Social Impact Assessment Guideline

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Queensland Government

The Department of State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning

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1 Introduction

This Social Impact Assessment (SIA) Guideline (the Guideline) applies to all projects subject to an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process under the *State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971* (SDPWO Act) or the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* (EP Act).

The purpose of an EIS is to assess and report on a project's social, economic and environmental impacts and the measures proposed to mitigate the potential impacts of the project. This includes the Coordinator-General's evaluation of the social impacts of a project and the decision whether or not to allow the project to proceed.

The definition of environment in the SDPWO Act and the EP Act includes social matters that affect people and communities. The consideration of social impacts through an SIA is therefore required for EISs under both Acts. An SIA is released for public comment as an integral component of an EIS.

1.1   Application of this Guideline

The Guideline states the details that must be included in an SIA. The Guideline covers the identification and assessment of potential social impacts, as well as their management and monitoring.

The Guideline is a statutory instrument for resource projects and has been made by the Coordinator-General in accordance with section 9(4) of the *Strong and Sustainable Resource Communities Act 2017* (SSRC Act). It is a non-statutory instrument for non-resource projects subject to an EIS process under the SDPWO Act or EP Act.

1.2   The SSRC Act 2017

The object of the SSRC Act is to ensure that residents of communities near large resource projects benefit from the construction and operation of the projects.

Sections 9, 10 and 11 of the SSRC Act provide the regulatory framework for the SIA of large resource projects. This framework includes provisions for the following:

- the matters SIA must provide for in relation to a project
- adoption of a recruitment hierarchy, prioritising recruitment from local and regional communities first, then recruitment of workers to the regional community
- Coordinator-General conditions to manage the potential social impacts of a project
- enforcement provisions for conditions stated by the Coordinator-General to manage the potential social impacts of a project.

The SIA provisions of the SSRC Act work in conjunction with the Act's other provisions to achieve the object of the SSRC Act. The other provisions include:

- prohibition of 100 per cent fly-in, fly-out (FIFO) workforce arrangements on operational large resource projects
- prevention of discrimination against locals in the recruitment of workers
- monitoring and compliance.

The SSRC Act ensures that the framework for SIA is consistently applied to large resource projects that require an EIS under the SDPWO Act or the EP Act.

2 SIA process

SIA is a process for the identification, analysis, assessment, management and monitoring of the social impacts of a project, both positive and negative. The social impacts of a project are the direct and indirect impacts that affect people and their communities at all stages of the project lifecycle.

The SIA must address the following key matters:

- community and stakeholder engagement
- workforce management
- housing and accommodation
- local business and industry procurement
- health and community well-being.

Addressing the key matters above in an SIA is a statutory requirement for large resource projects under Section 9 of the SSRC Act. The details that must be included in an SIA for each of the key matters are provided in Section 3.

2.1   Integration with the EIS process

The SIA report is part of the EIS for each project. Figure 1 explains how the SIA process aligns and integrates with the EIS process. The SIA report is released for public comment with the project's EIS. Based on the feedback received, the Coordinator-General may request amendments to the SIA. The Coordinator-General may, as part of evaluating a project's EIS, condition the project to require the management of social impacts.

2.2   SIA principles

The following principles are to inform the development of an SIA:

- **Lifecycle-focused:** an SIA is to consider the full lifecycle of the project.
- **Reasonable:** an SIA is to be commensurate with the nature and scale of the project, the sensitivity of the social environment, and the likely scope and significance of the resultant project related social impacts.
- **Participatory:** engagement for an SIA is to be inclusive, respectful, meaningful and tailored to the needs of potentially impacted individuals and groups.
- **Rigorous:** an SIA is to be based on objective, comprehensive social impact analysis, incorporating the most up to date information on the communities affected and the project.
- **Effective management:** an SIA is to include effective social management measures that enhance potential benefits and mitigate potential negative impacts.
- **Adaptive:** management measures are to be monitored, reviewed, and adjusted to ensure ongoing effectiveness.

Figure 1: Integration of the SIA process with the regulatory EIS process
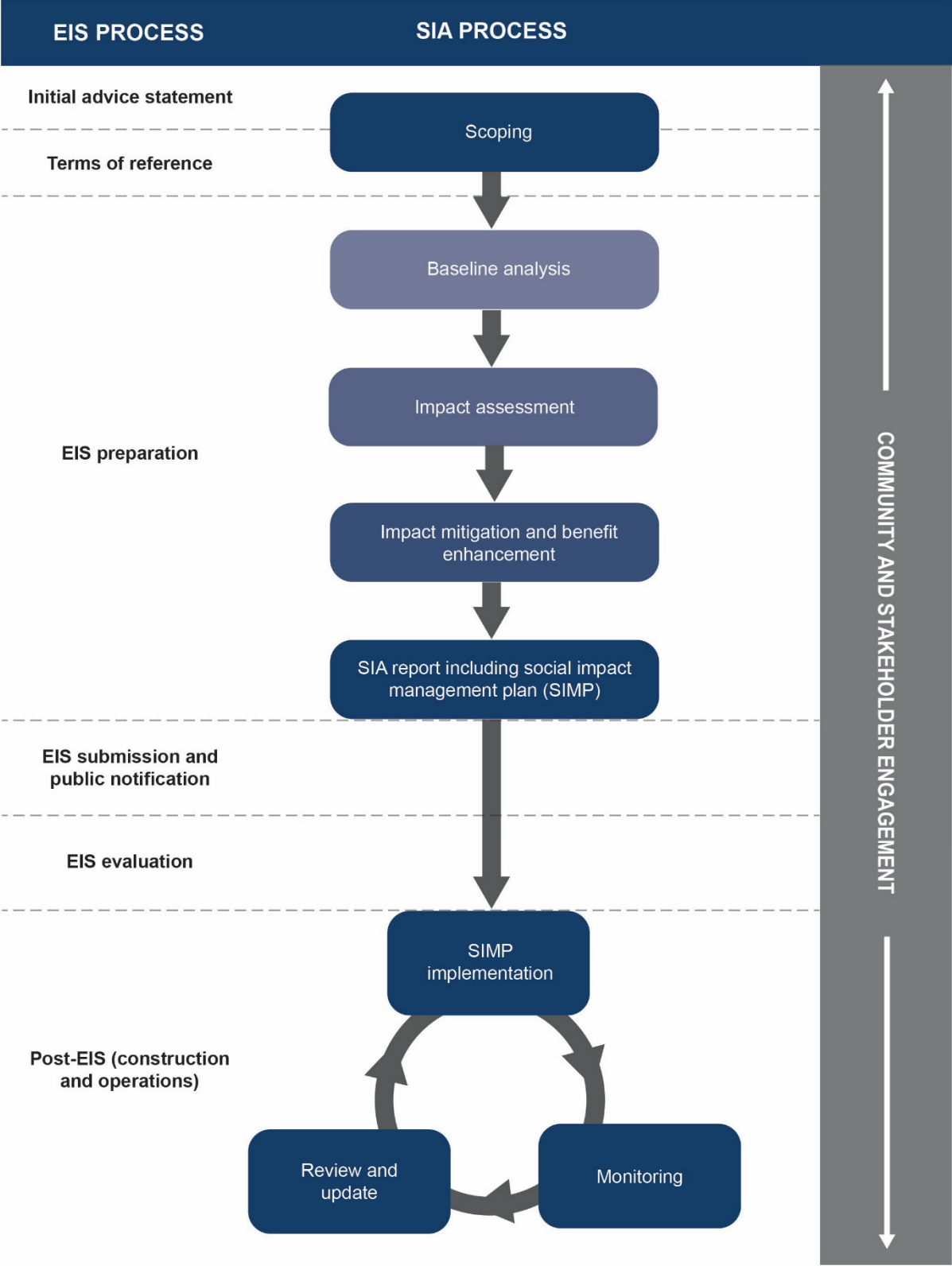
2.3   SIA phases

The phases of the SIA process are shown in Figure 1 and explained below. The outcomes of the SIA process are to be documented in an SIA report, along with an explanation of the approach and methods used for each phase of the SIA.

2.3.1 Scoping

The scoping phase allows for the early identification of the likely SIA issues and ensures that the SIA is appropriately scaled and consistent with regulatory requirements.

Scoping phase activities include describing the project, determining the regulatory context, identifying and profiling affected communities, identifying stakeholders, identifying relevant social indicators, conducting a preliminary review of potential social impacts and benefits and considering potential project design alternatives. These matters are typically addressed in a project's initial advice statement (refer to Figure 1) and will assist in identifying any project specific SIA requirements for the EIS terms of reference.

The SIA study area is to be determined during this phase. The SIA study area identifies the social and geographical boundaries for the SIA, and takes into account the following:

- the nature and scale of the proposed project, including associated infrastructure
- the scope of the potential social impacts throughout the project lifecycle
- the location and characteristics of potentially affected communities (including nearby regional communities)
- infrastructure, urban / rural centres, and land use patterns
- native title rights and other interests held by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- location of other projects in the region which may contribute to cumulative social impacts over time.

Potentially affected communities are those local and/or regional communities that may be affected by a proposed project, whether negatively or positively. A more detailed understanding of the characteristics of potentially affected communities, and the potential social impacts of the project, is obtained as the SIA process progresses, which will allow for the identification of potentially impacted communities (refer to Section 2.3.5).

Multiple study areas may be required in order to assess potential project impacts at differing geographic scales or locations (for example, a local and regional study area).

2.3.2 Baseline analysis

A social baseline describes the existing social conditions and trends within the SIA study area and provides a benchmark against which potential social impacts can be assessed.

The social baseline should include:

- a demographic profile of potentially affected communities
- an analysis of community characteristics such as community culture and values, community history, community well-being, land/property ownership and utilisation of natural resources
- details of the capacity of those potentially affected to participate in the community and stakeholder engagement
- an overview of land use and key industries in the region, as well as relevant local and state government plans
- the capacity and accessibility of infrastructure, facilities and services, including education, health and emergency services
- an analysis of the existing housing and accommodation market, including availability, capacity and affordability
- a profile of the local and regional labour market, including an assessment of the likely availability of personnel with skills relevant to the project
- details of other resource and infrastructure projects in the area, both planned and currently operating, based on publicly accessible information.

The scope, context, scale and level of detail in the social baseline is to reflect the nature of the project and the scope of the potential social impacts. Social baseline data must be as reliable as reasonably possible and include both desktop and field studies. Desktop data must be up to date and obtained from reputable sources (for example, census data, local government planning reports, and peer-reviewed research publications).

Prior to undertaking any field studies, the proponent will evaluate the quality and completeness of the data obtained through desktop research and identify any gaps to determine the requirements for additional data collection. Any required field data collection and analysis must be based on statistically sound methodologies.

Where relevant, data for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples must be incorporated into the social baseline.

2.3.3 Community and stakeholder engagement

Community and stakeholder engagement for a project includes the following elements:

- **Project:** the proponent's project level stakeholder engagement including overall project communications, negotiations, public relations and complaints management.
- **EIS:** the statutory stakeholder notification and consultation required for the EIS process.
- **SIA:** community and stakeholder engagement for the purposes of informing the development of the SIA report.

- **Post-EIS:** community and stakeholder engagement to inform the ongoing monitoring, review and update of management measures.

The proponent should integrate the above elements of the engagement program to reduce the risk of engagement fatigue for potentially affected communities.

In the context of the SIA, community and stakeholder engagement is undertaken to:

- understand who is likely to be impacted and how
- understand the values and characteristics of potentially affected communities
- identify and assess potential social impacts
- develop management measures to mitigate adverse impacts and enhance benefits
- support monitoring and reporting (including outcomes and performance indicators).

A consultative and inclusive engagement program is to commence at an early stage in the SIA process, and is to consider the nature of the project and the needs of the different stakeholder groups. Stakeholders should include local residents and landholders, state agencies and local government, non-governmental organisations, Traditional Owners, unions, industry groups and businesses, community groups, and traditionally underrepresented stakeholders such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, women, youth, and vulnerable groups. Further detail on the role of various stakeholders in the SIA process is provided in Appendix 1.

Stakeholders are to be provided with timely and relevant information about the project which presents an accurate indication of potential impacts and benefits. Stakeholder input is to inform the development of the SIA, including the baseline analysis, impact assessment, and development of management measures.

2.3.4 Impact assessment

The purpose of the impact assessment is to identify and assess the potential social impacts associated with a project. This includes the associated infrastructure for the project such as roads, pipelines and worker accommodation villages. At this stage of the SIA process the assessment will identify potentially affected communities that are likely to be impacted (referred to as "potentially impacted communities").

Social impacts are the issues that affect people and the potentially impacted communities in which they live as a result of a project. Types of social impacts include:

- changes to community values and/or the way the community functions
- impacts on how people live, work, play and interact with one another on a day-to-day basis
- impacts on culture, history, and ability to access cultural resources

- impacts on communities' physical safety, exposure to hazards or risks, and access to and control over resources
- impacts on communities' quality of life including liveability and aesthetics, as well as the condition of their environment (for example, air quality, noise levels, and access to water)
- impacts on communities' access to, and quality of, infrastructure, services and facilities
- impacts on communities' physical and mental health and well-being, as well as their social, cultural and economic well-being
- changes to livelihoods, for example, whether peoples' jobs, properties or businesses are affected, or whether they experience advantage/disadvantage.

The impact assessment in the SIA report is to include sufficient detail and analysis to provide a clear understanding of the potential impacts of the project. The assessment must consider the level of impact at differing geographic scales within the SIA study area, and be informed by consultation with stakeholders. The impact assessment must also consider the social consequences of technical matters assessed in other parts of the EIS (for example, traffic management, economics, and noise). Potential impacts which have been identified through the SIA process, and which do not fall within the scope of the key matters in Section 3, must be addressed in the SIA.

The impact assessment must also consider impact significance. An impact significance assessment is an analysis of the extent to which potentially impacted communities and stakeholders, may be affected, whether positively or negatively. Factors such as the probability, scale, duration and intensity of the impact, as well as the characteristics of the community or stakeholders which may be affected, should be considered. Where a potential impact is found to be significant, a residual significance assessment (extent of impact after management measures have been applied) is also required.

Consideration must also be given to potential cumulative impacts that could result from the combined effect of similar actions by multiple projects. In many instances, mitigation of these cumulative impacts may not be within the proponent's direct control, but an assessment nonetheless provides important context regarding the likely consequences that would be experienced by potentially impacted communities.

The Coordinator-General may also establish SIA cross-agency reference groups (CARGs) on a needs basis for relevant regions when required to provide a collaborative approach to SIA and the assessment of cumulative impacts. Membership of the CARGs will include relevant state government agencies and local governments. A project proponent may be invited to a CARG meeting to discuss project details and proposed impact mitigation and benefit enhancement measures. Other stakeholders may also be invited to attend a CARG meeting as required.

2.3.5 Impact mitigation and benefit enhancement

Once potentially significant social impacts have been identified, the proponent, in consultation with potentially impacted communities and other stakeholders, must develop and document social impact mitigation and benefit enhancement measures (collectively referred to as "management measures") within the SIA report.

The SIA must provide management measures for all potentially significant negative impacts, and must demonstrate that the hierarchy of avoid and mitigate has been followed. Options to mitigate social impacts must only be proposed where all reasonable measures relating to project design, location, consultation and implementation have been explored to avoid negative social impacts.

The SIA must include the following for each proposed management measure:

- the potential impact
- a description of the management measure, and an assessment of its adequacy
- defined outcomes and performance indicators
- residual impacts and how these will be addressed
- monitoring and reporting framework.

Management measures should be outcomes focused, reasonable, relevant, transparent and monitorable. The management measures that are developed through the SIA process are to be embedded within the proponent's internal social management systems and will inform the development of the social impact management plan (SIMP).

2.3.6 Social impact management plan

The management measures identified through the SIA process must be documented in an SIMP, which will provide a practical basis for their implementation.

The SIMP is to include detail on the proposed management measures, timeframes for implementation, roles and responsibilities, stakeholders, and potential partnerships. The SIMP must also incorporate processes to ensure that throughout the project lifecycle:

- the effectiveness of management measures is monitored
- ineffective management measures are amended.

A SIMP is to be provided in the SIA report, and submitted as part of the EIS.

2.3.7 Monitoring, review and update

The potential social impacts identified in the project's SIA report reflect the existing social conditions and trends within the SIA study area at the time of the assessment. Changes to social conditions and trends can occur over time. The proponent may be required to update

the SIA report, which would inform an updated SIMP, if more than two years have elapsed between the Coordinator-General's evaluation of the SIA report and the commencement of construction or if the social conditions within the SIA study area change significantly from those evaluated in the SIA report.

To ensure that the project's social management measures remain current and effective, the proponent is required to monitor the implementation of their SIMP throughout the project lifecycle. Stakeholder feedback and field data collection will play a role in this process.

The purpose of monitoring is to:

- track the progress and assess the appropriateness and effectiveness of the management measures
- assess the actual project impacts against the potential impacts and social indicators identified in the SIA
- capture information with which to advise potentially impacted communities and government on progress and achievements
- facilitate engagement, consultation and collaboration with stakeholders.

The key components of a monitoring program are:

- a list of identified impacts, issues and benefits
- targets and outcomes sought
- description of how management measures will be monitored and reported
- the party responsible for monitoring
- timing and frequency of monitoring
- key performance indicators
- mechanisms to update management measures, if required.

The Coordinator-General may condition a project to specify how often the project's SIA report and SIMP should be updated. There should be a continuous improvement approach throughout the project lifecycle involving the review and adaption, where required, of potential impacts, management measures, and outcomes.

2.4   Compliance and reporting

The Coordinator-General will set conditions to manage social impacts. The Coordinator-General may also require the proponent to report on matters such as:

- compliance with the Coordinator-General's conditions for the project
- implementation of the SIMP and proponent commitments
- community and stakeholder engagement, including complaints management
- monitoring outcomes.

The frequency of reporting to the Coordinator-General will depend on the individual circumstances of each project, and will be specified in the Coordinator-General's conditions for the project.

Section 11 of the SSRC Act and Part 7A of the SDPWO Act authorises the Coordinator-General to enforce compliance with project conditions. Compliance actions may include:

- a review by the Coordinator-General of SIAs and management plans
- direction to the proponent on corrective actions that may be required
- an audit by the Coordinator-General to verify compliance
- a third-party audit.

3 Key matters for SIA

This section details the requirements for each of the key matters the SIA for a project must provide for:

- community and stakeholder engagement
- workforce management
- housing and accommodation
- local business and industry procurement
- health and community well-being.

The scope, objectives and detail to be provided in the SIA for each key matter is explained below.

3.1 Community and stakeholder engagement

3.1.1 Scope

This matter applies to the SIA requirements for engagement with potentially impacted communities and stakeholders. The SIA report must include an explanation of the community and stakeholder engagement undertaken during the SIA process, as well as proposed measures for ongoing engagement during construction and operation.

3.1.2 Objective

To ensure transparent and inclusive community and stakeholder engagement informs the SIA process, and the ongoing management and monitoring of potential social impacts during the construction and operational phases of the project.

3.1.3 Detail required in the SIA

The SIA report must include the following details for community and stakeholder engagement:

- a profile of potentially impacted communities, and analysis of key stakeholders
- a description of engagement undertaken in support of the SIA, including details such as:
    - stakeholders consulted, and how and when they were consulted
    - principles and processes adopted
    - an overview of the consultation program and key events
    - stakeholder feedback and issues raised (including the means by which these have been or will be addressed)
    - records of engagement activities and details of any negotiations or agreements with potentially impacted stakeholders
- a description of how stakeholder input has informed the baseline analysis, social impact assessment, and the development of management measures
- a community and stakeholder engagement plan for the construction and operational phases of the project, which includes:
    - objectives and key performance indicators
    - measures for ongoing engagement including action plans, and proposed communication tools and activities
    - processes for incorporating stakeholder feedback into the further development of project-specific management measures
    - details of any stakeholder agreements to be negotiated, including agreements with state and local government agencies
    - roles and responsibilities for engagement
    - a complaints management process
    - monitoring and reporting requirements.

3.2 Workforce management

3.2.1 Scope

This matter applies to the SIA requirements for the assessment and management of potential social impacts associated with the project workforce during the construction and operational phases. The project workforce includes employees of the project, as well as personnel engaged by principal contractors and subcontractors.

3.2.2 Objective

To ensure project workforce management practices:

- prioritise recruitment of workers from local and regional communities and workers who will live in regional communities
- reduce the proportion of workers engaged in FIFO arrangements, where operationally feasible
- support the health and well-being of the project workforce.

3.2.3 Detail required in the SIA

The SIA report must include the following details regarding workforce management:

- a summary workforce profile for the construction and operational phases of the project, including the estimated proportion of FIFO workers
- an analysis of the local and regional labour market, and an assessment of potential social impacts, including:
  - o employment opportunities
  - o training and development opportunities
  - o possible labour shortages within local communities due to project demand
- an assessment of opportunities for local workers to commute to and from work where safe and practical
- a workforce management plan for the construction and operational phases of the project which includes:
  - o objectives and key performance indicators
  - o roster arrangements for local, regional and FIFO workers
  - o measures to enhance potential employment opportunities for local and regional communities, and to mitigate potential negative social impacts
  - o provisions to achieve a recruitment hierarchy that prioritises recruitment of workers from the local and regional communities, then recruitment of workers who will live in regional communities
  - o proposed training and development initiatives to improve local and regional skills and capacity including, where relevant, initiatives for traditionally underrepresented groups
  - o programs to support the physical and mental health and well-being of workers.

3.3   Housing and accommodation

3.3.1 Scope

This matter applies to the SIA requirements for the assessment and management of potential social impacts from project housing and accommodation arrangements for the project workforce during the construction and operational phases.

3.3.2 Objective

To ensure project housing and accommodation arrangements:

- do not contribute to significant affordability and availability impacts on housing and accommodation in local and regional communities
- are well planned, enhance worker well-being, and do not place an excessive burden on existing infrastructure, facilities and services used by local and regional communities.

3.3.3 Detail required in the SIA

The SIA report must include the following details regarding housing and accommodation:

- proposed workforce accommodation arrangements during the construction and operational phases of the project
- details of any proposed project workforce accommodation facilities or purpose built housing developments, including:
  - o statement of need
  - o planned size, capacity, layout, location and service life
  - o strategies for the provision of adequate infrastructure, utilities, recreational facilities, health and social services for workers
  - o status of any relevant approvals and agreements with local and state government agencies regarding provision of infrastructure, utilities and services
- projected population changes attributable to the project, including an estimate of workers and their households who may live in, or move to, local or regional communities
- an analysis of the local and regional housing and accommodation market, and an assessment of potential social impacts, including:
  - o potential impacts to the availability and affordability of housing (both open market and rental) and other forms of accommodation
  - o consequences of project induced housing market changes for local residents
  - o potential opportunities for local accommodation providers
- a workforce housing and accommodation plan for the construction and operational phases of the project which includes:

- objectives and key performance indicators
- measures to enhance potential benefits for project workers and the community, and to mitigate potential negative social impacts
- policies regarding housing and accommodation support to be provided to project workers and their families who wish to live locally.

3.4 Local business and industry procurement

3.4.1 Scope

This matter applies to the SIA requirements for the assessment and management of potential social impacts associated with the procurement of goods and services for the project during the construction and operational phases.

3.4.2 Objective

To ensure project procurement practices:

- maximise opportunities for competitive and capable local businesses to provide goods and services to the project
- reduce barriers to entry for local businesses where feasible.

3.4.3 Detail required in the SIA

The SIA report must include the following details regarding local business and industry procurement:

- a profile of the skills, services and materials required by the project
- an analysis of local and regional supplier capability and capacity relevant to the project, and an assessment of potential social impacts, including:
  - opportunities to enhance the capacity of local businesses and supply chains
  - risks associated with monopolisation of goods and services by the project
- a local business and industry procurement plan for the construction and operational phases of the project which includes:
  - objectives and key performance indicators
  - procurement strategies and initiatives for local and nearby regional suppliers, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses, and actions to facilitate participation
  - proposed policies and programs to build local and regional capacity and capability, and reduce barriers to entry
  - processes that embed the local business and industry procurement strategies into the contracting model for the project
  - measures to mitigate any potential negative social impacts on local industries

o   details of any established industry guidelines or codes of practice which the proponent has committed to complying with.

3.5   Health and community well-being

3.5.1 Scope

This matter applies to the SIA requirements for the assessment and management of potential social impacts from the project to the health and well-being of potentially impacted communities during the construction and operational phases. This matter includes physical and mental health, as well as social, cultural and economic well-being.

3.5.2 Objective

To ensure the project:

- avoids or mitigates negative social impacts and capitalises on opportunities to improve the health and well-being of local and regional communities
- does not adversely impact on the level of service to local and regional communities from existing social services, facilities and infrastructure.

3.5.3 Detail required in the SIA

The SIA report must include the following details regarding health and community well-being:

- an analysis of the availability, accessibility and capacity of, and an assessment of potential project impacts on, existing social services, facilities and infrastructure such as:
    o   healthcare and emergency response
    o   transport and utilities
    o   education and childcare
    o   community support services
- an analysis of the health and well-being of potentially impacted communities, and an assessment of potential social impacts, including:
    o   community health, safety and security (including exposure to hazards and risks)
    o   environmental factors such as air quality, noise and water
    o   livelihoods, economic well-being and access to resources
    o   community lifestyles and cultural practices, amenity value, social character, and community cohesion
- a health and community well-being plan for the construction and operational phases of the project which includes:
    o   objectives and key performance indicators

- measures to ensure that the level of service provided to the local community by existing social services, facilities and infrastructure is not reduced
- measures to mitigate potential health and well-being impacts on local communities, and enhance potential benefits
- the level of on-site health services to be provided for workers
- details of any workforce code of conduct to govern worker interactions with local communities
- emergency response arrangements and management measures agreed with emergency service providers, for incidents both on and off the project site
- details of any community development programs to be implemented, and the outcomes to be achieved.

Appendix 1: Roles of key stakeholders

Coordinator-General

The Coordinator-General is responsible for:

- convening cross-agency reference groups (CARGs), where necessary
- considering stakeholder submissions, including those of local governments, on the terms of reference and the SIA report
- evaluating and deciding the adequacy of the SIA report
- conditioning to manage a social impact, if necessary
- monitoring and enforcing ongoing compliance.

Project proponents

Project proponents are required to follow the SIA process, prepare an SIA report, and prepare and implement an SIMP for their project in accordance with this Guideline. Project proponents are also required to engage with potentially impacted communities and stakeholders in a transparent and inclusive manner throughout the project lifecycle.

State agencies

State agencies are required to provide information and data for the social baseline, review an SIA report, participate in the CARG process and assess potential project impacts on state government services.

Local governments

In preparing the SIA, project proponents must consult with the local government(s) for the area in which the project is located. Engagement with local government(s) should commence early in the SIA process. The relevant local government(s) will play an important role in reviewing project proposals and providing information for the social baseline. Relevant local government(s) may also:

- participate in the CARG process
- engage, collaborate and negotiate with proponents on the management of project impacts on local government services
- review and provide feedback on the SIA report and assess potential project impacts on local government services
- represent or coordinate local community groups, as appropriate.

Non-government organisations

Non-government organisations may be requested to provide information for the social baseline. These organisations may also:

- review an SIA report and assess potential impacts on non-government services
- engage with proponents on the management of potential impacts to non-government services.

Unions

Relevant unions will be requested to provide information to support the social baseline. They may also be requested to:

- review an SIA report and assess potential social impacts
- engage with proponents on the management of potential social impacts
- represent employee groups.

Industry groups and businesses

Industry groups and businesses may be consulted regarding the provision of information to support the social baseline. They may also:

- review an SIA report and assess potential social impacts
- engage with proponents on the management of potential social impacts.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have the opportunity to make submissions on a project's terms of reference and review an SIA report during the EIS public consultation period. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples may also be engaged with by the proponent through stakeholder engagement processes and provide information for the social baseline and comment on social impact management strategies regarding potential cultural, social and economic impacts.

The community

All members of potentially impacted communities and stakeholders have the opportunity to make submissions on a project's terms of reference and review an SIA report during the EIS public consultation period. These groups may also be engaged by the proponent through the stakeholder engagement processes outlined in this Guideline.

Appendix 2: References

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