



DEPARTMENT of
ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
& DEVELOPMENT PLANNING
Provincial Government of the Western Cape

EIA GUIDELINE AND INFORMATION DOCUMENT SERIES

GUIDELINE ON ALTERNATIVES

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GUIDELINE ON ALTERNATIVES

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- *Guideline on Transitional Arrangements (August 2010)*
- *Guideline on Alternatives (August 2010)*
- *Guideline on Public Participation (August 2010)*
- *Guideline on Exemption Applications (August 2010)*
- *Guideline on Appeals (August 2010)*
- *Guideline on Need and Desirability (August 2010)*
- *Information Document on the Interpretation of the Listed Activities (August 2010)*
- *Information Document on Generic Terms of Reference for EAPs and Project Schedules (August 2010)*

Please note: The above versions are all in draft form. The final versions of the guidelines and information document will be formally published later this year.

The EIA Guideline & Information Document Series, the relevant legislation and DEA&DP's applications forms are available on the DEA&DP website: <http://www.capegateway.gov.za/eadp>

Please note: This guideline must be read together with the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998) ("NEMA"), the EIA Regulations, the relevant Specific Environmental Management Act(s) ("SEMA") (e.g. Environment Conservation Act, 1989 – Act No. 73 of 1989, National Environmental Management: Air Quality Act, 2004 – Act No. 39 of 2004, the National Environmental Management: Integrated Coastal Management Act, 2008 – Act No. 24 of 2008, and the National Environmental Management: Waste Act, 2008 – Act No. 59 of 2008, and the SEMA's Regulations), and is not intended to be a substitute for the provisions of the NEMA, the EIA Regulations or the SEMAs, in any way. Adherence to the requirements in terms of the NEMA, the EIA Regulations, and the SEMAs does, however, not absolve the applicant from also adhering to the requirements of any other legislation applicable to the undertaking of the activity.

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ACRONYMS

DEA&DP	Western Cape Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning
EAP	Environmental Assessment Practitioner
ECA	Environment Conservation Act, 1989 (Act No. 73 of 1989)
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
I&AP	Interested and Affected Party
NEMA	National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998)
NEMAA	National Environmental Management Amendment Act, 2008 (Act No. 62 of 2008)
NEM: AQA	National Environmental Management: Air Quality Act, 2004 (Act No. 39 of 2004)
NEM: WA	National Environmental Management: Waste Act, 2008 (Act No. 59 of 2008)
SEMA	Specific Environmental Management Act

1. INTRODUCTION

On 21 April 2006 the Minister responsible for Environmental Affairs promulgated Regulations in terms of Chapter 5 of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998) ("NEMA")¹. When these Regulations came into effect on 3 July 2006² they replaced the Environmental Impact Assessment ("EIA") Regulations that were promulgated in terms of the Environment Conservation Act, 1989 (Act No. 73 of 1989) ("ECA") in 1997³, and introduced new provisions for EIAs. Subsequently, the National Environmental Management Amendment Act, 2008 (Act 62 of 2008) ("NEMAA"), was promulgated on 9 January 2009⁴ and came into effect on 1 May 2009⁵. The NEMAA made a number of significant amendments to the general provisions applicable to EIAs. On 18 June 2010 the Minister responsible for Environmental Affairs promulgated amended EIA Regulations in terms of Chapter 5 of NEMA⁶. From the date of effect of these amended EIA Regulations, 2 August 2010, these amended EIA Regulations replaced the previous EIA Regulations that were promulgated on 21 April 2006.

It must also be noted that the definition of "Environmental Authorisation" in terms of NEMA has been amended and now reads "*when used in Chapter 5 means the authorisation by a competent authority of a listed activity or specified activity in terms of this Act, and includes a similar authorisation contemplated in a specific environmental management Act*". In other words, *inter alia*, the following are all considered to be an "Environmental Authorisation": an Environmental Authorisation issued for an activity listed in Listing Notice 1, 2 or 3⁷; an atmospheric emissions licence in terms of the National Environmental Management: Air Quality Act, 2004 (Act No. 39 of 2004) ("NEM: AQA"); and a waste management licence in terms of the National Environmental Management: Waste Act, 2008 (Act No. 59 of 2008) ("NEM: WA"). As such the general provisions of NEMA that applies to an application for and consideration of an application for environmental authorisation applies to all of these applications.

It must further be noted that as part of an application for a waste management licence or an atmospheric emissions licence the application must also be subjected to the EIA process as stipulated in the EIA Regulations promulgated in terms of NEMA. While a number of different authorisations might therefore be required (an Environmental Authorisation, a waste management licence and/or an atmospheric emissions licence), one integrated EIA process must be followed in accordance with the requirements as stipulated in the EIA Regulations, with the specific requirements of the relevant specific environmental management Act ("SEMA(s)") to also be adhered to over and above the requirements of the EIA Regulations⁸.

¹ Government Notice No. R. 385, R. 386, and R. 387 in Government Gazette No. 28753 of 21 April 2006 refer.

² Government Notice No. R. 612, R. 613, R. 614, R. 615, and R. 616 in Government Gazette No. 28938 of 23 June 2006 refer.

³ Government Notice No. R. 1182 and R. 1183 in Government Gazette No. 18261 of 5 September 1997 refer.

⁴ Government Notice No. 22 in Government Gazette No. 31789 on 9 January 2009 refers.

⁵ Government No. 27 in Government Gazette No. 32156 of 21 April 2009 refers.

⁶ Government Notice No. R. 543, R. 544, R. 545, R. 546 and R. 547 in Government Gazette No. 33306 of 18 June 2010 refer.

⁷ Government Notice No. R. 544, R. 545, and R. 546 in Government Gazette No. 33306 of 18 June 2010 refer.

⁸ Section 24(4)(b)(vii) of NEMA refers.

In light of the above, this guideline, which forms part of the *Environmental Impact Assessment Guideline and Information Document Series* (available on the Department's website at <http://www.capecgateway.gov.za/eadp>) provides information and guidance for applicants, authorities and interested and affected parties ("I&APs") on requirements for the consideration of alternatives in terms of NEMA, the EIA Regulations, the NEM: AQA, and NEM: WA.

This guideline must be read together with the NEMA, the EIA Regulations, the relevant SEMA(s) and its Regulations, and is not intended to be a substitute for the provisions of the NEMA, the SEMAs or the Regulations, in any way. Adherence to the requirements in terms of the NEMA and the EIA Regulations, the SEMAs and its Regulations does, however, not absolve the applicant from also adhering to the requirements of any other legislation applicable to the undertaking of the activity.

2. DEFINITIONS

"Alternatives", in relation to a proposed activity, means different means of meeting the general purposes and requirements of the activity, which may include alternatives to –

- (a) the property on which, or location where, it is proposed to undertake the activity;
- (b) the type of activity to be undertaken;
- (c) the design or layout of the activity;
- (d) the technology to be used in the activity;
- (e) the operational aspects of the activity; and
- (f) the option of not implementing the activity.

"Applicant", means a person who has submitted or who intends to submit an application.

"Competent Authority", means the authority who in terms of the provisions of the NEMA and the EIA Regulations is identified as the authority who must consider and decide on an application in respect of a specific listed activity.

Note: The "Competent Authority"⁹ in terms of an application for environmental authorisation for an activity listed in Listing Notice 1, 2 or 3, is not necessarily the same authority as the "Licensing Authority" in terms of the NEM:WA¹⁰ or NEM: AQA¹¹.

"Days" means calendar days.

Note: When a period of days must in terms of these Regulations be reckoned from or after a particular day, that period must be reckoned as from the start of the day following that particular day to the end of the last day of the period, but if the last day of the period falls on a Saturday, Sunday

⁹ Section 24C of NEMA refers.

¹⁰ Section 43 of the NEM: WA refers.

¹¹ Section 36 of the NEM: AQA refers.

or public holiday, that period must be extended to the end of the next day which is not a Saturday, Sunday or public holiday. The period of 15 December to 2 January must be excluded in the reckoning of days. Where a timeframe is affected by the 15 December to 2 January period, the timeframe must be extended by the number of days falling within the 15 December to 2 January period. Where a timeframe is affected by one or more public holidays, the timeframe must be extended by the number of public holiday days falling within that timeframe.

“Department”, means the Western Cape Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning;

“Environmental Assessment Practitioner” (EAP), means the individual responsible for planning, management and coordination of environmental impact assessments, strategic environmental assessments, environmental management programmes or any other appropriate environmental instrument introduced through the Regulations.

Note: If exemption from the appointment of an EAP has been applied for, the applicant must perform the tasks required of an EAP, as indicated in this guideline.

“Environmental Authorisation”, means the authorisation by a competent authority of a listed activity or specified activity in terms of this Act, and includes a similar authorisation contemplated in a specific environmental management Act.

“Interested and Affected Party” (I&AP), for the purposes of Chapter 5 of the NEMA and in relation to the assessment of the environmental impact of a listed activity or related activity, means an interested and affected party contemplated in Section 24(4)(a)(v), and which includes-

- (a) any person, group of persons or organisation interested in or affected by such operation or activity; and
- (b) any organ of state that may have jurisdiction over any aspect of the operation or activity.

“NEMA EIA Regulations”, mean the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations promulgated in terms of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998) (“NEMA”)¹².

“No-Go Option” means the option of not implementing the activity;

“Organ of State”, means -

- (a) any department of State or administration in the national, provincial or local sphere of government; or
- (b) any other functionary or institution –

- i. exercising a power or performing a function in terms of the Constitution or a Provincial Constitution; or
- ii. exercising a public power or performing a public function in terms of any Legislation

but does not include a court or a judicial officer.

Note: Examples of organs of state include: Municipalities (both the District and Local Municipality), Heritage Western Cape, CapeNature, the Department of Water Affairs, etc.

¹² Government Notice No. R. 543, R. 544, R. 545, R. 546 and R. 547 in Government Gazette No. 33306 of 18 June 2010 refer.

“**Previous regulations**” means the Environmental Impact Assessment regulations published in terms of:

- sections 26 and 28 of the ECA, by Government Notice No. R. 1183 of 5 September 1997; or
- NEMA, by Government Notice No. R. 385 in the Government Gazette of 21 April 2006.

“**Public Participation Process**”, means a process by which potential interested and affected parties are given an opportunity to comment on, or raise issues relevant to, an application.

“**State department**”, means any department or administration in the national or provincial sphere of government exercising functions that involve the management of the environment or that administer a law relating to a matter affecting the environment.

Note: Examples of State departments include: the Department of Water Affairs, Department of Agriculture, etc. Whilst all State departments are organs of State, not all organs of State are State departments (e.g. Municipalities are organs of State, but not State departments).

“**Registered interested and affected parties**” means

- a) all persons who, as a consequence of the public participation process conducted in respect of an application, have submitted written comments or attended meetings with the applicant or EAP;
- b) all persons who, after completion of the public participation process, have requested the applicant or the EAP managing the application, in writing, for their names to be placed on the register; and
- c) all organs of state which have jurisdiction in respect of the activity to which the application relates.

Note: To be registered as an interested and affected party the persons referred to in (a) and (b) above must provide their names, contact details and addresses to the EAP managing the application process. Registered I&APs must ensure that they notify the EAP if their contact details and/or address changes during the application process. A Registered I&AP is entitled to comment, in writing, on all written submissions made to the Department by the applicant or the EAP, provided that comments are submitted within the specified timeframes and the I&AP discloses any direct business, financial, personal or other interest which that party may have in the approval or refusal of the application.

3. IDENTIFICATION, INVESTIGATION AND ASSESSMENT OF ALTERNATIVES

3.1 Alternatives: the key consideration of EIA

The NEMA prescribes that the procedures for the investigation, assessment and communication of the potential consequences or impacts of activities on the environment must, *inter alia*, with respect to every application for environmental authorisation –

- ensure that the general objectives of integrated environmental management laid down in NEMA and the National Environmental Management Principles set out in NEMA are taken into account¹³; and
- include an investigation of the potential consequences or impacts of the alternatives to the activity on the environment and assessment of the significance of those potential consequences or impacts, including the option of not implementing the activity¹⁴.

The general objective of integrated environmental management is, *inter alia*, to “*identify, predict and evaluate the actual and potential impact on the environment, socio-economic conditions and cultural heritage, the risks and consequences and alternatives and options for mitigation of activities, with a view to minimising negative impacts, maximising benefits, and promoting compliance with the principles of environmental management*”¹⁵ set out in NEMA.

The National Environmental Management Principles, *inter alia*, state that “*Environmental management must be integrated, acknowledging that all elements of the environment are linked and interrelated, and it must take into account the effects of decisions on all aspects of the environment and all people in the environment by pursuing the selection of the best practicable environmental option*”¹⁶. The NEMA defines the “best practicable environmental option” as “*the option that provides the most benefit or causes the least damage to the environment as a whole, at a cost acceptable to society, in the long term as well as in the short term*”.

In terms of the NEMA, if the Department considers an application for an environmental authorisation, the Department must take into account all relevant factors, which may include, *inter alia*, “*...any feasible and reasonable alternatives to the activity which are the subject of the application and any feasible and reasonable modifications or changes to the activity that may minimise harm to the environment*”¹⁷.

The NEM: WA also specifies that when considering an application for a waste management licence, the licensing authority must take into account all relevant matters, including the “*...need for, and desirability of, the waste management activity and alternatives...*”¹⁸.

¹³ Section 24(4)(a)(ii) of NEMA refers.

¹⁴ Sections 24(4)(b)(i) and 24(4A) of NEMA refer.

¹⁵ Section 23(2)(b) of NEMA refers.

¹⁶ Section 2(4)(b) of NEMA refers.

¹⁷ Section 24(1)(b)(iv) of NEMAA refers.

¹⁸ Section 48 of NEM: WA refers.

The NEM: Air Quality Act also states that when considering an application for an atmospheric emission licence, the licensing authority must also take into account “*the best practicable environmental options available that could be taken*”¹⁹.

Ultimately an EIA is a decision-making process with the specific aim selecting the option that will provide the most benefit and cause the least damage in the short and long term. The *quality* of an EIA, as with all decisions, therefore “*depends on the quality of alternatives from which to choose*”²⁰.

In light of the above, the very consideration of a development in terms of EIA is about the consideration of alternatives related to the development – the consideration of alternatives being the key consideration of EIA. Although the NEMA refers to “*must include*” “*where applicable*” when referring to the requirement to consider alternatives²¹, the NEMA states that where an EIA has been identified as the environmental instrument to be utilised in informing an application for environmental authorisation, the consideration of alternatives, is applicable²². All EIAs must therefore consider alternatives.

3.2 Alternatives and Exemptions

While the NEMA EIA Regulations make provision for an application for exemption from any provision of the Regulations²³, the requirement to consider alternatives is prescribed by the provisions of the NEMA itself²⁴. Section 24M of the NEMA does, however, allow for exemptions from any provision of the NEMA, except from a provisions of section 24(4)(a). While it is therefore possible to apply to be exempted from the requirement to consider alternatives, the fact that the consideration of alternatives is the key consideration of EIA, makes it unlikely that the authority will grant such exemption. It is, however, important to understand exactly what the legislation requires in terms of having to consider alternatives, and specifically the difference between having to investigate and having to comparatively assess alternatives. The next section provides more detail in this regard.

¹⁹ Section 39 of NEM: AQA refers.

²⁰ Steinemann, A. (2001) Improving Alternatives for Environmental Impact Assessment, in: **Environmental Impact Assessment Review**, vol. 21, no. 1, New York: Elsevier Science Inc, pp.3-21.

²¹ Section 24(4)(b) of NEMA refers.

²² Section 24(4A) of NEMA refers.

²³ Regulation 50 of GN No. R. 543 of 18 June 2010 refers.

²⁴ Sections 24(4)(b) and 24(4A) of NEMA refer.

3.3 Identifying and Investigating Alternatives, and Comparatively Assessing Alternatives

In terms of the NEMA EIA Regulations all Basic Assessment Reports²⁵, Scoping Reports²⁶ and Environmental Impact Reports²⁷ must contain a description of any feasible and reasonable alternatives that have been identified, including a description and comparative assessment of the advantages and disadvantages that the proposed activity and alternatives will have on the environment and on the community that may be affected by the activity. Every EIA process must therefore identify and investigate alternatives, with feasible and reasonable alternatives to be comparatively assessed. If, however, after having identified and investigated alternatives, no feasible and reasonable alternatives were found, no comparative assessment of alternatives, beyond the comparative assessment of the preferred alternative and the option of not proceeding, is required during the assessment phase. What would, however, be required in this instance is that proof of the investigation undertaken and motivation indicating that no reasonable or feasible alternatives other than the preferred option and the no-go option exist must be provided to the Department²⁸.

Note: If an applicant intends applying for exemption from the requirement to investigate alternatives, the reasoned motivation why no alternatives exist and why exemption should be granted from having to investigate alternatives, would consist of information on the consideration given to alternatives (i.e. the investigation) – meaning that the same information required by the provisions from which exemption is sought, will have to be provided as part of the exemption application – nullifying the reason for the exemption application. Furthermore, the exemption application will have to be decided prior to proceeding with the process and, if appealed, may suspend the process until the appeal is decided.

It must, however, be remembered that based on the information generated during the assessment phase, further alternatives might have to be considered. Alternatives must be identified as early as possible in the process. It must, however, be remembered that alternatives are to be considered throughout the process. (See 4.1 below dealing with alternatives and modifications and changes to activities.) The identification of alternatives should be broad, objectively done and well documented. Key criteria when identifying and investigating alternatives are that they should be “feasible” and “reasonable”. The alternatives identified must serve to achieve the *triple bottom-line* of sustainability i.e. they must meet the social, economic and ecological needs of the public²⁹. The alternatives must also aim to address the key significant impacts of the proposed project by maximising benefits and avoiding or minimising the negative impacts. The primary objective must be to avoid all negative impacts, rather

²⁵ Regulation 22(2)(h) of No. R. 543 of 18 June 2010 refers.

²⁶ Regulation 28(1)(c) and (j) of No. R. 543 of 18 June 2010 refers.

²⁷ Regulation 31(2)(g) and (i) of No. R. 543 of 18 June 2010 refers.

²⁸ Regulations 22(4), 28(3) and 31(3) of No. R. 543 of 18 June 2010 refers.

²⁹ DEA&DP Guideline on Need & Desirability (August 2010)

than to minimise them. **Detailed information on the consideration of alternatives must, however, be provided in the relevant reports. In this regard (a) the methodology, (b) criteria used to identify, investigate and assess alternatives (these must be consistently applied to all alternatives), and (c) a reasoned explanation why an alternative was or was not found to be reasonable and feasible must be provided.** While all identified alternatives must be comparatively considered, only those found to be “feasible” and “reasonable” must be comparatively assessed. Interested and affected parties must specifically be afforded an opportunity to provide inputs into the consideration of alternatives.

Alternatives are defined in the NEMA EIA Regulations as “*different means of meeting the general purpose and requirements of the activity*”. The “*feasibility*” and “*reasonability*” of and the need for alternatives must be determined by considering, *inter alia*, **(a) the general purpose and requirements of the activity, (b) need and desirability, (c) opportunity costs, (d) the need to avoid negative impact altogether, (e) the need to minimise unavoidable negative impacts, (f) the need to maximise benefits, and (g) the need for equitable distributional consequences.**

Note: Also refer to the Department’s *Guideline on Need and Desirability* (August 2010).

On deciding on an application, the competent authority may approve an alternative, and to the extent that authorisation is granted for an alternative, such alternative will be regarded as having been applied for³⁰.

3.4 Alternatives and Public Participation

Interested and affected parties must be notified of a proposed activity and the alternatives being considered and must be afforded an opportunity to provide inputs into the consideration of alternatives. Refer to the Department’s *Guideline on Public Participation*, which forms part of the Department’s *Environmental Impact Assessment Guideline and Information Document Series*, for further information in this regard.

4. TYPES OF ALTERNATIVES

4.1 Alternatives and Modifications and Changes to Activities

Although alternatives are to be considered as early as possible in the process, the necessity to consider modifications and changes, in order to prevent and/or mitigate environmental impacts identified during the assessment process, may also arise. Whereas discrete alternatives are therefore generally identified during the early stages of a project (pre-feasibility and feasibility) and comparatively assessed during the assessment phases (Basic Assessment and Scoping-EIR processes); incremental modifications and changes to activities might also have to be considered when a development proposal is amended in

³⁰ Regulations 25(2) and 35(2) of No. R. 543 of 18 June 2010 refers.

an incremental manner throughout the EIA process to address impacts and issues, as and when they are identified. Both the identification, investigation, and assessment of alternatives, and the generation and consideration of modifications and changes to activities must be well documented.

4.2 Types of Alternatives

“*Alternatives*” are defined in the Regulations as different means of meeting the general purpose and requirements of the activity, which may include alternatives to: (a) the property on which or location where it is proposed to undertake the activity; (b) the type of activity to be undertaken; (c) the design or layout of the activity; (d) the technology to be used in the activity or process alternatives; (e) the operational aspects of the activity; and (f) the option of not implementing the activity. However, a range of alternatives exist, not all of which are necessarily appropriate for each EIA. Further to the types of alternatives below, alternatives that maximise energy and water-use efficiency and minimise waste production must be sought.

TYPE OF ALTERNATIVE	EXPLANATION/EXAMPLES
Location	Refers to both alternative properties as well as alternative sites on the same property.
Activity	Incineration of waste rather than disposal at a landfill site/ Provision of public transport rather than increasing the capacity of roads.
Design or Layout	Design: E.g. Different architectural and or engineering designs Site Layout: Consideration of different spatial configurations of an activity on a particular site (e.g. Siting of a noisy plant away from residences).
Technological	Consideration of such alternatives is to include the option of achieving the same goal by using a different method or process (e.g. 1000 megawatt of energy could be generated using a coal-fired power station or wind turbines).
Demand	Arises when a demand for a certain product or service can be met by some alternative means (e.g. the demand for electricity could be met by supplying more energy or using energy more efficiently by managing demand).
Input	Input alternatives are applicable to applications that may use different raw materials or energy sources in their process (e.g. Industry may consider using either high sulphur coal or natural gas as a fuel source).
Routing	Consideration of alternative routes generally applies to linear developments such as power line servitudes, transportation and pipeline routes.
Scheduling and Timing	Where a number of measures might play a part in an overall programme, but the order in which they are scheduled will contribute to the overall effectiveness of the end result.
Scale and Magnitude	Activities that can be broken down into smaller units and can be undertaken on different scales (e.g. for a housing development there could be the option 10, 15 or 20 housing units. Each of these alternatives may have different impacts).
“No-Go Option”	This is the option of not implementing the activity.

Note: The No-Go Option - The assessment of alternatives must at all times include the “no-go” option as a baseline against which all other alternatives must be measured. The option of not implementing the activity must always be assessed and to the same level of detail as the other feasible and reasonable alternatives. The “no-go” option is taken to be the existing rights on the property and this includes all the duty of care and other legal responsibilities that apply to the owner of the property. For example, one cannot state that the “no-go” option for a vacant piece of land will result in further degradation or alien plant invasion, as the Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act, 1983 (Act No. 43 of 1983) requires that the landowner keeps their land clear of alien invasive plants, and Section 28 of the NEMA, “Duty of Care”, states that reasonable measures must be taken to prevent pollution or degradation from occurring, continuing or reoccurring. All the applicable permits must be in place for a land use to be an existing right (the no-go/default) e.g. the zoning of Agriculture does not mean land can be cultivated as the no-go option, as other approvals must first be obtained.

5. ROLE OF THE VARIOUS PARTIES IN THE CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVES

If exemption from the appointment of an EAP has been applied for, the applicant must also perform the tasks required of an EAP, as indicated below.

5.1 The role of the EAP according to the Regulations, *inter alia*, is to:

- consider the strategic planning and environmental context within which the development and alternatives are to be considered;
- identify, investigate and assess alternatives;
- afford opportunities for interested and affected parties to provide input into the identification, investigation and assessment of alternatives;
- disclose all information relevant to the consideration of alternatives to the applicant and competent authority;
- document the process of identification, investigation and assessment of alternatives (including providing the methodology and criteria used, and how the level of investigation applied to each alternative was established); and
- provide a comprehensive consideration of the impacts of each of the alternatives assessed.

5.2 The role of the Applicant in terms of the Regulations, *inter alia*, is to:

- consider the strategic planning and environmental context within which the development and alternatives are to be considered;
- consider all feasible and reasonable alternatives (not only the preferred option); and
- provide the EAP with access to all information at the disposal of the applicant regarding the application.

5.3 The role of I&APs in terms of the Regulations, *inter alia*, is to:

- declare their interests;
- assist in the identification, investigation and assessment of alternatives, particularly where local knowledge is required;
- within the specified timeframes, provide comment on the consideration of alternatives.