

Required information (the EIA Regulations Schedule 4 Part 1)	Relevant Volume/Chapter of Environmental Statement
<p>cumulative, short, medium and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects of the development, resulting from:</p> <p>(a) the existence of the development            (b) the use of natural resources            (c) the emission of pollutants, the creation of nuisances and the elimination of waste</p>	<p>offset any significant adverse effects, have been applied. These are summarised in Chapter 7, Volume 1 and detailed in the Technical Appendices (Volume 2).</p> <p>Likely effects have been assessed, as relevant to each individual effect, in relation to the project's construction and permanent use of the land. The geographical level of importance, nature and duration of effects are reported.</p> <p>Particular assessment methods are discussed in each detailed assessment.</p>
<p>5. A description of the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and where possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment.</p>	<p>The measures are listed separately in Chapter 8, Volume 1 and repeated in each detailed assessment in the Technical Appendices.</p>
<p>6. A Non-Technical Summary of the information provided under paragraphs 1 to 5 above.</p>	<p>A Non-Technical Summary (NTS) is included in Volume 1 and is available separately.</p>
<p>7. An indication of any difficulties (technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered by the applicant in compiling the required information.</p>	<p>Assumptions, limitations or other areas of uncertainty, where they have been identified, are reported in the relevant detailed Technical Appendices.</p>

## 6.6 The Detailed EIA Process

### Introduction

**6.6.1** The EIA process involves the application of specific criteria for specific subject areas to evaluate and rank features (receptors) and impacts. However, because of the complexities involved the use of experienced professional judgement in the valuation of features and in the determination of impact magnitude and effect significance is one of the most important elements of the process.

## Impact and Effect

**6.6.2** There is a distinction between the terms 'impact' and 'effect'. The EIA Regulations refer to the requirement to report the significance of effects. An impact has been defined as the cause of a change to the existing environment (e.g. felling of existing trees), whereas an effect refers to the consequences of this change for the environment (e.g. the felling of trees results in effects on visual amenity and on ecology and nature conservation).

## Evaluation

**6.6.3** Each feature of importance is described in terms of its overall importance using a set of criteria. For example, features of international importance can be described as Exceptional, through High, Medium down to Low for features of local importance. In some subjects Low can be split up into two or three sub-categories because it is often the case that the majority of features fall into this category. Using ecology and nature conservation as an example see Table 6.2 below.

**Table 6.2: Descriptions of Nature Conservation Value Levels**

Value*	Examples
<b>Exceptional</b> (International importance)	Habitats or species that form part of the cited interest within an internationally protected site or candidate site (e.g. SAC, cSAC, SPA, pSPA, Ramsar site etc.). A feature (e.g. habitat or population) which is either unique or sufficiently unusual to be considered as being one of the highest quality examples in a international / national context that the site is likely to be designated as an SAC / SPA.
<b>High</b> (National importance)	Habitats or species that form part of the cited interest within a nationally designated site (SSSI, ASSI, NNR, MNR). A feature (e.g. habitat or population) which is either unique or sufficiently unusual to be considered as being one of the highest quality examples in a national / regional context for which the site could potentially be designated as an SSSI.
<b>Medium</b> (Regional importance)	Habitats or species that form part of the cited interest of a Local Nature Reserve, or some local-level designated sites depending on specific site conditions. Viable areas of internationally or nationally important habitats (e.g. Annex 1 habitats, priority BAP habitats) present in quality and extent at a regional or relevant biogeoclimatic zone (i.e. SNH natural heritage zone), level of importance. Population of a species which is either unique or sufficiently unusual to be considered as being of nature conservation value at up to a county context (e.g. Nationally Scarce). Sites supporting critical habitats for a regularly occurring, regionally significant number of a nationally important species (e.g. priority UK BAP).

Value*	Examples
<b>Low</b> (Local importance)	<p>High:</p> <p>Sites meeting the criteria for Scottish Council area designation, Wildlife Sites, which may include amenity and educational criteria in urban areas.</p> <p>Sites containing viable areas of any priority habitat identified in the UK BAP or Scottish Local Authority LBAPs. Sites supporting viable breeding populations of species known to be Scottish LA rarities (e.g. included in the LBAP), and / or supplying critical elements of their habitat requirements. Any regularly occurring, locally significant population.</p>
	<p>Moderate:</p> <p>Features / habitats or species which are not considered to qualify for non-statutory designation but which provide locally important semi-natural habitats (i.e. approx. 10 km radius from the site).</p> <p>Populations of any species conservation importance in the context of the local area (i.e. approx. 10 km radius from the site).</p>
	<p>Low:</p> <p>Features / habitats or species which are not considered to qualify for non-statutory designation but which provide locally important semi-natural habitats in the context of the immediate surrounding area (e.g. species-rich hedgerows, small ponds, etc.).</p> <p>Populations of any species of conservation importance in the context of the immediate surrounding area.</p>
<b>Negligible</b>	<p>Commonplace feature of little or no significance. Loss of such a feature / population would not be seen as detrimental to the ecology of the area.</p>

\*Where species or habitats occur in more than one level the highest value is normally applicable.

**6.6.4** The assessment of a features sensitivity to change due to any development is derived from experience and the literature. This aspect of the assessment requires a thorough understanding of the likely responses of a feature to a given set of processes or construction plans associated with a proposed development.

**6.6.5** The assessment of impacts draws on published guidance, where applicable (e.g. SNH's 'A Handbook on Environmental Impacts Assessment, 2005). Once identified, the impacts are ranked according to the comparative severity of their impact on the feature / receptor. In defining and predicting impacts consideration is given to a range of parameters including whether the impact is adverse or beneficial, impact magnitude, extent, duration, reversibility and timing / frequency. The degree of confidence in the predicted impacts (pre-mitigation and residual) is also discussed in the assessment where appropriate.

## Impact Magnitude

**6.6.6** The effects (both adverse (negative) and beneficial (positive)) of the construction and operation of the proposal, and any potential cumulative and in-combination effects associated with the proposal or other proposals for the wider area, are assessed for their potential effect on the interests. The impact magnitude is first determined by the interaction between the scale of the effect in time, area and

intensity and the sensitivity of the feature being impacted. An example set of criteria for different levels of impact magnitude are given in Table 6.3 below.

**Table 6.3: Categorisation of Impact Magnitude (includes consideration of impact duration)**

Magnitude	Description
Total / Near Total	Would cause the loss of a major proportion or whole feature, or cause sufficient damage to a feature to immediately affect its viability.
High	Major impacts on the features, which would have a sufficient effect to alter the nature of the feature in the short-long term and affect its long-term viability.
Medium	Impacts that are detectable in short and long-term, but which should not alter the long-term viability of the feature.
Low	Minor impacts, either of sufficiently small-scale or of short duration to cause no long-term harm to the feature.
Negligible	Minimal change on a very small scale: <i>de-minimus</i> .
Neutral	A potential impact that is not expected to affect the feature in any way, therefore no effects is predicted.
Duration definitions	According to the assessment periods of An Camas Mòr or as additionally defined by the technical chapter author.

## Mitigation

**6.6.7** Mitigation is the term used to refer to measures to prevent, reduce and where possible offset adverse effects. The EIA Regulations only require a description of the measures to prevent, reduce and where possible offset significant adverse effects, however, lesser effects may also need to be addressed depending on the specific circumstances. With an iterative design process much of the most important prevention mitigation is often a key part of the outline and detailed design process and not necessarily obvious as a specific mitigation measure.

## Effect Significance and Mitigation

**6.6.8** Following the determination of value and impact magnitude the significance of the effect is determined by combining the two, in conjunction with professional judgement. Table 6.4 illustrates the relationship between impact magnitude and value. The Table 6.4 matrix is for guidance only as in practice the assessment of effect significance involves judgment based on the nature of the potential impacts and detailed understanding of the sensitivity of the features affected.

**6.6.9** Only those effects at a moderate to major level (both adverse and beneficial) are considered to be significant (i.e. considered to be “likely significant effects” in terms of the EIA Regulations).

**6.6.10** Once effect significance has been determined then the need for mitigation measures is identified and their implementation committed to. Following this the residual effect significance is determined once the benefits of the proposed committed mitigation measures are fully considered in the assessment.

**Table 6.4: Matrix Showing the Relationship between Impact Magnitude and Value in the Determination of the Significance of Effects.**

Impact Magnitude	Value				
	Exceptional	High	Medium	Low	Negligible
Total / near total	Major	Major	Major	Moderate	Slight
High	Major	Major	Major-Moderate	Moderate	Slight
Medium	Major	Major - Moderate	Moderate	Moderate - Slight	Slight
Low	Moderate - Slight	Moderate - Slight	Moderate - Slight	Slight	Slight
Neutral/Negligible	Neutral / Negligible Impact				

**6.6.11** Each of the resulting effect significances in the matrix above can be adverse, neutral or beneficial, depending on the type of impact and resulting effect(s). Table 6.5 below gives examples of the categorisation and definitions of the effect significance levels.

**Table 6.5: Description of Effect Significance Levels.**

Significance	Adverse / Beneficial	Description
Major	Adverse	An effect of Major significance on a feature of at least Medium value. Consideration of the application of mitigation measures of at least Moderate beneficial effect significance is required.
Moderate	Adverse	Moderate significance applies to effects that adversely affect features of at least Low value at a minimum magnitude of Slight. Consideration of the application of mitigation measures at Slight-Moderate beneficial effect significance is required.
Slight	Adverse	Slight significance can apply to effects that adversely affect features of any value. Mitigation measures are discretionary depending on the detailed nature of the potential effects and the value of the features that would be affected.
Neutral	-	No impacts or effects are predicted.
Slight	Beneficial	Slight benefits, either of sufficiently small-scale or of short duration to cause no long-term overall benefit to the feature.

Significance	Adverse / Beneficial	Description
Moderate	Beneficial	Benefits for a feature that are detectable in the short and long-term, but would not increase / secure the viability of the feature.
Major	Beneficial	Major benefits for a feature are not normally applicable to the majority of EIA situations.

**6.6.12** Residual effects are considered significant under the EIA Regulations if they are at a level of Moderate or Major. In other words residual effects of Neutral, Negligible or Slight are not considered to be significant.

## Cumulative Effects

**6.6.13** In addition to the assessment of direct impacts and effects from the proposed development, an assessment is often also undertaken of the likely cumulative effects of the proposed development, if applicable. In-combination effects with other surrounding proposed and constructed projects can also be undertaken, depending on the level of information available to the practitioner on the relevant environmental details for other developments, their likelihood of being taken forward and their timescales.

## 6.7 Scoping

### Introduction

**6.7.1** Scoping is an important part of the EIA process and is used to ensure that all the environmental impacts that could possibly result in significant effects are identified and appropriate methods for information collection and impact assessment are devised.

**6.7.2** The EIA Regulations do not prescribe the specific assessment topics to be addressed in an Environmental Impact Assessment. However, Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations states that an Environmental Statement should include “A description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the development, including, in particular, population, fauna, flora, soil water, air climatic factors, material assets, including the architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the inter-relationship between the factors”.

### The Process

**6.7.3** The scoping process is described in detail in Chapter 10 (Volume 3); Report of Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Consultations (Volume 3) and is summarised below:

- It was agreed between The Highland Council, Cairngorms National Park Authority and An Camas Mòr LLP that the scope for the EIA would be established through consultation with an agreed list of consultees.