude of an impact with the likelihood of that impact occurring. Cells in the matrix then indicate the significance of the impact.

Magnitude of an impact describes the intensity of the change that is predicted to occur to the receptor of the impact type, e.g. how species of conservation interest (receptor) are affected by edge effects (impact type) as a result of the impact. There is currently no recommended function to establish the magnitude of impact, though the following impact characteristics are often taken into consideration: extent, duration, scale, and frequency.

Table 4.10: Likelihood and Magnitude of Impact

| Likelihood | Magnitude of Impact | | | |
|------------|---------------------|----------|------------|------------|
| | Large | Medium | Small | Negligible |
| Likely | Critical/Major* | Major | Moderate | Minor |
| Possible | Major | Moderate | Minor | Negligible |
| Unlikely | Moderate | Minor | Negligible | Negligible |

*A common variation for the above matrix is the classification of likely large magnitude impacts into critical or major impact significance

Table 4.11: Characteristics of the Different Impacts

| Impact Characteristic | Description |
|-----------------------|---|
| Spatial Extent | Whether the impact is confined to the development site or part of it, or spreads beyond the site (e.g. downstream, if there is drainage or a watercourse; widespread, if there is air movement bringing pollutants to distant areas), and over what distance (m, km) or area (ha, km ²) |
| Duration | Whether the impact is confined to the pre-construction, construction, operational or decommissioning phases, and whether these can be quantified in terms of days, months or years, and possibly particular seasons |
| Scale | Whether the impact is large or small in terms of absolute numbers (e.g. number of individual animals lost) or in percentages (e.g. proportion of a population that is lost), or in terms of local, regional, national or international significance (e.g. number of IUCN Red List species affected), or in other, preferably quantitative terms |
| Frequency | Whether the impact is a once-off event, recurrent, or continuous |

Quantifying the likelihood of the impact occurring is often not practical, and it is often necessary to assess likelihood qualitatively. Table 4.12 shows some examples of the likelihood of different types of impact.

Table 4.12: Likelihoods of Different Types of Environmental Impacts

| Likelihood | Examples of Types of Impacts |
|------------|---|
| Likely | Vegetation clearance the size of the development footprint |
| Possible | Leakage of bentonite slurry into the ground |
| Unlikely | Pollution of untreated wastewater due to complete failure of water treatment system |

The developer should have sound justifications for determining the magnitude, likelihood and significance of impacts as these are qualitative assessments. Assignment of magnitude can be made more reliable by consultation with agencies and the public during the BIA process.

4.4.3 The Leopold Matrix (Leopold, Clarke, Hanshaw & Balsley, 1971)

The Leopold Matrix is a two-dimensional matrix which cross-references the activities linked to the project that are likely to have an environmental impact, and the existing environmental conditions that could possibly be affected by the project.

| Environmental Aspect | Project Activity | | | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|---------|--------------------|---------------------|
| | | Vegetation Clearance | Soil Investigation | Piling | Drain Construction | Building Operations |
| | Plants | 9 / 7 | 2 / 3 | | | |
| | Birds | 7 / 7 | | 5 / 7 | | 5 / 3 |
| | Mammals | 7 / 3 | | 5 / 3 | 4 / 3 | 5 / 3 |
| | Reptiles | 7 / 4 | | 5 / 4 | 4 / 4 | 2 / 3 |
| | Spp. of Conservation Interest | 7 / 7 | 2 / 3 | 5 / 3 | | 5 / 3 |
| | Total | 37 / 28 | 4 / 6 | 20 / 17 | 8 / 7 | 17 / 12 |

Figure 4: Example of the Leopold Matrix

The first step to the matrix is to draw a diagonal line for all interactions considered significant, i.e. activities which have magnitude and importance to the environmental aspect. The next step is to apply a number from 1 to 10 (1 being the minimum and 10 the maximum) to register the magnitude of the interaction. This number is then transferred to the upper left hand corner. The final step is to do the same for the lower right hand corner, but the number represents the real importance of the interaction.

The last row of the matrix sums up the total magnitude and importance for each project activity. Activities with high magnitudes and importance will need to be flagged out for further discussion on whether they are required, or if they can be mitigated.

4.5 Assessing Residual Impacts

After the impact assessment is completed, mitigation measures should be developed for all impacts classified, especially those classified as slight and above, or those which exceed set EQOs. The next chapter covers strategies in developing mitigation measures. Following the development of mitigation measures, a residual impact assessment will be conducted. This is done by repeating the same steps taken in the previous section, but with a revised impact magnitude depending on the expected effectiveness of the mitigation measures. The consultant should explain how mitigation leads to reductions to impact (if any). If prevention and mitigation cannot be done to reduce the level of significance from “critical” downwards, the viability of the entire project may need to be reconsidered.

4.6 Reporting the Final Impact Assessment

In the main BIA report, the impact assessment matrix need not be produced and printed separately for every impact. The impacts and their significance can be listed in tabular format and/or in plain text. The completed matrices for each impact can be attached to the main BIA report in the form of appendices.

5. Developing Mitigation Measures



5. Developing Mitigation Measures

5.1 What are Mitigation Measures

Mitigation measures are measures taken to avoid, reduce, or remedy adverse impacts arising from a development. They are directly linked to the impact assessment, and should be developed with the aim of reducing net impact. Mitigation measures should be tailored to address the different types and stages of construction work, as well as for the different habitats on site.

The approach to mitigation is hierarchical, with the first preference being to avoid the impacts. If this is not practicable, the next approach should be to reduce/minimise total impact. To reduce the residual impacts further, measures should be taken to remedy/restore the situation after the impact, and where possible, measures should be taken to compensate for the impacts in a different part of the development. The hierarchy of approaches is thus:

- Avoid
- Minimise
- Remedy/repair/restore
- Compensate/offset

The following example shows how the various approaches could be taken in a hypothetical situation where a building is planned to be constructed in a forested patch which is a habitat for rare birds and arboreal mammals:

Table 5.1: Example of Mitigation Measures Proposed According to the Mitigation Hierarchy

| Mitigation Hierarchy | Example of Mitigation Measures |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Avoid | The building is relocated/shifted away from the forested areas to avoid the need to clear the entire patch during the design and planning phase of the project. |
| Minimize | A wildlife shepherding plan is put in place to allow any animals trapped on the site to escape into the surrounding vegetation. During tree felling, any trees found with nests of rare birds are retained until the fledglings are mature and leave the nest. Spill budgets are set to minimise turbidity impacts from dredging. |
| Remedy/Repair/Restore | After construction, appropriate trees and shrubs are replanted in appropriate locations on the impacted site to restore part of the habitat. |
| Compensate/Offset | Where site clearance is unavoidable, rare shrubs or trees that are important to the birds and mammals and are located within the impacted site are salvaged, to be planted elsewhere in consultation with NParks. Corals are relocated from direct impact zone to alternative sites within and/or outside of project area, in consultation with NParks. |

Approval of an impact assessment report carries with it the implication that the mitigation measures will be implemented. Mitigation measures may be stipulated as requirements within land use and planning approvals, contracts and agreements.

If the mitigation measures described in the BIA are not put in place, potential difficulties could include rescinding of approvals, stopping of work orders and requiring resubmissions. As such, it is crucial that the developer only propose mitigation measures that are reasonable, implementable, economically feasible and sustainable. Including mitigation measures that are not realistic will result in delays to the project timeline and incur additional cost for developers.

5.2 When are Mitigation Measures Required

Mitigation measures should be developed for all stages of project implementation, namely:

- Design
- Pre-construction
- Construction
- Operation
- Decommissioning

Table 5.2: List of common activities where mitigation measures may need to be considered

| Type of Activity | Pre-construction | Construction | Operation | Decommissioning |
|--|-------------------------|---------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| Placement of hoardings and barriers | √ | √ | | √ |
| Removal of roadside trees and vegetation for site access, working space, storage, and rest areas | √ | √ | | √ |
| Removal of vegetation for site clearance | | √ | | √ |
| Earthworks, levelling and filling | | √ | | |
| Preparation of drainage | | √ | | |
| Preparation of internal roads | | √ | | |
| Laying on water, electricity or other facilities | | √ | | |
| Waste disposal (solid, chemical, hazardous, toxic) | | √ | √ | √ |
| Delivery of materials to and from site | | √ | √ | √ |
| Installation of piles | | √ | | |

5.3 Developing Mitigation Measures

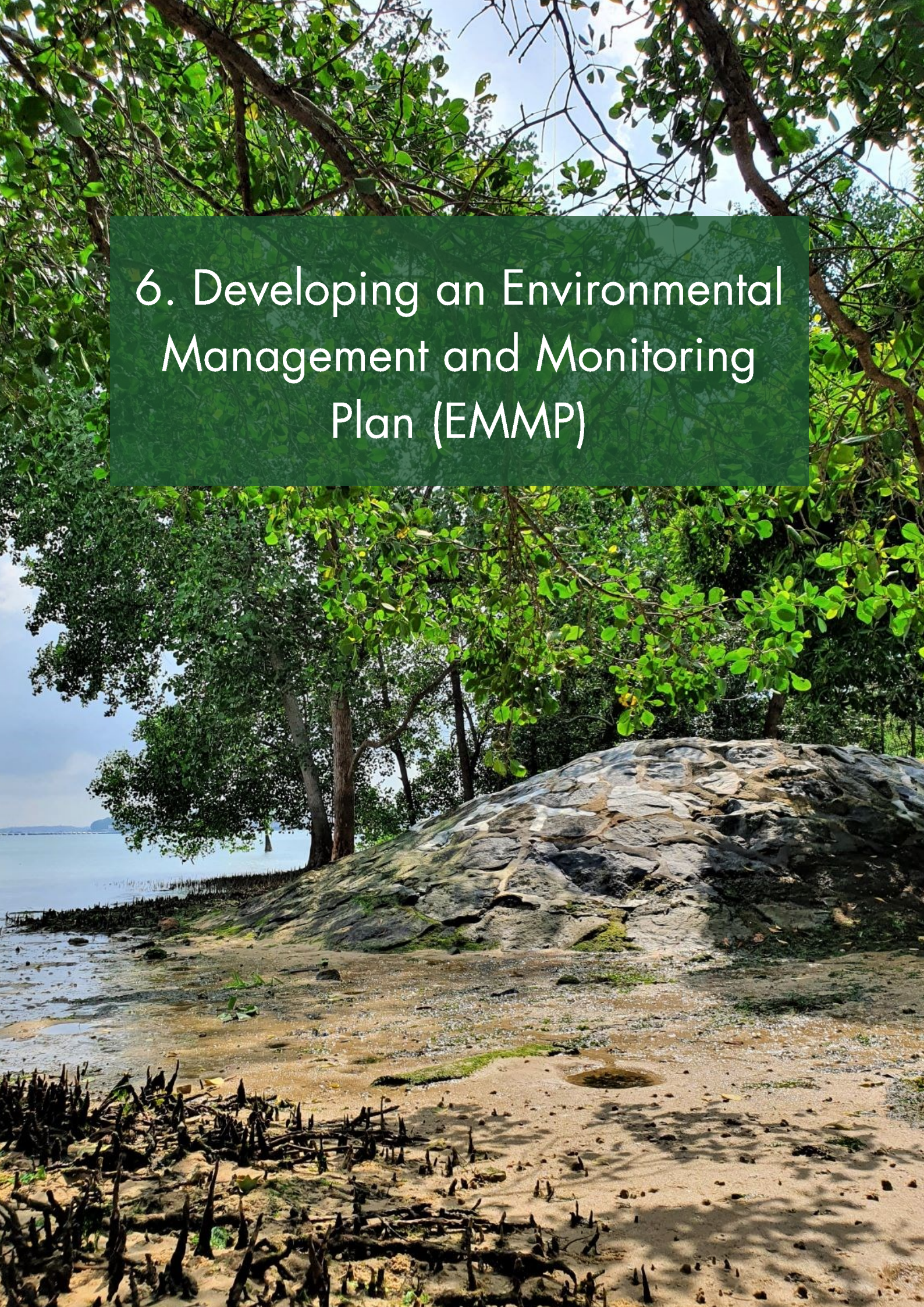
Before delving into specific mitigation measures for different impacts, the developer needs to consider if there are appropriate project alternatives or if it is possible to avoid development completely in conservation priority areas. Mitigation measures should only be considered if alternatives are not possible.

Mitigation measures can be written in a generalised fashion, or they can be written so that they are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound (SMART). While generalised mitigation measures are acceptable for the BIA report, they will need to be converted into a SMART form for the Environmental Management and Monitoring Plan (EMMP; see next chapter).

As an example of the level of detail required for a SMART mitigation measure, a proposed mitigation measure to retain trees of conservation interest on a site should include geographical locations, cross-referenced to a map and descriptions of the trees of interest, including species information, tree health, size etc.

Below are other examples of SMART mitigation measures:

- Minimise vegetation clearance throughout project area, particularly in High Conservation Priority areas (see Section 2.4, where these zones are identified, described and mapped).
- Minimise slope cuts throughout project area, particularly in areas of biological importance (e.g. High Protection Zones). Reduce working space to avoid slope cuts (e.g. reduce working space such that the works are conducted completely on the base of the slope).
- Reduce working space to below 10 m to avoid removal of important habitats and flora (including trees).

A photograph of a coastal environment. In the foreground, there is a sandy area with many dark, vertical mangrove roots. To the left, a body of water is visible. In the center, a large, light-colored rock with some green moss or algae on its surface sits on the sand. Behind the rock, there are several large trees with green leaves. The sky is blue with some white clouds. A semi-transparent green box is overlaid on the upper part of the image, containing white text.

6. Developing an Environmental Management and Monitoring Plan (EMMP)

6. Developing an Environmental Management and Monitoring Plan

6.1 What is an EMMP and How is it Related to a BIA?

The EMMP is the implementation tool of the overall Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), which includes but is not exclusive to biodiversity. Until this point, the guidelines have focused only on the biodiversity related component of the EIA – the BIA. This chapter covers the EMMP more broadly, as the general approach to developing and implementing an EMMP is the same for biodiversity and non-biodiversity components of the EIA.

The EMMP is a tool to proactively manage and confirm that impacts of a development do not exceed the stipulated Environmental Quality Objectives (EQOs) for the project (Doorn-Groen, 2007). An EMMP describes how an action might impact the natural environment in which it occurs, and sets out clear commitments from the entity taking the action on how those impacts will be avoided, minimised, managed, remedied and compensated so that they are environmentally acceptable.

The EMMP should set out the indicators or criteria that will be used to:

1. Affirm that the mitigation and/or compensation measures from the impact assessment will be implemented;
2. Monitor whether the mitigation and/or compensation actions have been implemented, and that they are effective and sufficient;
3. Establish the response necessary to address impacts;
4. Confirm that appropriate tolerance limits have been adopted;
5. Detect any unexpected impacts at an early stage;
6. Specify the parties responsible for the actions, and the schedule for these tasks; and
7. Frame the environmental compliance reporting.

An EMMP is a continuous and adaptive management process which requires feedback mechanisms that link environmental objectives with the environmental management measures that are implemented. Effectiveness of the implemented measures must be monitored over time, and further adjustments to the mitigation measures or monitoring plans should be made as needed to achieve the environmental objective set.

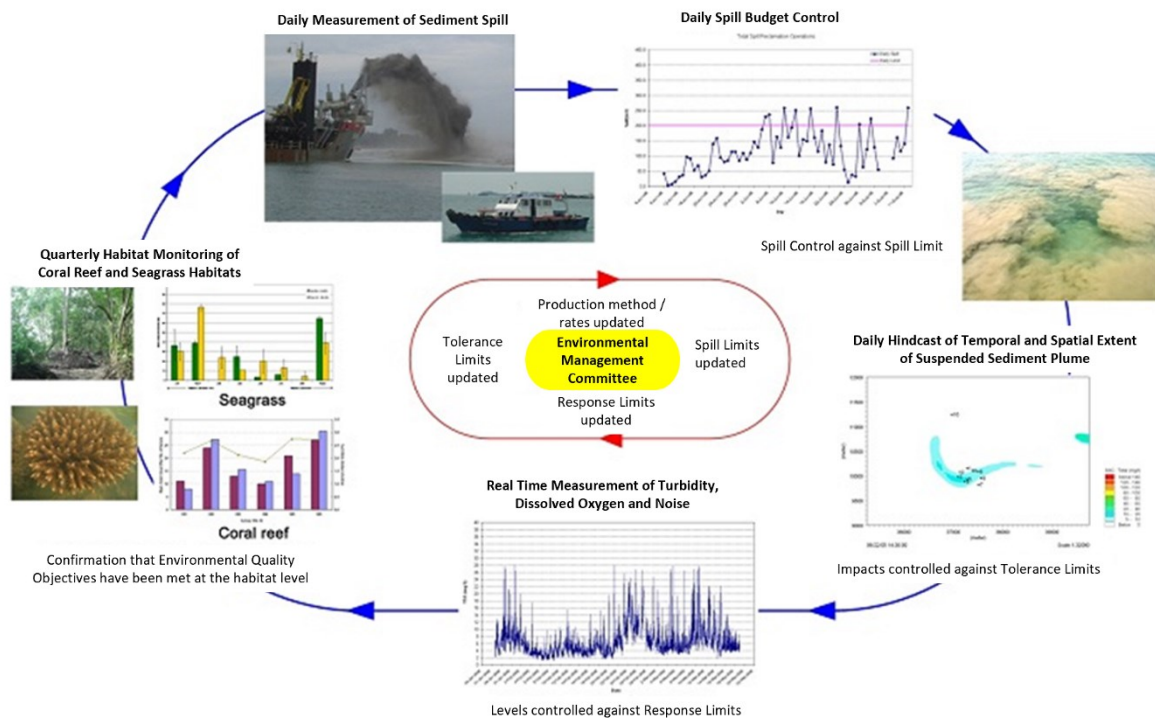


Figure 6.1: Example of Monitoring Required (adapted from Doorn-Groen, 2007)

In many instances, the same consultants who conducted the impact assessment follow through with implementing the EMMP. However, there have been cases where the contracts for the impact assessment and EMMP have been split (due to budget constraints or development timelines), resulting in several consultants or contractors becoming involved in the project. In these cases, it becomes imperative that the stakeholder agencies assess the competence of the subsequent consultants/contractors to carry out their tasks, so that the EQOs are met.

6.2 What to Include in an EMMP

An EMMP typically includes the following information:

- Executive summary or introduction
- Project description
- Environmental objectives
- Potential environmental impacts and risks
- Environmental management measures which will include:
 - * Activities, controls and performance targets
 - * Management maps and diagrams
 - * Monitoring programmes and response plans
 - * Corrective actions
- Environmental management roles and responsibilities
- Reporting procedures
- Environmental training for site workers
- Emergency contacts and procedures
- Audit and review procedures which include:
 - * Environmental auditing
 - * Environmental management plan review

The pertinent items are further elaborated in the subsequent sections.

6.2.1 Project Description

The project description should be similar to, and not conflict with, the description committed to in the EIA. It should include additional details and specifications that were not available earlier in the planning process. It should include:

- Relevant layout plans
- Tree felling and/or vegetation and site clearance plans
- Construction method statements
- Utilities and services (e.g. additional water and water supply structures needed for construction)
- Transportation and construction access and routes (e.g. additional paths needed to transport materials)

6.2.2 Environmental Objectives

The environmental outcomes of the plan should be refined in the EMMP. This should cover:

- The overall intent of the plan
- The specific purpose(s) of various monitoring measures in the EMMP
- The goals that the management plan wants to achieve

6.2.3 Potential Environmental Impacts and Risks

This section is relevant if the EMMP can only be submitted or refined after the EIA approval has been given. If the EMMP is drafted at this stage, the EMMP should minimally provide a quick summary of all the identified threats, as well as the identification, location and quantification of potential impacts, both direct and indirect, of the project. It should elaborate on the relevant impacts of the project, the nature and extent of the potential short-term and long-term effects, and highlight any uncertainties regarding the predicted impacts. This information is usually available as part of the EIA report and will allow the reader of the report to understand the environmental impacts without referring to the EIA report.

6.2.4 Environmental Management Measures

This section of the EMMP details the environmental management measures, i.e. the mitigation measures and monitoring programmes that need to be in place to achieve the environmental objectives outlined in the EMMP. This will form the bulk of the EMMP. It will state how the potential impacts of the proposed project will be managed. For each potential impact the plan should:

- Describe all environmental management activities;
- Detail the control measures that will be implemented to avoid or minimise environmental impacts;
- Specify the timeframes for implementation and the performance targets or outcomes to be achieved.

When defining the performance targets, the outcomes should be quantitative and auditable. These performance targets will then be used as triggers for corrective actions when they are not met.

Table 6.1 Example of Quantifiable and Auditable Performance Targets

| Performance Target | |
|--|---|
| Noise will be kept to not more than 70dbA during the construction period of 8 am to 6pm | ✓ |
| Light will be kept to not more than 100 lux for night delivery of oversized equipment from 7 pm to 7 am. | ✓ |

The use of diagrams and maps is highly encouraged to illustrate:

- Specific designs of various environmental control practices
- Flowcharts of environmental management procedures
- Boundaries of environmentally sensitive areas on or near a project site
- Sources of impacts
- Vegetation that requires protection and other sensitive receptors
- Buffer zones or 'no-go zones'
- Monitoring locations

Monitoring programmes are required to establish the effectiveness of the environmental management measures in place. Monitoring also allows developers to detect any unanticipated impacts and make the necessary adjustments to the management plan to meet the environmental objectives of the project. In developing monitoring programmes, the consultants should include:

- Specific parameters that are being tracked
- Methodology
- Frequency and duration of monitoring activities
- Performance targets as triggers for corrective actions
- Details on the corrective actions to be taken
- Plans on how monitoring records will be maintained

6.2.5 Environmental Management Roles and Responsibilities

The EMMP should also define and document the roles and responsibilities of personnel in charge of the environmental management of the project. These include but are not limited to:

- Environmental managers
- Contractors and subcontractors
- Environmental committees or panels
- Emergency contacts

Table 6.2: Example of Roles and Responsibilities

| Role | Responsibilities |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Manager — Environmental Management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate the implementation of management strategies outlined in the EMMP • Be accountable for implementation of mitigation measures • Report potential or actual instances of missed performance targets, including incidents and non-conformances |
| Manager — Environmental Reporting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all internal and external reporting requirements relating to the EMMP are met • Review and verify data used in EMMP monitoring reports |
| External Auditor | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spot-check construction works to verify contractor compliance to mitigation measures |

6.2.6 Reporting

The EMMP should also provide a list of reporting requirements. This may include, but is not limited to:

- A list of required reports (e.g. training attendance records, environmental health and safety inspection reports, EMMP implementation audit reports, on-schedule monitoring reports, reports of environmental incidents, non-compliance, corrective actions and audits)
- A description of the standard report content
- Schedule or triggers for preparing a report
- Whom the report is provided to
- Document control procedures

6.2.7 Environmental Training

All people involved with the project should receive relevant environmental training to ensure they understand their responsibilities when implementing the environmental management plan. People to be trained include those involved in any of the project activities and operations, including contractors, subcontractors and visitors. The training should be tailored to the role of the individual in the project. The environmental management plan should describe the training to be implemented and could include, but is not limited to:

- Site inductions
- Identification of key points of environmental value and any relevant matters of environmental significance
- Understanding the requirements of the environmental management plan and the individual's role
- Environmental incident emergency response procedures
- On-site environmental controls
- An outline of the potential consequences of not meeting their environmental responsibilities
- Records of all training conducted should be maintained and include:
 - * The name of the person receiving the training
 - * The date the training was received
 - * The name of the person conducting the training
 - * A summary of the training

6.2.8 Emergency Contacts and Procedures

The EMMP should identify the key emergency contacts responsible for managing environmental emergencies associated with the project, and their contact details. These personnel should have the power to stop and direct works so that they can manage emergencies effectively. The EMMP should also establish procedures for managing environmental emergencies and ensuring that those procedures are implemented and maintained. These can include, but are not limited to situations such as encounters with wildlife on site, noise exceeding thresholds levels, and spillage of chemicals.

6.2.9 Review, Audit, and Change Management

Monitoring results need to be reviewed on a regular basis to assess whether the plan is achieving its objectives and the requirements of any relevant approval conditions. Corrective action should be taken when performance targets are not met. The plan should also identify who will be responsible for undertaking the review, and the reporting structure within the organisation and to relevant government agencies. Environmental management measures may need to be adapted to more effectively address a potential impact during the review process, but the reasons for varying the environmental management plan should be clearly documented.

In addition to the regular review conducted by the contractors or consultants, independent third-party checks will ensure that the EMMP is fully implemented and achieving its environmental objectives. This is usually done on a regular interval or when pre-determined criteria are met (e.g. once a month, once a year, when a certain number of thresholds are not met). The audit should take into account environmental monitoring records, corrective actions and the results of any previous audits. Change management may also be triggered during the independent audit as part of the corrective action or when thresholds are not met or when monitoring results reveal unanticipated impacts.

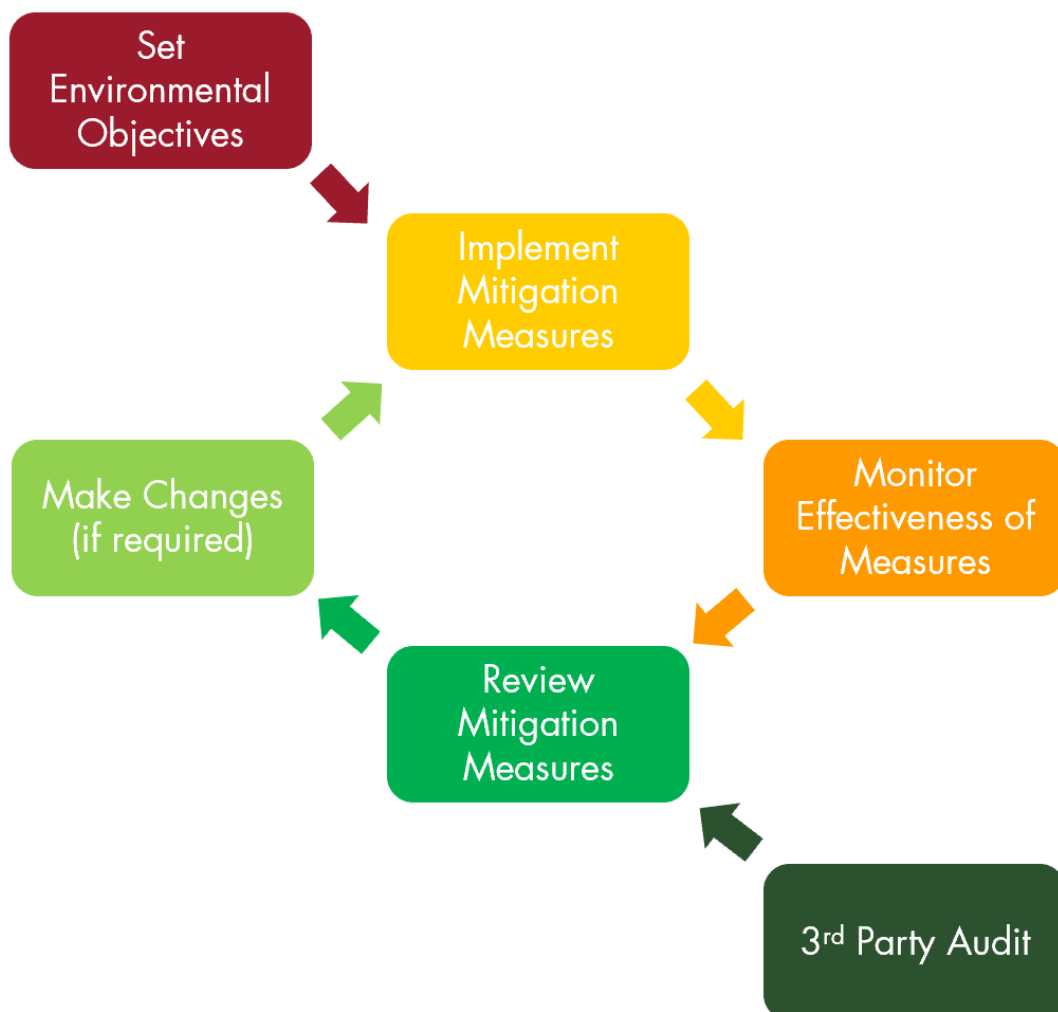


Figure 6.2: Summary of a Robust EMMP Framework

A photograph of a dirt path in a forest. Sunlight filters through the dense green foliage, creating a dappled light effect on the ground. The path is covered with fallen leaves and small plants. A dark green rectangular box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the text "7. Conclusion".

7. Conclusion

7. Conclusion

This booklet is a compilation of the collective knowledge and experience of conducting a BIA and developing a robust EMMP. The developer and consultant should be mindful of the following:

- These guidelines do not include other aspects of an EIA which may touch on social, cultural, historical or other non-biodiversity related components;
- While the guidelines provide suggestions on the methods to conduct baseline studies, these methods are non-prescriptive and non-exhaustive and we continue to welcome new technology and methods in conducting baseline studies that are suited to the location and type of development;
- The precautionary principle and worstcase scenarios should always be applied when there is any doubt in the evaluation of impacts and development of mitigation measures; and
- Monitoring programmes are crucial in ensuring environmental objectives of a project are met and are important components of a robust EIA.

In summary, each development is unique and there is no template for conducting an impact assessment. The developer and their consultant will need to tailor the assessment to the site conditions and the type of development. Where there is uncertainty about the scope and requirements of the EIA, the developer and consultant should err on the side of caution and consult technical agencies. We hope that the best practices provided in these guidelines will provide clarity on how to conduct a BIA and what is expected for a robust EMMP. Further resources are also available at the end of this booklet.

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Additional Reading

Baseline Studies and Monitoring

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- Lindenmayer, D. B., & Franklin, J. F. (2013). *Conserving Forest Biodiversity: A Comprehensive Multiscaled Approach*. Island Press.

Impact Assessment Tools

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Annex A: List of Relevant Acts and Regulations

| Category | Relevant Acts and Regulations |
|--|---|
| Conservation of Trees and Protected Area | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks and Trees Act, 2006 • Parks and Trees Regulations, 2006 • Parks and Trees (Preservation of Trees) Order, revised 1998 |
| Wildlife Protection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wild Animals and Birds Act, 2000 • Wild Animals and Birds (Bird Sanctuaries) Order, 1992 |
| Import of Animals and Plants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endangered Species (Import and Export) Act, 2008 • Animals and Birds Act, 2002 • Control of Plants Act, 2000 |
| Surface Water Protection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Utilities Act, 2002 • Public Utilities Act (Reservoirs, Catchment Areas and Waterways) Regulations, 2006 • Sewerage and Drainage Act, 2001 • Sewerage and Drainage Act (Surface Water Drainage) Regulations, 2008 • Environmental Protection and Management Act, 2002 • Environmental Protection and Management (Trade Effluent) Regulations, 2008 • Environmental Protection & Management Act (Part V – Water Pollution Control) 2008 |
| Air Quality Protection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Protection and Management Act, 2002 • Environmental Protection and Management (Vehicular Emissions) Regulations, 2008 • Environmental Protection and Management (Air Impurities) Regulations, 2008 • Environmental Protection and Management (OffRoad Diesel Engine Emissions) Regulations, 2012 |
| Noise Protection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Protection and Management Act, 2002 • Environmental Protection and Management (Control of Noise at Construction Sites) Regulations, 2008 • Environmental Protection and Management (Vehicular Emissions) Regulations, 2008 |
| Waster Management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Protection and Management (Hazardous Substances) Regulations, 2008 • Environmental Public Health Act, 2002 • Environmental Public Health (General Waste Collection) Regulations, 2000 • Environmental Public Health (Toxic Industrial Waste) Regulations, 2000 • Sewerage and Drainage Act, 2001 • Sewerage and Drainage (Trade Effluent) Regulations, 2008 |



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