

Challenges Facing Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Systems in Eastern Africa: Comparative Review of 11 Countries



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Purpose and Scope of the Study

Comparative review of EIA systems in Burundi, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia

Assessment of institutional, procedural, and enforcement challenges

Coverage of mercury (ASGM), plastic waste, and e-waste management

Why Environmental Impact Assessment Matters



Global decision-making tool adopted after the U.S. NEPA (1969)



Supports environmentally sound, socially equitable development



Intended to inform decisions before project approval

EIA / ESIA, SEA, Project Briefs, EMPs /ESMPs

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graph TD; A[EIA / ESIA, SEA, Project Briefs, EMPs /ESMPs] --> B[Instrument selected based on project risk, scale, and location]; B --> C[Mandatory in all countries, but uneven application in practice];
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Instrument selected based on project risk, scale, and location

Mandatory in all countries, but uneven application in practice

EIA Instruments Used in Eastern Africa

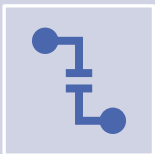
Institutional Leadership and Coordination



All countries have environmental policies and framework laws



National authorities review and approve EIA reports



Weak inter-agency coordination and limited capacity persist

Screening and Scoping Challenges

Screening determines whether full EIA is required

Predetermined project lists may underestimate impacts

Scoping often treated as a formality rather than a planning tool

Public Participation and Disclosure



Legally required in almost all countries



Consultations often limited and poorly integrated



Public hearings used inconsistently

Assessment of Alternatives

Required in all 11 countries

Often done after site and
design decisions are fixed

Limits meaningful comparison
and stakeholder input

Environmental Management and Follow-Up

EMP / ESMP and monitoring
plans legally required

Implementation and compliance
monitoring are weak

Limited audits due to resource
constraints



Emerging Pollution Management Priorities in AFE

Plastic waste, e-waste, and mercury from Artisanal and Small-scale Gold Mining (ASGM) cause significant adverse effects

Exposure to lead (including from e-waste) and mercury impair children's cognitive development

The economic cost of these impacts are equivalent to 5.7% and 1.1% of the region's Purchase Power Parity-adjusted GDP

This the highest among all regions in the world

Children living near e-waste dumpsites face a 70% higher risk of contracting Acute Respiratory Infections.

Challenges using EIA to Address Emerging Priorities

EIA	Plastic Waste, E-waste, and Mercury from ASGM
Designed for formal, proponent-led development projects	Generated by diffuse, informal (sometimes illegal), livelihood-driven activities
Requires monitoring, follow-up, and enforcement	Carried out in geographical areas without the presence of formal authorities
Predominantly focused on projects with clearly defined boundaries that are developed within a single country	Involve cross-border flows of plastics, e-waste, and mercury

Overall Findings

01

EIA systems exist but are weakly implemented

02

Low compliance in government-funded projects

03

Limited monitoring after project approval

04

EIA must evolve to address emerging priorities

Key Conclusions and Policy Implications



Strengthen political commitment and institutional capacity by integrating Environmental and Social risk management in project identification and planning across government agencies to simplify decision-making.



Improve coordination and enforcement mechanisms by enhancing post-project ESIA monitoring, auditing, and compliance with environmental management laws.



Enhance transparency, participation and follow up by establishing stakeholder engagement practices and integrating them throughout the project.



Use Strategic Environmental Assessments for entire sectors, simplified instruments for livelihood-based activities, and strengthen collaboration to conduct trans-boundary EIAs

Please contact me if you'd like a copy of a poster providing a more detailed comparative analysis of EIA systems in AFE.



COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF EIA AND WASTE FOR AFE COUNTRIES

COUNTRY	ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORITIES	DECISION MAKING RESPONSIBILITY	EIA LEGISLATION	IMPLEMENTATION REGULATORY FRAMEWORK	SCREENING PROCEDURE	SCOPING PROCEDURE	TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)	THE REQUIREMENTS FOR SCOPE OF EIA STUDY	EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVES	INSTITUTIONAL COORDINATION	INFORMATION DISSEMINATION	CITIZEN PARTICIPATION	ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN (EMP)	MONITORING	REPORTING OF MONITORING RESULTS	MEASURE IN SUPPORT OF SMALL SCALE BUSINESSES	PLASTIC WASTE MANAGEMENT	E-WASTE MANAGEMENT
	Ministry of Lands, Water and Environment, Department of Environment Regional (ER) Environmental Council	Ministry of Lands, Water and Environment, Department of Environment	Proclamation No. 102/2001 (The Environmental Protection Proclamation) and Proclamation No. 103/2001 (The Environmental Protection Proclamation)	Category A projects: Full EIA Category B projects: Environmental Impact Assessment Category C projects: No further assessment	The project owner is required to submit an EIA study to the relevant government agency and agree on the TOR for the EIA study. The EIA study should be submitted to the relevant government agency for approval.	The project owner is required to submit an EIA study to the relevant government agency and agree on the TOR for the EIA study. The EIA study should be submitted to the relevant government agency for approval.	The TOR should be prepared by the project owner and approved by the relevant government agency.	The EIA study is required to cover all major activities and impacts on the environment, including social, economic, and cultural impacts.	Assessment of alternatives is required to identify the most feasible and sustainable alternative.	The project owner is required to coordinate with the relevant government agency and other stakeholders.	The public and stakeholders are required to participate in the EIA process through public consultations.	The EIA process involves public consultations and the preparation of an EMP.	Monitoring of projects is required to ensure compliance with the EMP and environmental standards.	The EIA process involves public consultations and the preparation of an EMP.	The EIA process involves public consultations and the preparation of an EMP.	The EIA process involves public consultations and the preparation of an EMP.	Regulations are in place to manage plastic waste, but enforcement is weak.	No publicly available legal framework on e-waste management.
	Federal Environmental Protection Authority (FEPA); Regional Environmental Agencies (REA)	EPA, Regional Environmental Agencies	Proclamation No. 102/2001 (The Environmental Protection Proclamation) and Proclamation No. 103/2001 (The Environmental Protection Proclamation)	Schedule I EIA projects: Full EIA Schedule II EIA projects: Full EIA Schedule III EIA projects: Full EIA	An assessment is required to determine the category of the project and the need for an EIA study.	For Schedule I projects, an assessment is required to determine the category of the project and the need for an EIA study.	The TOR should be prepared by the project owner and approved by the relevant government agency.	The EIA study is required to cover all major activities and impacts on the environment, including social, economic, and cultural impacts.	Assessment of alternatives is required to identify the most feasible and sustainable alternative.	The project owner is required to coordinate with the relevant government agency and other stakeholders.	The public and stakeholders are required to participate in the EIA process through public consultations.	The EIA process involves public consultations and the preparation of an EMP.	Monitoring of projects is required to ensure compliance with the EMP and environmental standards.	The EIA process involves public consultations and the preparation of an EMP.	The EIA process involves public consultations and the preparation of an EMP.	The EIA process involves public consultations and the preparation of an EMP.	The Solid Waste Management Proclamation No. 519/2007 provides for the management of plastic waste.	Electrical and Electronic Waste Management and Disposal Council of Ministers, Regulation No. 42/2002
	Ministry of Environment and Forestry National Environment Management Authority (NEMA)	NEMA	The Environmental Management and Coordination Act (EMCA) 1999	Low risk projects: Preparation of a Summary EIA Report Medium risk projects: Preparation of an EIA Report High risk projects: Preparation of an EIA Study Report	Authorizing agency to determine to which category the proposed project is assigned in accordance with Schedule 2 of the Environmental Management and Coordination Act (EMCA)	Scoping is undertaken for high risk projects to determine the key issues to be investigated and the development of Terms of Reference	TORs are prepared for high risk projects. They are prepared by the project owner and approved by NEMA for reference.	The EIA study should include an analysis of alternatives, including social, economic, and cultural impacts.	Assessment of alternatives is required to identify the most feasible and sustainable alternative.	The project owner is required to coordinate with the relevant government agency and other stakeholders.	The public and stakeholders are required to participate in the EIA process through public consultations.	The EIA process involves public consultations and the preparation of an EMP.	Monitoring of projects is required to ensure compliance with the EMP and environmental standards.	The EIA process involves public consultations and the preparation of an EMP.	The EIA process involves public consultations and the preparation of an EMP.	The EIA process involves public consultations and the preparation of an EMP.	The Environmental Management and Coordination Act (EMCA) 1999 provides for the management of plastic waste.	The Environmental Management and Coordination Act (EMCA) 1999 provides for the management of e-waste.



IAIA26
QUÉBEC CITY, CANADA

Let's continue the conversation!

Message me your questions or comments in the IAIA26 app.

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