

Estonia

As a respond to CBD notification nr. 2013-102, I let you know that there is currently no big scale scientific studies underway contained in CBD COP decision X/33 paragraph 8(w) or their application to specific areas.

All kind of geo-engineering project as a project which potentially may have important environmental impact, must follow the rules set in Nation Environmental Impact Assessment Act before it is allowed to make start with any kind of activities, which change the current situation.

Activity licenses in the case of which an EIA may be initiated:

- building permit;
- permit for use of construction works;
- integrated environmental permit;
- permit for the special use of water;
- ambient air pollution permit;
- waste permit;
- hazardous waste handling license;
- radiation practice permit;
- natural resource extraction permit;
- prospecting permit;
- geological investigation permit;
- other document permitting planned activity in relation to a presumably material environmental impact.

You may order an EIA from a person or enterprise that holds an EIA license, and employees an expert who holds a license.

Objective of an EIA

To give decision-makers information on the environmental impact on all realistic alternatives and to issue a proposal regarding the most suitable solution.

Cross-border assessments

Upon initiating every EIA, you should verify whether your activity may have a material impact beyond Estonian borders. This is also the case when implementing a strategic planning document. In the case of a cross-border environmental impact, the initiator of the assessment must promptly notify the Ministry of the Environment. If the country impacted desires, the representative of the country will be allowed to take part in the proceedings on the EIA.

Natura assessment

Potential environmental impact on Natura 2000 network of nature preserves is assessed pursuant to the Environmental Impact Assessment and Environmental Management System Act. Natura assessments are generally similar to EIA procedure, but exceptions must be taken into consideration upon deciding on

the activity. What is important in the case of Natura assessments is that above all the impact on the protected site is assessed.

Initiating an EIA

An EIA may be initiated if:

- you are seeking an activity license and the activity you are seeking the license for will presumably lead to material environmental impact;
- you are seeking amendment of an activity license and the activity you are seeking the license for will presumably lead to material environmental impact;
- you are planning an activity that will either by itself or in conjunction with other activities presumably lead to material impacts of the Natura 2000 network area.

Grounds for initiating an EIA:

- list of activities established by legal acts in the case of which assessment is obligatory
- set forth in legal acts if it is found as a result of a preliminary assessment that the activity may lead to material environmental impact (the decision is made by way of deliberation)
- public pressure
- free will on the part of the entrepreneur