European Commission

Collection of information and data on the implementation of the revised Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive (2011/92/EU) as amended by 2014/52/EU)

Final report

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Introduction

The objective of this study was to provide information and data to the Commission on the implementation of Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment[1], as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU (thereafter the EIA Directive). More specifically, the study aimed to collect data on the number of EIAs and screening procedures carried out in the 27 EU Member States and their breakdown by project categories, the average costs for public administrations and developers of both procedures, and their average duration. This part of the study largely draws on the Member States' reporting described in section 1.1. The results from this data collection exercise are presented in Section 2 of this report.

In a second step, the study aimed, based on the analysis of 11 case studies of screening procedures and 12 of EIA procedures, to provide data and assess direct and indirect costs of undertaking EIAs and screenings for the developers, costs of both procedures for public administrations, their duration, the environmental and employment benefits arising from the completion of these procedures. The findings from this work are provided in Section 3 of this report.

[1] Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment, OJ L 26, 28.1.2012, p. 1–21.

1. Information and data on the implementation of the EIA Directive in the 27 Member States

This section presents the results from the collection of data on the number of EIAs and screening procedures carried out in the 27 EU Member States and their breakdown by project categories, the average costs for public administrations and developers of both procedures, and their average duration, which builds on the reporting questionnaires sent by Member States' authorities.

1.1. Member States' reporting

The 2012 impact assessment accompanying the Commission proposal for the revision of the Directive had underlined that the absence of a reporting requirement in the EIA Directive was impeding proper data collection to evaluate the implementation of the Directive[2]. To fill this gap, Directive 2014/52/EU, amending the EIA Directive, introduced a reporting requirement for Member States. Article 12(2) of the EIA Directive now requires Member States to provide the Commission every six years from 16 May 2017 with the following data, where such data are available:

- (a) the number of projects referred to in Annexes I and II made subject to an EIA.
- (b) the breakdown of environmental impact assessments according to the project categories set out in Annexes I and II.
- (c) the number of projects referred to in Annex II made subject to a screening decision.
- (d) the average duration of the environmental impact assessment process.
- (e) general estimates on the average direct costs of environmental impact assessments, including the impact from the application of this Directive to SMEs.

The first reporting from Member States for the period 2017-2023 was due in May 2023. To collect this data from Member States in a consistent way, a reporting questionnaire had been developed by the Commission and agreed with the Commission EIA/SEA National Experts Group in 2022. All 27 Member States sent their reporting questionnaires between May and November 2023. Section 2 of this report largely builds on the information provided in these questionnaires.

1.2. Data received from Member States

By 28 November 2023, questionnaires were received from all 27 Member States. From Belgium, responses were received from the Federal State and the three regional authorities (Flanders, Brussels Capital Region and Wallonia). Table 1 shows the data that each responding Member State was able to provide in its reporting questionnaire. The information within the parentheses indicates which data were provided when the Member State could not provide all the requested information. Overall, Table 1 shows that the main data gaps are for

[2] European Commission, Commission Staff Working Paper, Impact assessment accompanying the document Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment, SWD(2012) 355 final, Brussels, 26.10.2012.

the average duration of the EIA process, and the average direct costs of EIAs. Moreover, in some cases, Member States could only provide partial data related to specific years, annex or project category. In addition, the response from Denmark only covers information available from the national authorities. As the respondent did not have data from municipalities, which are also responsible for handling EIA cases in Denmark, only a limited proportion of Danish projects are reflected in the response. This situation is similar for Italy and Spain, as responses were received from 12 out of 21 regions in Italy and 10 out of 17 autonomous communities in Spain, indicating that the overall figures for these two countries underrepresent the true situation. Further information about data quality and accuracy per question is provided under section 2.3, which further discusses the content and comparability of the data received.

Table 1: Data availability per Member State

MS	No. of projects subject to an EIA	No. of projects per category	No. of projects subject to a determination	Average duration of the EIA process	Average direct costs of EIA
AT	✓	✓	✓	✓ (screening)	X
BE (Federal)	✓	X	X	X	X
BE (Flanders)	✓	✓	✓	✓ (EIA report, consultation)	X
BE (Brussels)	✓	X	✓	✓ (EIA report, consultation, consent)	X
BE (Wallonia)	✓	✓	X	X	X
BG	✓	X	✓	✓ (excluding consent)	✓
CY	✓	✓	✓ (EIA required)	✓ (excluding consent)	✓
CZ	✓	✓	✓	X	X
EE	✓	✓	✓ (EIA required)	X	X
EL	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
ES	✓	✓	✓ (EIA required)	X	X
DE	✓	✓	✓	X	X
DK	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
FI	✓	✓	✓	✓ (screening, scoping, EIA report)	✓
FR	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

MS	No. of projects subject to an EIA	No. of projects per category	No. of projects subject to a determination	Average duration of the EIA process	Average direct costs of EIA
HR	✓	✓	✓	✓ (screening, scoping, EIA report, consultation)	✓
HU	✓	✓	✓	✓ (screening/ scoping, decision)	X
IE	✓ (total)	X	X	X	X
IT	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
LT	✓	✓	✓	✓ (screening, EIA report, consultation)	✓ (no. of staff, national level)
LU	✓	✓	✓	✓ (excluding consent)	✓
LV	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
MT	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
NL	✓	✓	✓ (2018 & 2021)	X	X
PL	✓	✓	✓	✓ (screening, scoping, EIA report, consultation)	✓
PT	✓	✓	✓	X	X
RO	✓ (2019-2022)	✓	✓ (2019-2022)	✓	✓
SE	✓ (2022)	✓	✓ (2022)	X	X
SI	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SK	✓	✓	✓	✓ (screening, scoping, EIA report, reasoned conclusion)	✓

1.3. Analysis of data received

This section presents the findings received from Member State questionnaires concerning: the number of projects subject to an EIA, projects per EIA Annex I and II category, average duration of the EIA process, and average direct costs. It also discusses data gaps, quality and comparability of the data, and any additional information received that supports the data analysis.

1.3.1. Number of EIA and screening procedures undertaken in Member States

1.3.1.1. Number of projects subject to EIA

Table 2 presents the data reported on the number of projects per Member State and year that were subject to an environmental impact assessment under Annex I and II of the EIA Directive. As shown in Table 2, not all Member States could provide the full set of data requested. For example, Ireland, Belgium (Brussels Capital Region, and Austria only provided the total number of projects without distinguishing between Annex I and Annex II. Additionally, five countries (CY, FI, FR, RO and SE) did not provide information for all the years of the reporting period. A number of cases where the number of Annex I and Annex II projects did not add up to the total number of projects were also identified. Based on clarifications provided by Member States, these discrepancies can be explained by the fact that some Member States have projects that cannot be directly assigned to either Annex to the Directive (Estonia); some projects are counted in both Annexes, distorting the total (Netherlands); or the region has three different annexes (Belgium (Flanders)). Additionally, in case of Spain, the figures on the total number of EIAs were provided by General State Administration and Autonomous Communities, while Annex I and Annex II data was only provided by the General State Administration. As a result, the total number of projects is significantly higher than the sum of data provided for Annex I and Annex II.

A first trend that can be observed is that Member States reported significantly more Annex II projects as opposed to Annex I. Considering respondents who provided comparable data for all the years (21 out of 30 questionnaires), it can be observed that, throughout the reporting period approximately 82% of projects fell within Annex II, with the remaining 18% falling within Annex I. This distribution aligns with expectations based on the nature of projects falling under these respective annexes. Annex I projects are subject to compulsory Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) due to the inherent expectation of significant environmental impacts. These projects typically include large-scale energy and transport infrastructure (e.g. pipelines, highways, long distance railways) and dangerous activities (e.g. nuclear, chemicals, large scale mining activities) above certain size / volume of activity thresholds. Annex II include projects below these thresholds and smaller infrastructure projects (urban developments, tourism and leisure infrastructure) that may not inherently have significant environmental impacts. Those projects are subject to screening to determine whether an EIA is required. In most Member States, the number of Annex II projects is logically higher than the number of Annex I projects.

In 2022 there has been approximately 246 EIAs per Member State on average. However, an average number may not be too informative considering the large variations across Member States and the multiple reasons that may explain these variations. If the size of the country is an element that may influence the number of projects seeking development consent and therefore subject to EIA, it is not sufficient to explain the variations across Member States. For example, Austria reported very low numbers of EIA procedures throughout the period (i.e. 13 cases in 2021). Germany reported a relatively low number of EIAs throughout the period (272 on average) in comparison to smaller countries such as Greece which reported an average of 1 317 projects throughout 2017-2022. Other factors that may influence the number of projects include the way the screening procedure is carried out in each Member State – the type of project that require screening (that may go beyond what is required in the Directive), the methods used (thresholds or case by case examinations) or the weighting of criteria in case-by-case examinations. Therefore, the use of an average number could be misleading because it masks the variations across Member States.

Although there is no clear trend in the total number of projects per year across the reporting period, it can be observed that the number of projects has been gradually increasing throughout the reporting period (it should be noted that the number of projects in 2022 may appear lower because some Member States only provided data for a part of the year). However, comparing the reported numbers of EIAs to the data provided by a similar study conducted by GHK in 2010[3], there has been a decrease in the total number of EIAs between 2005-2008 and 2017-2022, which is quite significant in some countries (e.g. Poland had on average 4 000 cases per year in the period 2005-2008 and reported around 1 100 EIAs per year for the period 2017-2022; France had an average number of 3 867 EIAs per year in the period 2005-2008 and reported an average of around 1 000 EIAs per year for the period 2017-2022)[4]. There are only four countries in which the total number of EIAs has increased between the two periods – CY, EL, IE and LV. No firm conclusions should however be derived from this comparison as both studies rely on different data collection tools (a survey questionnaire sent to Member States by the study authors in 2010 and an official reporting questionnaire in 2023, which do not have exactly the same questions).

[3] GHK, 2010, Collection of information and data to support the Impact Assessment study of the review of the EIA Directive: A study for DG Environment. Available at: https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/3b48eff1-b955-423f-9086-0d85ad1c5879/library/27a69f55-bf82-4e47-8700-1e6305abbb18/details?download=true

[4] A comparison between the two reporting periods was only done for the 16 Member States that have provided data in both time periods.

Table 2: Number of projects subject to EIA per Member State

	Total number of projects subject to an EIA						Annex I projects subject to an EIA						Annex II projects subject to an EIA					
MS	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**
AT	12	14	14	18	13	3												
Federal (BE)	1	1	1		2	1							1	1	1	1	2	1
Flanders (BE)*	48	73	138	123	104	109	2	32	99	82	61	61	46	41	39	41	43	48
Brussels (BE)	147	255	211	117	132	148												
Wallonia (BE)	48	66	56	76	81	83	10	13	10	11	14	10	38	53	46	65	67	73
BG	44	55	40	43	47	26	24	32	20	19	25	7	20	23	20	24	22	19
CY		214	329	297	375	297		155	104	70	69	61		59	225	227	306	236
CZ	22	73	56	39	50	17	8	35	31	17	23	5	14	37	22	22	27	12
DE	177	260	219	340	418	217	10	41	40	61	69	38	78	124	178	279	349	181
DK	10	19	17	7	14	8	5	5	1	1	4	0	5	14	16	6	8	8
EE**	9	20	36	14	27	9	3	10	26	8	14	4	6	10	10	6	13	5
EL	1190	1220	1079	1399	1432	1582	199	45	109	136	151	176	991	1175	970	1263	1281	1406
ES***	706	1169	872	1026	1331	668	51	40	16	19	28	38	94	68	46	66	68	22
FI	27	31	31	39	38	74	17	12	18	20	13		10	19	13	19	25	
HR	218	337	353	411	421	221	13	13	6	5	26	1	205	324	347	406	395	220
HU	27	52	41	64	53	35	19	38	31	52	40	28	8	14	10	12	13	7

	Total number of projects subject to an EIA						Annex I projects subject to an EIA						Annex II projects subject to an EIA					
MS	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**
IE	118	89	229	229	280	253												
IT**	545	747	770	881	1149	663	89	100	94	99	88	43	456	647	676	782	1061	620
LT	403	218	235	222	228	244	15	11	12	13	21	23	388	207	233	209	207	221
LU***	6	8	5	15	20	16	0	2	2	3	3	1	6	6	3	12	17	15
LV	26	27	33	39	43	28	12	12	7	10	13	13	14	15	26	29	21	7
MT	3	13	7	5	5	2	0	2	2	0	0	0	3	11	5	5	5	2
NL	32	34	25	30	35	29	12	15	8	15	18	13	22	23	18	21	25	21
PL	970	1197	1078	1295	1084	244	337	437	392	442	384	112	633	760	686	853	700	132
PT****	41	96	95	120	115	34	14	16	19	23	13	5	27	80	76	97	102	29
RO			278	471	835	942			21	25	26	33			257	446	809	909
SE						168						99						69
SI	31	18	20	12	26	15	8	6	7	2	6	4	23	12	13	10	20	11
SK	34	40	55	36	47	9	14	19	35	12	20	4	20	21	20	24	27	5

* Note that in the Flanders Region, the transposition of Annex II of the EIA directive results in two separate annexes: Flemish Annex II projects (following the 'ontheffingsprocedure') and Flemish Annex III projects (following the 'project-mer-screeningsprocedure'), each with their own distinct procedures. Under the Annex II columns, only the projects relate to the Flemish Annex II projects are displayed. The Flemish Annex III projects are many more: 798 (in 2017), 9750 (in 2018), 12582 (in 2019), 12625 (in 2020), 13459 (in 2021), and 13318 (in 2022), according to the questionnaire respondent.

** Note that the response from Estonia provided also the total number of projects including projects that have not been listed directly and or cannot be directly associated with Annes I or II of the EIA Directive such as if a proposed activity is likely to have significant effects on a Natura 2000 site. If including also these projects, the total number of projects subject to and EIA would in 2018 be 21, followed by 38 in 2019, 16 in 2020, and 28 in 2021.

***The figures for Total come from General State Administration and Autonomous Communities, while the division between Annex I and Annex II was only provided by the General State Administration.

****Note that this data represents a sum of the regional and national data in Italy. However, regional data was only provided by 12 of the 21 Regions and Autonomous Provinces.

***** The figures from Luxembourg concern only the projects for which a full EIA procedure is required, including the elaboration of an EIA report and the public consultation.

****** The figures for Portugal represent the data from mainland Portugal + Azores + Madeira

1.3.1.2. Breakdown of EIAs by project category set out in Annex I and II of the EIA Directive

24 out of 30 (22 Member States) respondents provided a detailed breakdown of projects by the categories of projects listed in Annexes I and II (Article 12(2)(b)) to the EIA Directive. Member States provided various reasons for not providing a breakdown per category. For example, Belgium (Brussels Capital Region) could not make a breakdown per category because they do not make any distinction between the two annexes. Additionally, several factors limit the comparability of the data between Member States: first, not all Member States responded consistently to the project categories in the questionnaire. While some Member States provided detailed information by reporting the number of projects for each specific subcategory (e.g. 1(a), 1(b)), a few Member States (Lithuania and Sweden) chose to combine these subcategories into broader categories (e.g. Annex I (1); Annex I (2) etc). Moreover, France and Austria did not provide a breakdown according to the sub-categories of the Directive but a breakdown according to broader groups (e.g. water management, infrastructure, mining and quarries), limiting the comparability of their results to other Member States. Lastly, Ireland and Bulgaria did not provide any answer to this question.

In addition to the issues presented above, several Member States reported difficulties in completing the questionnaire. For example, according to the respondent from the Netherlands, two projects have a national EIA category that does not correspond to the categories of the EIA Directive. These projects are specifically related to changes in water levels in certain areas. In addition, in Estonia, there are discrepancies between Table 2 and Table 4 because some of the projects cannot be directly assigned to a project category in Annex I or Annex II of the EIA Directive. In addition, the Czech respondent was not able to extract data based on project start date. Therefore, the Czech data are based on project completion dates.

Furthermore, in order to calculate the number of projects per Annex I category, Belgium (Flanders) made a link between the headings in Flanders and the headings in Annex I in order to report data for the years 2021 and 2022. In doing so, the Flemish authorities identified the following challenges:

- Different headings apply to different EIAs.
- The process of linking Annex II and III of the Flemish legislation with Annex II of the EU Directive is difficult.
- Many projects have been prepared for Annex II headings and have not yet been added to the totals.

Therefore, the data provided by the Flemish respondent is incomplete and not sufficiently representative. In addition, the Flemish region no longer keeps track of data on Annex II projects.

Overall, despite the challenges outlined above, 25 out of 30 respondents (All respondents excluding Austria, Bulgaria, Belgium (Flanders), France and Ireland) provided at least a broad breakdown of projects per category (e.g. Annex I (1); Annex I (2) etc), which allows some general analysis and identification of the most popular project categories between 2017-2022.

While respondents from the Czech Republic, Estonia, and the Netherlands did highlight some challenges in addressing this question, the reported issues were relatively minor. For instance, the Netherlands reported only two projects that could not be assigned correctly. As these challenges did not significantly impact the overall analysis, these countries are still included in the general analysis. Table 3 shows the project categories with the highest number of projects subject to EIA, based on categories laid out in Annex I and II of the EIA Directive. As already suggested in the previous section, most projects belong to Annex II. The most frequent project categories were Annex II (10) - Infrastructure Projects (19%), followed by Annex II (13) –

changes or extension of already authorised projects (18%), Annex II (3) – Energy Industry (11%).

Table 3: Top 10 most project categories with the highest number of projects subject to EIA

Project category	Number of projects between 2017-2022
Annex II (10) – Infrastructure projects	7 673
Annex II (13) – Changes or extensions of already authorised projects in Annex II	7 124
Annex II (3) – Energy Industry	4 448
Annex II (11) – Other projects	3 654
Annex II (2) – Extractive industry	2 297
Annex II (1) – Agriculture, silviculture and aquaculture	1 734
Annex II (12) – Tourism and leisure	892
Annex II (7) – Food industry	597
Annex I (17) – Installations for the intensive rearing of poultry or pigs	656
Annex I (24) – Changes or extensions of already authorised projects in Annex I	565

On the other hand, project categories with the smallest number of projects were Annex I (23) - Installations capture of CO_2 capture for the purposes of geological storage – followed by Annex I (5) – Installations for the extraction processing and transformation of asbestos both occurring in less than 0.001% of cases. These project categories cover highly specialised projects, which are logically less common than Annex II projects.

1.3.1.3. Number of Screening Decisions

As displayed in Table 4, 27/30 respondents (all except Federal Belgium, Greece, and Ireland) provided an estimate of the number of Annex II projects subject to screening decisions. For two of these Member States, no data was reported because no screening procedure were carried out. In Belgium, all projects permitted at Federal level are large projects falling in Annex I and were subject to an EIA. Greece explained that the threshold approach is exclusively applied to Annex II projects instead of case-by-case examinations, meaning no screening procedure were carried out by the administration. As with previous questions, it remains difficult to compare responses between Member States, as some did not respond to all sub-categories. This was the case for Cyprus, Romania, Netherlands, Belgium (Flanders, Wallonia), Estonia, Sweden, Spain, and Denmark. However, when looking at the answers of countries that responded to the question in a comparable way (19/30 respondents), it is noticeable that between 2017-2022, the majority of Annex II projects subject to screening decision (95%) did not require an EIA procedure. In 2022 Sweden had the highest proportion (54%) of cases requiring an EIA. On the contrary, in Austria, none of the 33 screening cases were requested to carry out an EIA.

Comparing these results with the 2010 study is difficult, because of a low response rate to this question in 2010. However, from the limited sample available it seems that the share of screening cases requiring an EIA decreased between 2010 and the current reporting period, but no firm conclusions should be derived from this comparison.

Table 4: Number of Annex II projects subject to determination per Member State

	Number of Annex II projects subject to determination - Total						Number of Annex II projects subject to determination - EIA required						Number of Annex II projects subject to determination - EIA not required					
MS	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**
AT	75	79	86	94	78	33	1	6	3	5	2	0	74	73	83	89	76	33
BE (FL)*		9791	12621	12666	13502	13366		8	28	28	27	34		9783	12593	12638	13475	13332
BE (BxI)	147	255	211	117	132	148	9	12	13	5	19	8	138	243	224	122	142	156
BE (WAL)											1							
BG	1024	1314	1148	1016	1295	728	20	23	20	24	22	19	1004	1291	1128	992	1273	709
CY									3	4		3						
CZ	48	372	346	397	443	180	5	49	47	59	59	22	43	323	299	338	384	158
DE	2980	4195	3383	4018	4147	1946	42	85	92	132	146	71	2938	4110	3291	3886	4001	1875
DK							5	11	14	5	7	7	12	56	56	94	75	34
EE							6	10	10	6	13	5						
EL**	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ES							11	6	4	2	6	0						
FI***	20	57	62	65	55	54	1	14	7	10	23	20	19	43	55	55	32	34
FR	3577	4747	4799	4377	4855	5039	391	550	379	563	569	630	3186	4197	4420	3814	4286	4409
HR	193	312	325	377	375	225	6	5	6	15	24	5	187	307	319	362	351	220

	Number of Annex II projects subject to determination - Total						Number of Annex II projects subject to determination - EIA required						Number of Annex II projects subject to determination - EIA not required					
MS	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**
HU	343	461	369	345	413	186	3	10	10	10	10	7	340	451	359	335	403	179
IT**	584	773	782	837	933	455	51	80	67	121	178	44	533	693	715	716	755	411
LT	388	207	233	209	207	221	9	4	16	31	11	9	379	203	217	178	196	212
LU	0	27	54	74	93	87	0	5	3	12	17	15	0	22	51	62	76	72
LV	267	388	453	383	405	182	13	15	23	27	18	7	254	373	430	356	387	175
MT***	10	43	43	43	30	9	1	9	6	2	4	1	9	34	37	41	26	8
NL		906			896			3			15			903			881	
PL	5596	8084	8290	8350	8574	2591	633	760	686	853	700	132	4963	7324	7604	7497	7874	2459
PT****	5596	8084	8290	8350	8574	2591	633	760	686	853	700	132	4963	7324	7604	7497	7874	2459
RO			8537	8466	9494	9277			257	446	809	909			8280	8020	8685	8368
SE						172						93						79
SI	196	295	246	230	115	59	13	12	20	22	14	7	183	283	226	208	111	52
SK	352	505	414	396	512	165	20	21	20	24	27	5	332	484	394	372	485	160

* Note that in the Flemish Region, the transposition of Annex II of the EIA directive results in two separate annexes: Flemish Annex II projects (following the 'ontheffingsprocedure') and Flemish Annex III projects (following the 'project-mer-screeningsprocedure'), each with their own distinct procedures. The numbers in the first and last sets of columns refer to approved EIA for Annex II or III projects according to Flemish regulation.

**In Greece the threshold approach is applied instead of a screening procedure

*** As Finland's mandatory list of projects already includes some projects or thresholds from Annex II, the given numbers do not give an exact status of the amount of Annex II projects.

****Note that this data represents a sum of the regional and national data in Italy. However, regional data was only provided by 12 of the 21 Regions and Autonomous Provinces.

***** Note that in Malta, a number of project categories, listed under Annex II of the Directive, are listed under Category I of Malta's EIA legislation (which is equivalent to Annex I of the Directive and therefore a mandatory EIA is required). There are a number of projects, which although not falling under Annex I or Annex II of the EIA Directive, are listed under the respective annexes of the local legislation and were therefore screened. In this regard, these have not been included in the above section.

****** The figures for Portugal represent the data from mainland Portugal + Azores + Madeira

1.3.2. Duration of EIA and screening procedures

Member States were asked for the average, minimum and maximum duration (in months) of the environmental impact assessment process (Article 12(2)(d)) for the following steps: screening, scoping, EIA report, public consultation, reasoned conclusion and development consent. Information was received from 23 Member States and is presented in Table 5 below. Moreover, Table 6 shows the average values of the data that are displayed in Table 5. Since there are multiple data gaps, the average values in Table 6 are estimated and calculated based on a selection of available information.

The data gaps consist of incomplete information on all EIA stages per Member State or data on all three duration variables (average, minimum, maximum). Also, some of the data refer to a combination of steps in the EIA process. In addition, several Member States could only provide an estimated duration, information on duration under current legislation (i.e. legal deadlines) or data for specific sectors:

- Data from Czechia, the Netherlands, France, Finland, Ireland, and Portugal reflect national deadlines. For example, Czechia was able to provide information on the duration under current legislation and an estimate of around 4 months between the submission of the EIA report and the issuing of the reasoned conclusion.
- Germany was only able to provide information on the duration of some stages of the EIA process for wind farms to be completed in 2020 and 2021.
- Estonia could only provide valid information on the duration of the whole EIA process, but only rough estimates for each step.
- Sweden was not able to provide information on the average duration, but instead gave the median duration for the screening and development consent processes[5].

The fragmented nature of the data available limits the ability to draw general conclusions. Furthermore, it is not possible to estimate the overall average duration of the entire EIA process per Member State, except for Denmark, Estonia and Malta, due to gaps in the data for each step of the EIA process. Instead, Table 6 below provides an estimate of the average duration based on a selection of Member States and weighted by the number of projects subject to EIA per Member State. Table 5 shows that the duration of each step varies considerably from Member State to Member State and from project to project, given the wide range between the minimum and maximum duration of some of the steps in the EIA process.

The duration of the screening process varies considerably between projects and Member States. The average duration ranges from 1 to 11 months. Italy stands out by reporting 11 months. Additionally, 6 other Member States (AT, HR, PL, SE, SI and SK) reported an average duration over 3 months, which is above the legal deadline of 90 days provided in the EIA Directive. The remaining Member States reported an average duration of around 1 to 3 months, in line with the legal deadline. The lowest minimum duration is reported by Italy, Lithuania and Sweden (less than 1 month) and the highest maximum duration is reported by Poland (33 months), which also reports the largest variation (between 0.5 and 30 months). As reported by Sweden, Italy and Poland, the duration of the screening process ranges from less than one month to 20, 30 and 33 months respectively. However, it can also be observed that for countries such as Croatia, Italy, Poland and Slovenia, which reported large differences between the minimum and maximum duration, the average duration is much closer to the

[5] According to the response from Sweden, the screening process has a median duration of 3,5 months, and the process to develop consent has a median duration of 4,2 months.

minimum duration, indicating that the screening process takes a long time only for a handful of projects.

The duration of the scoping procedure is relatively less variable than that of the screening procedure. The lowest average duration is reported by Romania (1 month) and the highest average duration is reported by Croatia (7.6 months). The lowest minimum duration is reported by Luxembourg, Malta, Poland and Slovakia (less than one month) and the highest maximum duration is reported by Slovakia (30.6 months). For Slovakia, the average duration is however much closer to the minimum duration, indicating that the maximum duration reflects the situation of only a few projects.

As expected, the review of the EIA report has the longest average duration for all Member States except Belgium (Brussels Capital Region), Bulgaria and Slovakia. The highest average duration is reported by Latvia (18 months) and the lowest by Slovenia (1 month). The lowest minimum duration is reported by Poland and Slovakia (less than 1 month) and the highest maximum duration is reported by Belgium (Flanders) – 46 months.

The public consultation step has a relatively similar duration across Member States compared to the other steps, which is likely influenced by the adoption of legal minimum timeframes of 30 days, as required by the EIA Directive. Most Member States had an average duration of between one and two months, with the exception of Greece, which reported three months. Several Member States reported that both the minimum and maximum duration were one month (the consultation timeframe is the same for all projects), while the others reported minimum and maximum durations between about one and three months (the consultation timeframe varies based on the sector, the need for transboundary consultation etc.). The only exception is Greece, which reported a maximum duration of five months.

The duration reported for the reasoned conclusion step varied considerably between projects and Member States. The lowest average duration was reported by Romania (0.3 months) and the highest by Slovakia (11.8 months). Most of the other average durations reported are between two and four months. The lowest minimum duration is reported by Romania (0.3 months) and the highest maximum duration by Slovakia (39.6 months).

Relatively few Member States reported the duration of the development consent step. Only four Member States reported an average duration, ranging from 0.5 months for Greece to 15 months for Brussels Capital Region (Belgium). The difference between the minimum and maximum duration also varies considerably, from 0.2 months in Greece to 36 months in Latvia. Only four Member States reported both a minimum and a maximum duration. Sweden reported a relatively large difference between the minimum and maximum duration (1.3-22 months).

Table 5: Duration in months per step in the EIA process and Member State: Average (minimum – maximum) (> minimum, or < maximum)

MS	Screening	Scoping	EIA report	Public consultation	Reasoned conclusion	Development consent
AT	3.1			7. 2[6]		
Flanders (BE)			12 (1.7 – 46)	1		

[6] The response from Austria stated that the average duration of the environmental impact assessment process from the completeness of all documents for public consultation until development consent is 7.2 months.

MS	Screening	Scoping	EIA report	Public consultation	Reasoned conclusion	Development consent
Brussels (BE)			6 (4 – 12)	1		15 (12-21)
BG	3 (1-12)	2.5 (1-10)	3 (1-13)	1.5 (1-2)	3 (2-15)	
CY	1 (1-2)	2 (1-3)	6 (3-12)	1 (1-1)	4 (2-10)	
DK	2.2	6	13.6	1.8	1.5	1.4
EE	For the full EIA process: 22 months, with a minimum of 10 months and maximum of 42 months.					
EL		3 (2-4)	4 (2-6)	3 (1-5)	2 (1-3)	0.5 (0.2-1)
ES		(<2)	(<4)	(0.6-3)		
FI	1	(2-3)	(3-4)			
FR	(<1.1)			(>1)		
HR	4.6 (1-17.2)	7.6 (5-8)	12.2 (4-36)	1 (1-3.3)		
HU	1.5 (0.7 – 2.5)			(>1)	4.2 (1.3 – 20)	
IE	(<2)	(>1)		(>1)		
IT	11 (0.4-70)	7 (3-14)		2 (>1)	2 (>1)	
LT	(0.7-10.2)		(3 – 57)	1.4		
LU	1.9 (0.2-6.1)	2.7 (0.2-5.9)	3.1 (2-4.4)	1 (1-1)	3 (1.6-4.4)	
LV			18 (>6)		(>2)	(<36)
MT	1.1 (0.5-1.8)	1.4 (0.8-2.7)	14.2 (4.3-29.7)	1 (1-1)	1.6 (0.2-5.4)	6 (2.7-10.5)
PL	4 (0.5-33)	3 (0.5-9)	4.6[7] (0-38)	(<1)		
RO	1.5 (1-3)	1 (1-2)	3 (2-6)	2.5 (2.5-3)	0.3 (0.3-0.3)	(<1)
SE	(0 – 20)			(>1)		(1.2 – 22)
SI	3.5 (3-22)[8]	1.3 (1-2)	1 (1-1)	1 (1-1)		
SK	5.9 (1-38.7)	3.6 (0.1-30.6)	6.1 (0.4-36.4)		11.8 (3.6-39.6)	

[7] Weighted based on the reported Annex I and II projects reported subject to an EIA and the average duration per Annex.

[8] Refers to the screening process of solar power plants alone.

Table 6 combines data from all reporting Member States and shows estimates of the average, minimum and maximum duration in months for each step of the EIA process, as well as the average difference between the minimum and maximum duration.

Overall, the average duration of the EIA process is estimated to be around 20.6 months. Among the steps, the EIA report takes the longest on average, i.e. 5.3 months, while the public consultation period has the shortest average duration, i.e. 2.1 months. Compared to data collected from Member States in 2010, the average duration based on current data is almost twice as high. A report from 2010[9] calculated the average duration for the EIA process to 11.3 months. The only step that has a similar duration in both the previous and current study is the EIA report step (5.5 months in the previous study compared to 5.3 months in the current study). In the report from 2010, the average duration was 1.2 months for the screening step, 1.3 months for the scoping step, 1.6 months for the public consultation step, and 2 months for the final decision[10]. There is no apparent correlation between the increase in the average duration of the EIA procedure between 2010 and 2022 and an increase in the number of projects subject to EIA that competent authorities have to deal with – as shown in the previous section the reported numbers of projects subject to EIA have decreased in many Member States. Numbers of staff dedicated to EIA reported by Member States cannot be fairly compared between 2010 and 2022 as the data for both years is incomplete (some Member States provided data in 2010 and not in 2022 or vice versa). It is then difficult to make any correlation between the level of resources and the duration of the procedure based on this data. The increase in the reported duration of the EIA procedure does not come from an increase in EU requirements between the two periods, as obligations under the Directive generally stayed the same and were streamlined with the 2014 revision of the Directive. Reasons for this increase might be found in some of the drivers listed below and in section 2.3.3 (findings from case studies), such as an increased complexity of the projects (as project characteristics influence the time necessary for preparation/evaluation of documents). However, as mentioned in the previous section, as both studies rely on different data collection tools, which did not have exactly the same questions, some care should be taken in comparing data from 2010 and 2022.

As discussed above, the duration of each step in the EIA process varies considerably between Member States and projects. This is reflected in the differences between the minimum and maximum duration of each step in the EIA process. Due to the fragmented nature of the data and the significant differences between data from different Member States, the information in Table 5 can be difficult to interpret. Instead, a clearer view is provided in Table 6, which shows the calculated average of the minimum and maximum durations.

The screening step has the lowest estimated minimum duration (0.9 months) and the development consent step has the highest minimum duration (4 months). The public consultation step has the lowest maximum duration (2.1 months) and the EIA report step has the highest maximum duration (20.4 months). The average difference between the minimum and maximum duration is highest for the screening and EIA report steps (around 19 months) and lowest for the public consultation step (1.1 months).

As also discussed above, for the steps with a relatively high maximum duration (screening, EIA report and development consent), the average duration is much closer to the minimum duration, indicating that the maximum duration data only reflects the situation of a handful of projects.

[9] GHK, 2010, Collection of information and data to support the Impact Assessment study of the review of the EIA Directive: A study for DG Environment. Available at: https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/3b48eff1-b955-423f-9086-0d85ad1c5879/library/27a69f55-bf82-4e47-8700-1e6305abbb18/details?download=true

[10] Idem.

Table 6: Estimated minimum, maximum, and average duration in months per step in the EIA process, based on an average among the Member State that reported relevant data

	Screening	Scoping	EIA report	Public consultation	Reasoned conclusion	Development consent	Total
Weighted average duration[11]	3.7	3.8	5.3	2.1	3.5	2.2	20.6
Minimum duration[12]	0.9	1.4	2.5	1.1	1.5	4	
Maximum duration[13]	18.3	7.4	20.4	2.1	12.2	15.3	
Difference between minimum and maximum duration[14]	18.8	6.4	19.3	1.1	10.7	9.6	

The questionnaire gave the opportunity to provide additional information, including reasons for delays in the process. **The lack of expertise, staff, and/or resources were the most common reasons for delays**, followed by the lack of quality of documentation, consultation practices and difficulties, consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the quality of reporting, respectively. **The reasons for delays are clustered as follows, sorted from the most mentioned to the least mentioned:**

- **The lack of expertise, staff and/or resources** was mentioned as a reason for delays by ten Member States (AT, EE, ES, FI, IT, LT, LU, PL, SI, SK). Five Member States (AT, ES, FI, IT, PL) mentioned the lack of expertise, staff and/or resources specifically as a problem of the public administration, such as the EIA authority, while two Member States (FI, LU) also mentioned these reasons in relation to other stakeholders, such as consultants. The other Member States mentioned these reasons as a general issue without further specification.
- **The lack or quality of documentation** was mentioned as a reason for delay by eight Member States (AT, ES, IT, LT, LU, PL, RO, SI). Three Member States specifically mentioned the lack of documentation by the developer (AT, ES), investor (PL) or project owner (RO) in preparing the EIA report as a reason for delays. For example, RO

[11] The estimated average duration is based on the data provided in each step of the EIA process excluding data from Flanders due to the exceptional large number of projects. The data are weighted based on the share per Member State of total projects subject to an EIA that are reported in those Member States that also provided data on the average duration of the specific step of the EIA process. For the screening stage, also projects reported that do not require any EIA are included.

[12] Based on the average minimum duration among the Member States that reported such data.

[13] Based on the average maximum duration among the Member States that reported such data.

[14] Based on the average difference between minimum and maximum duration among the Member States that reported both minimum and maximum durations.

mentioned that the preparation of the documents required for screening, scoping, and the preparation of the EIA report by the project owner takes more time depending on the size and environmental risks of the project, and PL that delays are mainly caused by poor quality documentation from investors requiring repeated requests for additional information.

- **Difficulties and practices related to consultation procedures** were mentioned by eight Member States (CY, CZ, DK, EL, ES, MT, RO) as a reason for delays. For CY and ES, it was only the consultation of other authorities, while for CZ, DK, EL, MT and SI it was the consultation of both authorities and the public that caused delays. In addition, for three Member States (CZ, DK, MT) the review process following consultation was mentioned as a cause of delay, while for three other Member States (CY, EL, RO) it was the consultation process itself. For RO in particular when transboundary consultations are required.
- **Certain consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic** were mentioned by four Member States (CY, EE, RO, SK) as a reason for delays. On the other hand, six Member States (BE (Brussels Capital Region), CZ, DK, EL, FI, MT) mentioned changed practices such as the switch to online consultations due to the COVID-19 pandemic but did not consider such changes to cause any delays.
- **The quality of reporting** was mentioned as a reason for delays by three Member States (BE (Flanders and Brussels), DK, LT). Both Flanders and Brussels cited the poor quality of environmental studies as a reason for delays. DK indicated that delays occur when the developer's EIA does not include the required assessments, in particular under the Water Framework Directive, the Marine Strategy Directive and the Habitats Directive. In addition, LT generally cited the poor quality of EIA reports as a reason for delays.
- **Other reasons for delays** included project modifications (AT), the lack of clarity on the Nitrogen Deposition Assessment Framework (Flanders - BE), public opposition (EE), and the lack of an efficient information system for the management of EIA procedures (IT).

1.3.3. Costs of EIA and screening procedures

Member States were asked to provide the number of staff employed in administrations and annual budget allocated to manage EIA and screening. Only 16/30 respondents responded to these questions. Generally, Member States had more information on the number of staff employed to manage EIAs and Screenings rather than information on the allocated budget. Only 7/30 respondents were able to provide estimates of the annual budget allocated for screenings/EIAs. Moreover, only 13/30 Member States provided estimates of the EIA/Screening costs for the developer.

As indicated in Table 7, the budget allocated for the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) procedure shows notable variations across Member States. At the national level, budgets range from 275 000€ in Malta to approximately 2.4 million euros in Poland. Regional budget allocations show an even wider spectrum, starting at 89 000€ in Slovakia, while Poland reports the highest regional budget exceeding 11 million euros annually. The response rate for local-level budget allocation was notably low, with only Italy and Slovakia providing estimates—203 000€ and slightly over 1.5 million euros, respectively. This low response rate at the local level may be attributed to competent authorities for EIA and development consent often being national and regional authorities and to the difficulties in collecting data from dispersed authorities at local level.

Similarly, the staffing for EIA procedures varies significantly among Member States. At the national level, Slovenia reported the lowest number of employees with 4, while Denmark reported the highest with a range of 50-65 people. Regionally, Slovakia has the fewest employees in contrast to Poland which reported 350 staff. The response rate for the local level is low, with only three countries providing estimates: Slovakia with 86 employees, Romania with 470 employees, and Italy with 13 staff and an additional 65 technical experts.

The wide-ranging variations in the data provided by Member States regarding staff employment and budget allocation for EIA/screening procedures explain the challenges and limitations in calculating meaningful averages. Firstly, the substantial disparities observed in national and regional budgets, spanning from €275 000 in Malta to over 11 million euros in Poland, reflect diverse economic capacities and priorities among Member States. Such significant differences in financial capacity and resource allocation across countries contribute to skewed averages that may not accurately represent the overall landscape.

Secondly, the disparities in staffing levels, with Denmark reporting the highest at the national level (50-65 people) compared to Slovenia's lowest reported figure of 4 people, further illustrate the heterogeneity in administrative structures and capabilities. Countries with varying economic sizes, administrative capacities and national legislations may have inherently different staffing requirements for EIA procedures. Thirdly, the low response rates for certain parameters, particularly at the local level, pose a challenge in generating comprehensive averages. As a result, calculating averages from the provided data might lead to misleading generalisations and was not attempted.

Table 7: Estimates of the costs of EIA/Screening procedures for public authorities

	National level		Regional level		Local level	
MS	**Number of staff employed to manage EIAs / screenings**	**Annual budget allocated for the management of EIAs / screenings**	**Number of staff employed to manage EIAs/screenings**	**Annual budget allocated for the management of EIAs / screenings**	**Number of staff employed to manage EIAs/screenings**	**Annual budget allocated for the management of EIAs / screenings**
BG	9		65-67			
CY		€450 415				
DK	50-65					
EL	35	€1 050 000	80	€2 400 000		
FI			5-13			
FR	35		220			
HR	Maximum 9		Maximum 5			
IT	38 staff; 40 technical experts		13 staff employed	€200 000 medium/year	13 staff employed, 65 technical experts	€203 000 for year
LT	40-50					
LU	4 in the EIA unit of the				1 to 2	

	National level		Regional level		Local level	
MS	**Number of staff employed to manage EIAs / screenings**	**Annual budget allocated for the management of EIAs / screenings**	**Number of staff employed to manage EIAs/screenings**	**Annual budget allocated for the management of EIAs / screenings**	**Number of staff employed to manage EIAs/screenings**	**Annual budget allocated for the management of EIAs / screenings**
	ministry + 5-15 technical experts					
LV	EIA – 4 screening – 22	Salary - 8.84€/hour				
MT	5	€275 000				
PL	42	€2 427 385	350	€11 020 235		
RO	35		7		470	
SI	4		Staff salaries; €20 000 for expert opinions; €50 000 for transboundary procedures		Everything is centralized at national level.	
SK	20	€462 824.52	5	€89 674.27	86	€1 542 397.1

As indicated in

Table 8, only 13/30 respondents provided estimates of the costs of EIA/Screening procedures for the developer. This data shows again significant variations across countries. The overall cost of an EIA for the developer ranges from €10 000 (SI) to € 92 000 (PT). Denmark reported significantly higher costs than other Member States for an EIA procedure – between €130 000 to € 400 000. The cost of a screening procedure is generally significantly lower compared to the EIA, with a range from € 4 000 (HR) to € 7 000 (DK, SK). However, only 5/13 respondents provided estimates for screening. Considering the cost to the developer as a share of the total project cost, the estimates here are again very fragmented. While some countries indicated that EIA constitutes less than 1% of the total project cost (DK, ES, IT), Estonia reported 15%.

Calculating averages based on this data could be misleading due to very low sample size and significant variations observed. Nevertheless, generally it seems that the average cost as a share of the total project cost is usually below 10%.

Table 8: Estimates of the costs of EIA/Screening procedures for the developer

MS	The average cost to the developer (in €) of an EIA or screening	The average EIA/screening cost to the developer as a share of the total project cost (%)
BE - Brussels	Between €8 000 – € 30000. Very large projects can go up to €90 000. The cost of screening is much less.	1-2%

MS	The average cost to the developer (in €) of an EIA or screening	The average EIA/screening cost to the developer as a share of the total project cost (%)
DK	Screening: € 7 000 EIA permit: Between € 130 000 – € 400 000	Between 0.1% - 1%[15]
EE	€25 000 – €55 000	1–15%
EL	EIA: €20 000 Screening: €5 000	
ES		Less than 1 %
FR	€10 000	
HR	EIA: € 35 000. Screening: € 4.000	10% of the project documentation
HU	There are administration service fees for the environmental licensing procedures (regulated by Ministerial Decree No. 14/2015.): - for preliminary assessment – €625 - for EIA procedure – €7 500	
IT		EIA: 0.5 per thousand calculated on the value of the works to be carried out with a minimum of €5 000. Screening: 0.25 per thousand calculated on the value of the works to be carried out with a minimum of €2 000
PT	Between €50 300 (low estimate) and €91 250 (high estimate)[16]	Less than 5%
RO	25200	
SI	**EIA:** Between €1000 – €50 000 Screening: Much less	
SK	The average cost to the developer of documentation is up to €20 000 in the impact assessment process and up to €7 000 in the inquiry procedure.	Between 10% and 50%.

[15] This estimate is based on offshore wind farms in Denmark – large offshore wind farms cost several billion euros.

[16] These estimates are based on the summary of costs (lowest and highest) provided by the authority. This includes a summary of screening report + scoping document + environmental impact studies + admin costs. There may be other additional expenses.

1.3.4. Benefits of EIA and screening procedures

In general, respondents emphasised that stakeholder input during the consultation process can help to: identify potential environmental impacts that would not otherwise have been identified, take more environmental dimensions into consideration, increase knowledge and awareness, and or improve environmental protection and mitigation measures. In comparison to answers gathered from Member States for the 2010 study, the current responses focus more on final environmental benefits and the value of transparency. The answers from 2010 inform that the main benefits relate to resource savings gained and better project designs due to the integration of environmental concerns, including early in the process trough input from stakeholders. In this way, projects can avoid modifications at a later stage and increase acceptability of projects, according to the report[17].

All Member States that answered to the question state that there are benefits of the EIA process, including for the environment, climate, and/or public health. Member States valued the process of gathering information from stakeholders and the public, both for the process itself in terms of the added value of public participation and transparency, and for the information that is received in the process to improve projects and their benefits for the environment, alternatively to reduce the adverse impacts on the environment.

- Seven Member States mentioned the participation of stakeholders and the public as a benefit itself (AT, CY, CZ, FI, LT, LV, SI), and three including as a way to enhance transparency (AT, CY, FI, SI) such as by providing public access to environmental information.
- Most Member States that replied to this question assessed the impact of the EIA procedure on the project under assessment in terms of improving environmental conditions, identifying alternative approaches or mitigation measures.
    - Not least to describe and prevent or minimise environmental damage and/or ensure environmental protection (BE, DE, ES, HR, IT, LT, LU, MT, RO).
    - Also, for the identification of alternatives (BE (Flanders, Brussels), EE, FI, LU), such as a different location for a project and/or mitigation measures to avoid environmental impacts (BE (Flanders, Brussels), CZ, EE, EL, FI, IE, LT, LU, MT, PL, RO, SI).
    - Five Member States mentioned the EIA process as beneficial in identifying problems at an early stage of a project (CZ, DK, FI, HR, LU), so that potential improvements, alternatives, or mitigation measures can be introduced at the planning stage and thus have a greater impact.
- Four Member States mentioned the value of the EIA procedure in terms of the possibility of imposing conditions on projects or rejecting projects if, despite mitigation measures, there is a risk of significant environmental harm (CY, EL, PL, SK).
- Three Member States (BE (Flanders, Brussels), LU, SI) mentioned the benefits of improved monitoring as a result of the EIA process.

[17] GHK, 2010, Collection of information and data to support the Impact Assessment study of the review of the EIA Directive: A study for DG Environment. Available at: https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/3b48eff1-b955-423f-9086-0d85ad1c5879/library/27a69f55-bf82-4e47-8700-1e6305abbb18/details?download=true

Summary of key benefits:

- **Enhanced environmental protection:** identification of potential environmental impacts, alternatives and mitigation measures leading to better environmental conditions and minimising potential environmental damage.
- **Increased transparency:** the process increases environmental awareness among stakeholders and the public, enhancing transparency through easier access to environmental information.
- **Early problem identification:** early stakeholder engagement allows for the identification of potential issues, allowing for the implementation of improvements and corrective actions.

2. Analysis of case studies of EIA and screening procedures

This section presents the results of the analysis of 23 case studies of EIAs and screening procedures in the EU. These case studies were carried out to provide more in-depth insight on the implementation of the EIA Directive particularly with regards to estimating and assessing the costs, duration and benefits of the EIA. Section 2.1 presents the methodology followed to identify and analyse the case studies; section 2.2 presents an overview of the 23 case studies selected and section 2.3 presents the cross analysis of all case studies.

2.1. Methodology to Identify case studies

2.1.1. Criteria for selecting case studies

The 23 case studies include 11 case studies of screening procedures and 12 case studies of full EIA procedures. In terms of project categories, the 12 EIA case studies include project categories listed in both Annexes (although with a focus on Annex I). Screening case studies include projects listed in Annex II, which screening decisions resulted in both in the EIA being required and the EIA not being required.

An indicative list of 25 project categories (12 in Annex I and 13 in Annex II) was proposed in appendix to the terms of reference. We have aimed to cover as many of these project categories as feasible in the sample of case studies. For the purpose of the project, it was relevant to select a varied sample of case studies, covering many different project types and sizes, different types of developers (public and private) and different Member States to ensure the representativity of the sample.

Regarding the timing of the procedure, the selected projects have started their screening and EIA procedures after transposition of Directive 2014/52/EU in the Member States, which has happened in 2017 or 2018 depending on the Member States. In addition, selected projects had to have completed their screening or EIA procedures, so that information on costs and duration of the procedure could be collected effectively.

Regarding the sample of Member States, in addition to geographical spread, some criteria related to the implementation of the EIA Directive were taken into account for the EIA cases including whether EIA is integrated into development consent or in a separate decision, whether scoping is compulsory in the country and whether Member States have established joint or coordinated procedures with other environmental assessment (in particular assessment linked to the Nature Directives). In addition, efforts were made to cover as many Member States as possible and limit the number of cases in the same Member State.

Other important criteria for identifying good case studies were the availability of contact information for the developer, the availability of documentation online (project website, EIA report etc.) and the willingness of the developer and the competent authority to take part in an interview. Before confirming a case study, the availability of the documentation was checked, and the developer and the competent authority were contacted to confirm their availability to participate in an interview.

2.1.2. Case study identification process

2.1.2.1. Recommendations from stakeholders

Recommendations for case studies were gathered from Commission services and EU agencies dealing with project funding (in particular TEN-T and TEN-E projects) The following Commission services were asked for recommendations:

- DG MOVE and the European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA) for TEN-T projects
- DG ENER for TEN-E project and other energy projects (e.g. renewable energy generation)
- DG GROW in relation to mining projects

DG ENER and DG MOVE provided case study recommendations. Some of these recommendations are under further investigation as possible case studies. As some of these recommendations concern the same sectors or same Member States (e.g. several railway projects, or underwater power cables, several projects in Germany) and some were too old (prior to transposition of Directive 2014/52/EU), not all were investigated as potential cases.

Members of the Commission EIA/SEA National Experts Group were also contacted and asked to provide a few case study examples in their Member States. To facilitate the process, Milieu had prepared a note for Member States, containing criteria to help Member States select case study examples. Case studies recommendations were received from Croatia, Denmark, Latvia, Malta, and Wallonia. In all cases, the recommendations provided by the Member States were the starting point for the identification of the case in the country.

In addition to Commission services and Member States, the project team contacted relevant associations, including industry associations representing sectors corresponding to the project categories selected by DG Environment (such as energy or mining) and NGOs working on issues related to environmental assessments.

Table 9: Organisations contacted for case study recommendations

Organisation	Type of projects	Provided recommendations (Yes/No)
ENTSOG	Gas infrastructure	No
ENTSOE	Electricity infrastructure	No
Euromines	Mining	No
Wind Europe	Wind power	No
Renewables Grid Initiative (RGI)	Wind power	No
European Association of Development Agencies (EURADA)	All	No
CEE Bankwatch	All	Yes
Justice and Environment	All	Yes
Birdlife International	All	No

Cases provided were often too old (prior to transposition of Directive 2014/52/EU) to be selected. The few cases that fitted the criteria were investigated further.

2.1.2.2. Long list of potential case studies

All recommendations were compiled in a long list of potential case studies, presenting basic information on the project (project category, type of developer, country etc.), and to the extent possible, more detailed information on the characteristics of the projects, allowing to apply the criteria listed in section 2.1.1. The long list was progressively filled in by all partners and country researchers.

2.1.2.3. Complementary desk research

As not enough recommendations were obtained through stakeholders' and Member States' recommendations, desk research was carried out by the internal project team. Country researchers (with the language skills to do research at national level) went through the national EIA/SEA repository in their country (which could be a repository or a national website for public participation in EIA / SEA procedures) or alternatively through the opinions of the environmental authority on EIAs and selected relevant projects fitting the criteria set out in section 2.1.1, in particular the date of completion, the sector and the type of developer. Country researchers were advised to select several projects to have back-ups if in some cases stakeholders would not respond or refuse to participate in an interview. Selected projects by country researchers were added to the long list and checked by the project team before the country research starts contacted developers and authorities.

2.1.3. Preparation of case study templates

Two templates were developed, one for EIA case studies and one for screening case studies. the templates were organised around the main aspects of the case studies: costs, duration and benefits. They also include an introductory part aiming to gather contextual information on the project – in particular the specific features of the case that may have an impact on the costs, duration and benefits of the EIA. The templates were designed as a mix between case study template and an interview template – they contain questions that can be used in interviews, as well as tables to fill in, sometimes with pre-defined text for consistency. Both templates are available in Annex I and II to this report.

2.1.4. Cross analysis of case studies

All case studies were completed based on interviews with the project developer and the authority responsible for delivering the reasoned conclusion or granting development consent and desk research (e.g. review of the project webpage in national repository, project website, project documentation such as screening dossier, screening decision, scoping opinion, opinions of consulted public authorities, EIA report, and non-technical summary, reasoned conclusion). Each country researcher filled in a case study template. All case study templates

were compiled and analysed thematically (costs, duration, benefits) to identify trends, and to the extent possible, compared with results from Task 2 and the results from the 2010 study.

2.1.5. Problems encountered in the identification of case studies and in contacting developers

As explained in section 2.1.2, recommendations for case studies were gathered for only a handful of Member States, which led the project team to identify most of the case studies through desk research. The identification of possible cases was feasible in many Member States where a database of projects subject to EIA and screening existed and provided sufficient information to select relevant cases. Contacting stakeholders, in particular developers, to confirm their interest and availability to participate in an interview (which is a prerequisite for confirming the case) has proven difficult and has led to delays in the identification of case studies. In many cases, developers have not answered our request by email and sometimes could be reached by phone, leading to dropping many pre-selected cases. Some developers have also refused to participate in interviews for various reasons – no time to provide input, in particular when developers were SMEs, unwillingness to see their project named and described in a study, or confidentiality of internal EIA documentation. Authorities were also diversely responsive, sometimes due lack of time and resources to provide input. As a result, the identification of case studies took significantly longer than expected and the final number of case studies carried out is below the 30 case studies that were initially expected. As presented in the tables below, 23 case studies – 12 EIAs and 11 screening cases – in 17 Member States have been completed.

2.2. Selection of case studies

2.2.1. EIA case studies

Table 10: Final list of EIA case studies

Nb	MS	Annex	Project category		Type of developer		Competent authority	Project size	Project status	Input from stakeholders
1	Slovakia	Annex II	Point 3(a) and Point 2(d)(i)	Construction of a geothermal power plant and geothermal drilling	Private	SME	Regional	One plant with a 6.5 Mwe capacity	Development consent granted (not yet under construction)	Both developer and competent authority provided input
2	Italy	Annex I	Point 20	Construction of cross-border underground electrical power line between IT and AT (Italian section)	Mixed (public-private company)	Large	National	Power line of 51 km	Development consent granted (not yet under construction)	Both developer and competent authority provided input
3	France	Annex II	Point 3(h)	Installation and operation of two experimental tidal turbines	Private	SME	Regional	Two tidal turbines with a power of 250 kW each	Under construction	Developer provided input.
4	Luxembourg	Annex II	Point 6(c)	Construction of fuel storage facility	Private	Large	National	Storage facility of 30,000 m^3	EIA procedure completed, permitting procedure ongoing	Both developer and competent authority provided input
5	Bulgaria	Annex I	Point 16	Construction of compressor station as part of extension of gas pipeline	Public (company)	Large	National	Construction of one compressor station + connections	Under construction	Both developer and competent authority provided input
6	Poland	Annex II	Point 10(d)	Airport expansion	Public (company)	Large	Regional	Overall extension of 4 600m	Development consent granted	Both developer and competent

Nb	MS	Annex	Project category		Type of developer		Competent authority	Project size	Project status	Input from stakeholders
								(extension of runway, terminal + additional facilities)	(not yet under construction)	authority provided input
7	Denmark	Annex II	Point 3(b)	Construction of biogas pipeline	Public (company)	Large	National	Pipeline of 115 km and two biogas plants	Under construction	Both developer and competent authority provided input
8	Finland	Annex I	Point 20	Construction of cross-border overhead electrical power line between FI and SE (Finnish section)	Public (company)	Large	Regional	Power line of 380 km	Under construction	Both developer and competent authority provided input
9	Sweden	Annex I	Point 4	Construction of hydrogen-based steel mill	Private	SME	Regional	hydrogen production plant (700 MW) + steel mill covering an area of 300 ha	Under construction	Both developer and competent authority provided input
10	Germany	Annex I	Point 7(a)	Expansion of and construction of new railway line	Public (authority)	Large	National	Railway line of 200 km (segment covered by the case study is 6 km)	Under construction	Developer provided input.
11	Croatia	Annex I	Point 7(b)	Construction of new highway section	Public (company)	Large	National	8 km highway section	Under construction	Developer provided input
12	Latvia	Annex I	Point 19	Expansion of a stone quarry	Private	SME	Regional	Expansion of mining area of 88 ha	In operation	Competent authority provided input

2.2.2. Screening case studies

Table 11: Final list of screening case studies

Nb	MS	Annex	Project category		Type of developer		Competent authority	Screening decision	Project size	Input from stakeholders
1	Czechia	Annex II	Point 10(b)	Construction of an educational and sport center	Public (authority)	N/A	Regional	EIA required	Building site of 4,036 m^2	Both developer and competent authority provided input
2	Malta	Annex II	Point 10(b)	Construction of commercial complex	Private	SME	National	EIA required	Building site of 3,400m^2	Both developer and competent authority provided input
3	Greece	Annex II	Point 13(a)	Amendment to decision regarding the operation of a quarry	Private	SME	National	EIA not required	Quarry of 390,000 m^2	Both developer and competent authority provided input
4	Belgium (Wallonia)	Annex II	Point 3(i)	Windmill installation	Private	SME	Regional	EIA not required	One windmill (2.35 MW) within existing park	Both developer and competent authority provided input

Nb	MS	Annex	Project category		Type of developer		Competent authority	Screening decision	Project size	Input from stakeholders
5	Germany	Annex II	Point 3(h) / 10(g)	Dam and hydroelectric power station renovation	Private	SME	Regional	EIA not required	Section concerned by renovation of about 1 km	Developer provided input
6	Italy	Annex II	Point 3(b)	Installations of components within a gas storage facility	Mixed (public-private company)	Large	National	EIA not required	Installation of compressor of 15 MW	Developer provided input
7	Denmark	Annex II	Point 2(a)	Operation of a sand, gravel and stone extraction area	Private	SME	Regional	EIA required	Extraction area of 22 ha	Both developer and competent authority provided input
8	Sweden	Annex II	Point 3(a)	Solar park installation	Private	Large	Regional	EIA required	9 ha area, production of 9,000 MWh/year	Both developer and competent authority provided input
9	Sweden	Annex II	Point 3(a)	Solar park installation	Private	Large	Regional	EIA not required	13 ha area, production of 19 GWh/year	Developer provided input
10	Latvia	Annex II	Point 13(a)	Construction of combined rail/highway bridge	Public (authority)	N/A	National	EIA not required	Construction of one four traffic lane bridge	Both developer and competent authority

Nb	MS	Annex	Project category		Type of developer		Competent authority	Screening decision	Project size	Input from stakeholders
										provided input
11	Slovenia	Annex II	Point 3(a)	Extension of solar power plant	Private	Large	National	EIA not required	Addition of 5 MW (total capacity of 8 MW)	Competent authority provided input

2.3. Case study findings

2.3.1. Costs of EIA and screening procedures

This first section presents the findings from the case studies on the costs of EIA and screening procedures by stakeholder groups involved in EIA and screening procedures – project developers, competent authorities (responsible for delivering the reasoned conclusion or granting development consent), and authorities consulted at different stages of the procedure (screening, scoping and environmental report) when it was possible to reach them. Quantitative information from the case studies was collated in tables, compared to the results of the Task 2 and the 2010 study when possible. Relevant contextual information was included when it sheds light on the magnitude of the costs or explains differences between case studies.

2.3.1.1. Costs incurred by project developers

Typical costs incurred by project developers in an EIA procedure include:

- Staff time to coordinate and prepare thematic studies and field surveys for the EIA report, which include internal person-hours and/or the purchase of external expertise, and where relevant, the purchase of data, equipment or specific services.
- Staff time to coordinate and prepare all EIA documents (screening request, environmental report, non-technical summary), respond to additional information requests and integrate feedback from public consultation.
- Staff time and direct costs of organising public hearings.

Some of these costs may be externalised to specialised contractors – in some cases the whole environmental report, including all its thematic components, was externalised, in other cases, only some of the thematic assessments were subcontracted.

Project developers interviewed for the case studies were asked to provide estimates of person-hours spent internally, if possible, by stages of the EIA procedure, and an estimate of direct costs incurred for completing the procedure. Table 12 presents those estimates for the 12 EIA case studies. The person-hours presented in the table correspond to the time spent by the staff of the project developer; the fixed costs include both external expertise or services purchased by the developer and direct costs from the EIA procedure such as organising public hearing or other activities as part of the public consultation. The information presented in the table below reflects the developers' best estimates. It was not possible for some of the developers to precisely provide the number of person-hours spent internally when this time is not specifically monitored.

Table 12: Costs incurred by project developers in EIA case studies

Case	Person-hours spent by developers on the EIA	Fixed costs (e.g. studies outsourced, consultations)	Cost as % of project cost	Total cost
Construction of a geothermal power plant and geothermal drilling (SK)	N/A (2 internals and 10 externals worked on the case)	Public consultation – € 5 400	0.05%	€ 30 000
Construction of cross-border underground electrical power line between IT and AT (Italian section)	Effort equivalent to 1 person involved per 4h x 570 working days = 2 280 h	N/A	0,5 %	Effort equivalent to 1 person involved per 4h x 570 working days = 2 280 h or € 300 000
Installation and operation of two experimental tidal turbines (FR)	Between 1 and 1.5 FTE over 3 years*[18]	€500 000 – €600. 000	N/A	Effort equivalent to 1 – 1.5 FTEs over 3 years or €500 000 - 600 000
Construction of fuel storage facility (LU)	The EIA was outsourced and internal person-hours for coordinating the process could not be provided by the developer	Prepare screening dossier - €15 000 Submission of information to competent authority for scoping opinion - € 30 000 Preparation of EIA report and consultations - €5 600	N/A	€144 000
Construction of compressor station as part of extension of gas pipeline (BG)	The EIA was outsourced	Preliminary studies + preparation of the screening dossier - €12 526,65 Submission of information to competent authority for scoping opinion - € 5 112.92 Preparation of the EIA report - € 47 166,68	0.07%	€12 526,65 + €2 112,92 + €47 166,68 + €34 895,67 for EIA permit = € 96 701,92
Airport expansion (PL)	Preliminary studied – 24 hours Prepare screening dossier – 4 hours	Preliminary studies – €4 138 Preparation of EIA report – €20 690	0.04%	98 internal hours + €32 437

[18] *This number represents an estimate of person hours for outsourced work i.e. person-hours spent by the subcontractor

Case	Person-hours spent by developers on the EIA	Fixed costs (e.g. studies outsourced, consultations)	Cost as % of project cost	Total cost
	Submission of information to competent authority for scoping – 8 hours Preparation of EIA report – 4 hours (administration) Preparation of the non-technical summary and management of public consultation – 30 hours Summary and integration of comments received from public consultation into EIA report – 8 hours Revision of EIA report based on recommendations from the authority – 20 hours	Report on public consultation – €2 897 Annex to the EIA report – €3 563 Noise study – €1 149		
Construction of biogas pipeline (DK)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Construction of cross-border overhead electrical power line between FI and SE (Finnish section)	1000 internal company person hours (4 persons involved; together 1000 hours)	€260 000 (Consultant fees for reports and public consultation)	Less than 0.1%	1000 internal company person hours + €260 000
Construction of hydrogen-based steel mill (SE)	1560 hours**[19]	public consultation – 500.000 SEK = €44 000 overall EIA - 3-4 million SEK = €266 000 – 355 000	0.1%	1560 hours or €266 000 – 355 000
Expansion of and construction of new railway line (DE)	Not provided, but more than 50 staff members were involved in the approval process, including 1 head of engineering, 1 legal specialist, 1 environmental specialist, 1	N/A	N/A	N/A

[19] **This number represents an estimate of person hours for outsourced work i.e. person-hours spent by the subcontractor

Case	Person-hours spent by developers on the EIA	Fixed costs (e.g. studies outsourced, consultations)	Cost as % of project cost	Total cost
	electrical specialist, 20 in-house staff. The company involved in planning likely involved the same number of staff.			
Construction of new highway section (HR)	The EIA was outsourced	€41 941,73	0.043%	€41 941,73
Expansion of a stone quarry (LV)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Ten out of 12 developers provided estimates of the costs incurred in the process. Generally, there is a tendency to outsource most of the work and so the overall cost is a combination of internal person hours and costs associated with hiring external contractors. The estimates of the costs vary depending on the complexity and scope of the project. Based on the sample of 10 case studies, the costs range from as low as €30 000 in Slovakia to €500 000-600 000 in France. While these estimates seem high in absolute terms, they usually do not represent a significant proportion of the total project cost. The EIA cost as a percentage of the total project cost did not exceed 0.5% in any of the case studies where this estimate was available (7/12 developers provided an estimate of EIA cost as a % of project cost). According to the 2010 GHK study, the costs of the EIA procedure tend to represent a larger percentage of the total costs for smaller projects. This highlights the increased financial burden of EIA processes relative to the overall project budget for smaller-scale developments[20]. Based on the sample of case studies analysed in this report, it cannot be conclusively stated that the costs as a percentage of project cost are usually higher for smaller projects. The data points to a variety of percentages, with some smaller projects like the geothermal power plant (SK) and the new highway section (HR) having relatively low EIA cost percentages (0.05% and 0.04%, respectively), while a larger project like the construction in BG has a cost percentage of 0.07%. The largest project examined, the carbon-neutral steel plant (SE), has a cost percentage of 0.10%.

Table 13 shows the cost estimates reported by project developers for the screening procedures, in the screening case studies.

Table 13: Costs incurred by project developers screening

Case	Person-hours spent by developers on the EIA	Fixed costs (e.g. studies outsourced, consultations)	Total cost
Construction of educational and sport center (CZ)	The case study was outsourced	Prepare screening dossier - 9 834 €; Dossier revision / additional information request – 1 434 €; Overall screening decision - 11 268 €	€11 268
Construction of commercial complex (MT)	40-60 hours	Not possible to estimate. The cost for screening together with EIA was €137 580	40-60 internal hours + outsourced costs that were not possible to estimate
Amendment to decision regarding the operation of a quarry (EL)	80 hours***[21]	€ 3 850	€3 850 or 80 person hours.
Windmill installation (BE)	About 80 days (€11 .000)	€40 000 outsourced to an external entity for the preparation of the dossier;	Internal 80 days (€11.000) + €60 000 on outsourced costs

[20] GHK, 2010, Collection of information and data to support the Impact Assessment study of the review of the EIA Directive: A study for DG Environment. Available at: https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/3b48eff1-b955-423f-9086-0d85ad1c5879/library/27a69f55-bf82-4e47-8700-1e6305abbb18/details?download=true

[21] This number represents an estimate of person hours for outsourced work i.e. person-hours spent by the subcontractor.

Case	Person-hours spent by developers on the EIA	Fixed costs (e.g. studies outsourced, consultations)	Total cost
		€ 20 000 spent on tendering process open to wind turbine producers	
Dam & hydroelectric power station renovation (DE)	5 hours	Between €2 400 and €2 600 for 30-40 hours of subcontracted work	5 hours internally + €2 400-2 600 for outsourced work
Installations of components within a gas storage facility (IT)	Prepare screening dossier – 16 800 hours Dossier revision/ additional information request 2 740 hours; Overall screening decision 19 540	N/A	19 540 hours
Operation of a sand, gravel and stone extraction area (DK)	Preparation of the screening dossier – 14 hours. The rest was not possible to estimate. The screening lasted from February to October 2023.	N/A	Preparation of the screening dossier – 14 hours. The rest was not possible to estimate. The screening lasted from February to October 2023.
Development and operation of solar park of 9,000 MWh/year (SE)	Prepare screening dossier - 40-80 hours Dossier submission - 14-36 hours (including consultation) Dossier revision / additional information request - 20-40 hours for revision Overall screening procedure - 74-156 hours	N/A	74-156 hours
Development and operation of solar park 19 GWh/year (SE)	300 hours	€17 600	300 hours + €17.600
Construction of combined rail/highway bridge (LV)	N/A	€11 360 for external consultant	€11 360
Extension of solar power plant (SI)	N/A	N/A	N/A

Overall, costs associated with screening procedures are considerably lower than the costs associated with the EIA. 11 out of 12 developers provided an estimate of the person-hours or fixed costs (or at least the number of staff members involved in the case). However, some of the developers reported difficulties to distinguish the costs of the screening from the overall EIA costs (this was the case in Malta) or to estimate the costs of the overall procedure

(Denmark). Similarly to the EIA case studies, the cost range exhibits notable variations. The lowest cost was reported by Germany with 5 internal hours and €2 400-2 600 of outsourced work, while the highest cost was reported by Belgium with internal 80 days (€11 000) plus €60 000 worth of outsourced costs.

2.3.1.2. Costs incurred by competent authorities

Costs incurred by competent authorities in the EIA procedure include:

- Staff time to review documents submitted by the project developer (screening request, environmental report), prepare requests for additional information, if relevant, and for any informal exchanges with the project developer
- Staff time to coordinate the consultation of relevant authorities at the different stages of the procedure (screening, scoping, environmental report) and the public consultation (publish all documents on the relevant online platform and the public consultation announcement)
- Staff time for decision making and drafting the screening decision, scoping opinion and reasoned conclusion.

These person-hours are usually carried out by internal staff from the competent authorities (in none of the case studies any these tasks were externalised).

Table 14 presents the cost estimates reported by competent authorities for the EIA procedure.

Table 14: Costs incurred by competent authorities – EIA

Case	Person-hours spent by authority on the EIA	Fixed costs (e.g. studies outsourced, consultations)	Total cost
Construction of a geothermal power plant and geothermal drilling (SK)	45 hours	Nothing was outsourced	45 hours
Construction of cross-border underground electrical power line between IT and AT (Italian section)	Making all information and documentation related to the public consultation electronically accessible to the public (authority's website) - 6 person hours. No estimates available for other steps.	Nothing was outsourced	N/A
Installation and operation of two experimental tidal turbines (FR)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Construction of fuel storage facility (LU)	Screening total - 16 hours; scoping - 40 hours; Review of EIA report + organization of consultations - 80 hours; Preparation of the reasoned opinion - 30 hours; overall EIA	Nothing was outsourced	166 hours

Case	Person-hours spent by authority on the EIA	Fixed costs (e.g. studies outsourced, consultations)	Total cost
	procedure - 166 hours.		
Construction of compressor station as part of extension of gas pipeline (BG)	12 experts were involved. Person-hours estimate is not available.	Nothing was outsourced	12 experts were involved
Airport expansion (PL)	The least complicated cases involve 2 substantive employees, 2 managers and the director. The number of staff members increases with the complexity of the case. However, the authority did not provide an estimate number of people involved in this case.	N/A	N/A
Construction of biogas pipeline (DK)	6-8 experts involved in the case	Nothing was outsourced	Between 2 600 and 3 900 manhours in the course of three years
Construction of cross-border overhead electrical power line between FI and SE (Finnish section)	Scoping – 1120 hours; Review of EIA report – 752 hours; Overall EIA – 1872 hours	Nothing was outsourced	1872
Construction of hydrogen-based steel mill (SE)	900 hours - team consisted of 10-15 people with different levels of involvement and responsibilities	Nothing was outsourced	900 hours, which is equivalent to 500 000 SEK (€ 44 470) in salaries
Expansion of and construction of new railway line (DE)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Construction of new highway section (HR)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Expansion of a stone quarry (LV)	Preparation and issuance of the scoping opinion - Depending on the specification of the project – between 5 – 30 person days; Review of EIA report - Approx. 30 person days; Preparation of the reasoned opinion - Approx. 10 person days.	Nothing was outsourced	N/A

Generally, the costs incurred by public authorities tend to be lower compared to the costs borne by project developers. This is consistent with the findings provided in the 2010 GHK study[22]. If the public authority demands an additional environmental study, it is the responsibility of the developer to provide it and to pay for it. As indicated in column 3 of Table 14, it is not very common for public authorities to outsource their work. On the other hand, it is quite common for developers to outsource the entire EIA or parts of it (especially some of the very specialized studies) to external contractors, which increases the overall costs. The main cost for public authorities is the salaries of the staff members involved in the case. Eight out of 12 public authorities provided estimates of the costs (or at least the number of staff members involved in the case), which range from as low as 45 hours in Slovakia to 1 872 hours in Finland. The highest number of staff members working on a case was reported in Bulgaria and Slovenia with 12 staff members and 10-15 staff members respectively. Overall, the costs vary considerably across different case studies and the time spent by the public authority depends on the complexity of the case as well as the quality of the initial documentation provided by the developer.

Table 15: Costs incurred by competent authorities: Screening

Case	Person-hours spent by developers on the EIA	Fixed costs (e.g. studies outsourced, consultations)	Total cost
Construction of educational and sport center (CZ)	• Review screening dossier and take screening decision - 4/6 hours • Consult with other authorities (if applicable) - 6/10 hours • Draft public statement on screening decision with justification of the decision and notification to developer - 10 hours • Overall screening decision - between 20-30 hours	Nothing was outsourced	20-30 hours
Construction of commercial complex (MT)	40-70 hours	Nothing was outsourced	40-70 hours
Amendment to decision regarding the operation of a quarry (EL)	• Consult with other authorities - 64 person-hours in total,	Nothing was outsourced	64 hours for the consultation + 40 person hours for the screening = 104 hours

[22] GHK, 2010, Collection of information and data to support the Impact Assessment study of the review of the EIA Directive: A study for DG Environment. Available at: https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/3b48eff1-b955-423f-9086-0d85ad1c5879/library/27a69f55-bf82-4e47-8700-1e6305abbb18/details?download=true

Case	Person-hours spent by developers on the EIA	Fixed costs (e.g. studies outsourced, consultations)	Total cost
	• Overall screening decision - 40 person-hours in total, meaning 5 person-days (approximate) for the screening process.		
Windmill installation (BE)	• Review screening dossier and take screening decision - 20 hours to assess if the file is complete. If incomplete, sent back to the developer. Another 3-5h to assess its response • Consult with other authorities - Usually 15-20 other authorities or entities to consult. Authorities get 30 days to respond. No precise info on time needed to consult them.	Nothing was outsourced	32-40 hours
Dam & hydroelectric power station renovation (DE)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Installations of components within a gas storage facility (IT)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Operation of a sand, gravel and stone extraction area (DK)	203 hours	45 hours of an external contractor – €5 900	203 internal hours + €5 900 for 45 hours of outsourced work
Development and operation of solar park of 9,000 MWh/year (SE)	24 person-hours; 2 staff members involved in the screening procedure	Nothing was outsourced. It is not common to hire external contractors.	24 person-hours; 2 staff members involved in the screening procedure
Development and operation of solar park 19 GWh/year (SE)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Construction of combined rail/highway bridge (LV)	4-5 working days (23-40 hours) for the whole procedure	Nothing was outsourced.	4-5 working days (32-40 hours) for the whole procedure
Extension of solar power	• Review screening dossier and take	Nothing was outsourced	98 hours – 1 person

Case	Person-hours spent by developers on the EIA	Fixed costs (e.g. studies outsourced, consultations)	Total cost
plant (SI)	screening decision - 24 hours (1 person) • Formal call for additional information - 16 hours (1 person) • Consultation with other authorities - 8 hours (1 person) • Review and analysis of opinion gathered from consultations - 16 hours (1 person) • Active - 'in person consultations' - 6 hours (1 person) • Draft public statement on screening decision with justification of the decision and notification to developer – 4 hours (1 person) • overview of comments and decisions - 24 hours (1 person) • public comments - 16 hours (4 people); review of comments from the public - 4 hours (1 person) • overall screening procedure - 98 hours - 1 person		

As indicated in Table 15, the costs for screening are considerably lower than costs associated with overall EIA procedure. Eight out of 12 public authorities provided an estimate of the costs incurred by the screening procedure. Similarly to the EIA process, there is a big variety in the costs incurred by public authorities on screening, ranging from 20-30 hours in Czechia to 248 hours in Denmark (203 internal person hours + 45 delivered by an external contractor). Across the case studies, Denmark was the only case where the public authority outsourced part of the work, and the public authority paid approximately €5 900 for 45 hours of external work.

2.3.1.3. Cost incurred by consulted authorities

Authorities with environmental responsibilities or regional/local competences must be consulted on the environmental report and can be consulted at other stages of the EIA procedure (screening, scoping), depending on national requirements or practice. The costs incurred by consulted authorities include the staff time to review project documents – in particular the environmental report – and drafting their opinion. The information that could be collected from consulted authorities in a few case studies is presented in Table 16.

Table 16: Costs incurred by consulted authorities: EIA and Screening case studies

Case	Person hours
Construction of a geothermal power plant and geothermal drilling (SK) – EIA	9.5 hours (1 person involved)
Construction of compressor station as part of extension of gas pipeline (BG) – EIA	2 people were involved – specific person hours cannot be provided
Airport expansion (PL) – EIA	2 consulted authorities provided an estimate. The first authority spent 62 hours, the second one 40 hours.
Windmill installation (BE) – Screening	3-4 hours (1 person involved)
Construction of educational and sport center (CZ) – Screening	5 people involved spending 2-4 hours each

Only 5/23 case studies provided an estimate of the person hours spent by consulted authorities on the case. Table 16 shows varying person-hours spent by consulted authorities on EIAs/screenings for different projects. For the construction of a geothermal power plant and drilling, one person spent a total of 9.5 hours on tasks such as reviewing screening dossiers and drafting public statements. The Bulgarian case involved two people, but specific hours are not provided. Considering the Airport expansion in Poland, two consulted authorities provided an estimate of person hours. In both cases the person hours are slightly higher than for the other three case studies with 62 and 40 hours spent on the EIA. The windmill installation screening in Belgium (Wallonia) was brief at 3-4 hours because it consisted of adding a windmill to an existing site, which was already extensively studied before. Typically, evaluating a new windmill site requires a minimum of 2 working days. Lastly, the construction of an educational and sport centre in Czechia required the collective effort of five people, each spending 2-4 hours.

2.3.1.4. Cost drivers

Generally, the main financial burdens in EIA/Screening procedures are primarily attributed to the labour costs of both internal and external staff required to carry out the assessments. In particular, hiring the expertise of specialists (air quality experts, noise experts etc) was flagged in several case studies as a strong determinant of the overall cost of the EIA. Moreover, long EIA procedure and procedural delays when they happen may expose projects to economic variables like inflation and market fluctuations, making the overall project more expensive. In one case study (EIA case in Slovakia), the developer stated that the long EIA procedure increased the overall project costs by 30% because of high levels of inflation, driven by the

aftermath of covid-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine. An overview of factors influencing costs and duration is outlined in Section 2.3.3.

2.3.2. Duration of EIA and screening procedures

2.3.2.1. Screening

The duration of the case-by-case examination in the 13 case studies where case-by-case examination was carried out ranged from 14 to 589 days[23]. Excluding the Greek case study – which has the longest screening process and is an outlier compared to other case studies - the average duration is around 86 days, which is slightly under the three-month legal deadline provided in the Directive. Including the Greek case study, the average duration is around 124 days, close to four months. These figures are comparable to the results of Task 2, which showed an average duration for the screening procedure of 3,7 months and the largest range between minimum and maximum duration.

Eight of the 13 case studies concern Member States that have adopted a legal deadline for screening under the 90-day deadline provided in the Directive. In eight case studies, the national legal deadline was exceeded. In the sample, two case studies concern projects in Member States where there is public consultation at screening stage (Czechia and Italy). In the Czech case study, this public consultation has been flagged as a factor of delay, because of a surge in public opposition to the project.

For the screening case studies (second table), a distinction has been made to the extent possible between the duration of the administrative procedure and the duration of the whole screening process, which includes the time taken by the developer to prepare the screening dossier and to provide additional information when requested by the authority (which suspends the administrative procedure). The duration of the whole screening process is usually an estimate provided by the project developer in an interview.

The sample of case studies show that the preparation of all necessary documents is what take the most time-consuming part of the screening process. When developers provided an estimate of the full duration of the screening procedure (including all data collection and drafting time before and during the procedure), it is significantly longer than the administrative procedure – the administrative procedure representing 17 to 26% of the total duration, with the notable exception of the Greek case study, where the administrative procedure represented around 75% of the whole duration. In three case studies, there was a formal request for additional information from the competent authority. In all three case studies, this request delayed significantly the procedure – adding 65 days in the Maltese case study, 73 days in the Italian case study, and 77 days in the Danish case study, roughly around 2-2.5 months in each case.

[23] The duration of the case-by-case examination is understood as the time between the acceptance of the complete screening dossier and the adoption of the screening decision.

Table 17: Duration of screening in EIA case studies

Case study	Legal deadline in MS	Extension legally possible in MS?	Consultation at screening stage in case study	Duration of screening procedure in case study
Construction of a geothermal power plant and geothermal drilling (SK)	30 days	Yes	Not applicable	Automatically subject to EIA (based on national criteria)
Construction of cross-border underground electrical power line between IT and AT (Italian section)	90 days	Yes	Not applicable	Automatically subject to EIA (Annex I)
Installation and operation of two experimental tidal turbines (FR)	35 days	No	Inter-service consultation + opinion from environmental authority	104 days
Construction of fuel storage facility (LU)	90 days	Yes	Inter-service consultation	44 days
Construction of compressor station as part of extension of gas pipeline (BG)	30 days	Yes	Not applicable	Automatically subject to EIA (based on national criteria)
Airport expansion (PL)	30 days	Yes	Not applicable	Automatically subject to EIA (based on national criteria)
Construction of biogas pipeline (DK)	90 days	Yes	Not applicable	Automatically subject to EIA (based on national criteria)
Construction of cross-border overhead electrical power line between FI and SE (Finnish section)	30 days	No	Not applicable	Automatically subject to EIA (Annex I)
Construction of hydrogen-based steel mill (SE)	60 days	Yes	Not applicable	Automatically subject to EIA (Annex I)
Expansion of and construction of new railway line (DE)	42 days	Yes	Not applicable	Automatically subject to EIA (Annex I)
Construction of new highway section (HR)	60 days	Yes	Not applicable	Automatically subject to EIA (Annex I)
Expansion of a stone quarry (LV)	30 days	Yes	None	Automatically subject to EIA (Annex I)

Table 18: Duration of screening in screening case studies

Case study	Legal deadline in MS	Extension legally possible in MS?	Consultation at screening stage in case study	Request for additional information	Duration of screening procedure in case study	Duration of screening phase
Construction of educational and sport center (CZ)	45 days	Yes	30-day public consultation + all relevant authorities (with environmental responsibilities and local/regional competences)	No	65 days	9 months
Construction of commercial complex (MT)	30 days	Yes	Relevant authorities with environmental responsibilities	Yes	14 days	2.6 months (does not include preparation time before submission of application)
Amendment to decision regarding the operation of a quarry (EL)	90 days	No	No consultation procedure required[24]	No	589 days	26 months
Windmill installation (BE)	90 days	Yes (+30 days)	All relevant authorities (with environmental responsibilities and local/regional competences)	No	126 days	16 months
Dam & hydroelectric power station renovation (DE)	42 days	Yes	Relevant authorities with environmental responsibilities	No	187 days	N/A
Installations of components within a gas storage facility (IT)	60 days[25]	Yes	30-day public consultation + all relevant authorities (with environmental responsibilities and local/regional competences)	Yes	218 days	320 days (does not include preparation time before submission of application)

[24] When a screening procedure for the modification of a project is carried out in Greece, the screening report must be made available to the public, but the competent authority decides whether or not a public consultation is necessary. In this case, the changes to the project were not considered significant enough to require public consultation.

[25] This project falls under the fast-track procedure for energy projects (decarbonation, energy efficiency and energy security) established by Legislative Decree of 31 May 2021, n. 77 ('Simplifications Decree bis ') in which the deadline for the screening decision has been reduced from 90 days (45 day public consultation / 45 days for the decision) to 60 days (30 day public consultation / 30 days for the decision).

Case study	Legal deadline in MS	Extension legally possible in MS?	Consultation at screening stage in case study	Request for additional information	Duration of screening procedure in case study	Duration of screening phase
Operation of a sand, gravel and stone extraction area (DK)	90 days	Yes	All relevant authorities (with environmental responsibilities and local/regional competences) and affected landowners	No	41 days	7.3 months
Development and operation of solar park of 9,000 MWh/year (SE)	60 days	Yes	Relevant authorities with environmental responsibilities	Yes	36 days	6.7 months
Development and operation of solar park 19 GWh/year (SE)	60 days	Yes	Relevant authorities with environmental responsibilities	Yes	30 days	NA
Construction of combined rail/highway bridge (LV)	30 days	Yes	Relevant authorities with environmental responsibilities	No	42 days	5-6 months
Extension of solar power plant (SI)	90 days	Yes	Relevant authorities with environmental responsibilities	No	120 days	4 months

2.3.2.2. Scoping

Out of the 12 EIA case studies, nine had a scoping process, either mandatory or voluntary. In eight case studies, scoping was a mandatory step of the EIA procedure and therefore was automatically launched by the competent authority. The scoping resulted in all cases in a scoping opinion or statement made publicly available. In one case study, the scoping was not a mandatory step and was not carried out as a formal step of the EIA procedure. It instead took the form of a scoping meeting with the development consent and environmental authorities. No scoping opinion was issued in this case (the conclusions of the meeting constituted the scoping opinion).

The main difference between Member States in the way the scoping process is carried out lies in the consultation process required at the scoping stage, which may involve only relevant authorities or involve all interested parties, including the public. Out of the nine case studies, two (Denmark and Finland) had public consultation at scoping stage (in which relevant authorities were also involved) and seven a consultation process involving only relevant authorities – either limited to environmental authorities or also open to authorities with local/regional competences. In both cases that had public consultation, hearings where the public had the opportunity to ask questions and give feedback were organised.

The average duration of the scoping process[26] in the seven case studies for which that information is available was around 82.5 days (2.7 months), which is below the results of Task 2, in which an average of 3.8 months was found. Three of the case studies that had a scoping process were carried out in Member States that have established a legal deadline for scoping (Finland, Latvia, Luxembourg). In two of these cases the deadline was met (in the Finnish case, for one out of the two EIAs carried out for the project). In two cases – Denmark and Finland, second EIA – the public consultation may explain the longer duration of the scoping stage, because of the minimum duration needed for holding the public consultation and the necessary time to consolidate the feedback.

Table 19: Duration of scoping process in EIA case studies

Case studies	Mandatory or voluntary step in MS	Legal deadlines for scoping step	Consultation at scoping stage in case study	Duration of scoping procedure in case study
Construction of a geothermal power plant and geothermal drilling (SK)	Mandatory	None	All relevant authorities (with environmental responsibilities and local/regional competences)	71 days
Construction of cross-border underground electrical power line between IT and AT (Italian section)	Voluntary	60 days	Not applicable	No scoping opinion requested / issued

[26] The duration of the scoping process is understood as the time between the scoping request (or the initiation of the scoping by the authority when it is a mandatory step) and the adoption of the scoping opinion / statement.

Case studies	Mandatory or voluntary step in MS	Legal deadlines for scoping step	Consultation at scoping stage in case study	Duration of scoping procedure in case study
Installation and operation of two experimental tidal turbines (FR)	Voluntary	None	Relevant authorities with environmental responsibilities	No formal scoping – regular meetings with competent authorities
Construction of fuel storage facility (LU)	Mandatory	90 days	All relevant authorities (with environmental responsibilities and local/regional competences)	64 days + meeting with authorities
Construction of compressor station as part of extension of gas pipeline (BG)	Mandatory	None	Relevant authorities with environmental responsibilities	27 days
Airport expansion (PL)	Mandatory	30 days	Relevant authorities with environmental responsibilities	63 days
Construction of biogas pipeline (DK)	Mandatory	None	30-day public consultation open to all interested parties	172 days[27]
Construction of cross-border overhead electrical power line between FI and SE (Finnish section)	Mandatory	60 days (max 90 days if 60 days are needed for public hearing)	30-day public consultation open to all interested parties + public hearings	EIA 1: 91 days EIA 2: 132 days
Construction of hydrogen-based steel mill (SE)	Mandatory	None	All relevant authorities (with environmental responsibilities and local/regional competences)	NIA (roughly 3.4 months[28])
Expansion of and construction of new railway line (DE)	Voluntary	None	Not applicable	No scoping opinion requested / issued
Construction of new highway section (HR)	Voluntary	90 days	Not applicable	No scoping opinion requested / issued

[27] Includes the consultation time (30 days) and the time taken by the developer to consolidate the feedback and draft a scoping statement.

[28] Exact duration of scoping period is not known – this reflects the duration between the first permit request to the start of the public consultation.

Case studies	Mandatory or voluntary step in MS	Legal deadlines for scoping step	Consultation at scoping stage in case study	Duration of scoping procedure in case study
Expansion of a stone quarry (LV)	Mandatory	30 days	All relevant authorities (with environmental responsibilities and local/regional competences)	40 days

2.3.2.3. Public consultation

In the 12 EIA case studies, public consultation period ranged between 30 and 60 days. In most cases, the duration of the public consultation was equal to the legal minimum timeframe – only in four cases the public consultation lasted at least a week more than the minimum timeframe.

In the sample of EIA case studies, only one project had to carry out a transboundary consultation process – the construction of the cross-border overhead electrical power line between Finland and Sweden. The transboundary consultation was carried out for the cross-border section of the power line (second EIA). The transboundary consultation procedure lasted for about 35 months and significantly delayed the issuance of the final reasoned opinion on the EIA report.

Table 20: Duration of public consultation in EIA cases

Case studies	Public consultation on environmental report – legal minimum timeframe	Duration of public consultation on environmental report in case study	Transboundary consultation
Construction of a geothermal power plant and geothermal drilling (SK)	30 days	38 days	No
Construction of cross-border underground electrical power line between IT and AT (Italian section)	60 days	60 days	No
Installation and operation of two experimental tidal turbines (FR)	30 days	31 days	No
Construction of fuel storage facility (LU)	30 days	30 days	No
Construction of compressor station as part of extension of gas pipeline (BG)	30 days	33 days	No
Airport extension (PL)	30 days	57 days	No
Construction of biogas pipeline (DK)	8 weeks	56 days	No

Case studies	Public consultation on environmental report – legal minimum timeframe	Duration of public consultation on environmental report in case study	Transboundary consultation
Construction of cross-border overhead electrical power line between FI and SE (Finnish section)	30 days (can be extended to 60 days)	EIA 1: 60 days EIA 2: 60 days	EIA 1: No EIA 2: Yes – 1074 days
Construction of hydrogen-based steel mill (SE)	30 days	53 days	No
Expansion of and construction of new railway line (DE)	30 days	30 days	No
Construction of new highway section (HR)	30 days	30 days	No
Expansion of a stone quarry (LV)	30 days	43 days	No

2.3.2.4. Review of environmental report and consultation with relevant authorities

It was often not possible to single out the consultation of relevant authorities from the public consultation period and the review of the environmental report because in most Member States, these steps tend to happen in parallel. The typical sequence in most Member States is that when the environmental report is received, the public consultation is launched at the same time as the report is sent to the consulted authorities, sometimes with the same deadline, while the competent authority starts the review of the environmental report, which may lead at the end of the consultation period to a request for additional information or studies to the developer.

In two case studies, in France and Luxembourg, the consultation of relevant authorities was separated from and carried out prior to the public consultation and in both cases, revisions were made to the environmental report before the start of the public consultation. In the case study in Luxembourg, supplements to the environmental report were requested to the developer following the consultation with authorities, which led to the submission of a supplementary environmental report before the start of the public consultation. In the French case study, the developer addressed the comments from the environmental authority in a memo before the start of the public consultation.

To the extent possible, the duration of this phase was estimated and is presented for each case in Table 22. It is however difficult to compare the durations across case studies, as what is included in this phase is slightly different for each case study.

2.3.2.5. Reasoned conclusion and development consent

Article 8 of the EIA Directive provides that ‘Member States shall ensure that the competent authority takes [the decision to grant development consent] within a reasonable period of time’. Some Member States in the case study sample have adopted a legal deadline for the adoption of the reasoned opinion or the development consent decision. In several cases, this deadline is set from the end of the consultation period (Bulgaria, Finland, France, Italy, Luxembourg).

Two Member States have set the deadline from the submission of the request by the developer (Croatia, Poland) or the of the environmental report by the developer (Latvia). One set the deadline from the reception of an expert opinion on the environmental report (Slovakia). In the sample of case studies, these deadlines have been largely exceeded in four cases (Croatia, Italy, Poland and Slovakia), as shown in Table 21.

When asked in interviews whether the establishment of legal deadlines for the competent authority to issue the screening decision (maximum 90 according to Article 4(6) of the EIA Directive) and take the decision to grant development consent (Article 8) had an effect on the duration of the procedures, project developers and authorities in eight case studies found some value in the setting of legal deadlines. The positive impact mainly resides in that the deadlines force all parties to mobilise resources more quickly. In five case studies, interviewees found no added value in the legal deadlines often mentioned that those deadlines were frequently exceeded and therefore did not have an impact on the duration of the procedure.

Table 21: Duration of decision phase vs legal deadline for competent authority to take the decision

Case studies	Deadline for competent authority to issue reasoned opinion or development consent[29]	Duration to reasoned opinion in case study (if EIA carried out separately from development consent)[30]	Duration to development consent in case study (if EIA integrated to development consent)
Construction of a geothermal power plant and geothermal drilling (SK)	30 days from the reception of the expert opinion[31]	115 days between expert opinion and final opinion	
Construction of cross-border underground electrical power line between IT and AT (Italian section)	60 days from the end of public consultation period, with possibility of max. 30 days extension	Roughly 2 years after end of public consultation (84 days after last opinion from authority received)	
Installation and operation of two experimental tidal turbines (FR)	60 days from the date the competent authority sends the report and conclusions from the public consultation to the developer (+ 30 days if additional consultation of		103 days

[29] Some case studies take place in Member States where the EIA procedure is integrated to the development consent procedure (France, Germany, Sweden) and the reasoned conclusion on the significant effects of the project on the environment is included in the development consent decision. Other case studies take place in Member States where the EIA procedure is separated from and carried out prior to the development consent procedure, in which case the EIA procedure is completed with the reasoned conclusion. In the second group of Member States, case studies have considered the duration of the procedure until the reasoned conclusion; in the first group of Member States, case studies have considered the duration of the procedure of the procedure until development consent decision.

[30] When no legal deadline has been set in the Member States, the duration is provided from the end of the public consultation to the decision.

[31] According to Article 36 of the Slovak EIA Law (Act no. 24/2006 Coll.) an expert opinion is prepared by a natural or legal person registered in the list of professionally qualified persons for impact assessment and designated by the competent authority. The expert opinion is delivered to the competent authority within 60 days and serves as a basis for the competent authority's final opinion.

Case studies	Deadline for competent authority to issue reasoned opinion or development consent[29]	Duration to reasoned opinion in case study (if EIA carried out separately from development consent)[30]	Duration to development consent in case study (if EIA integrated to development consent)
	authorities are necessary).		
Construction of fuel storage facility (LU)	90 days from the end of public consultation period	105 days from end of public consultation	
Construction of compressor station as part of extension of gas pipeline (BG)	45 days from the end of public consultation	49 days from end of public consultation	
Airport extension (PL)	1 month from initiation of procedure (two months for complex cases)[32]	20.7 months from initial request by developer (179 days from submission of the EIA report[33])	
Construction of biogas pipeline (DK)	No explicit legal timeframe has been set.	53 days from end of public consultation	
Construction of cross-border overhead electrical power line between FI and SE (Finnish section)	60 days from the end of consultation	EIA 1: 49 days from end of consultation EIA 2: 40 days from end of consultation	
Construction of hydrogen-based steel mill (SE)	No explicit legal timeframe has been set.		Partial permit granted 35 days from end of public consultation; final permit granted 13 months after partial permit
Expansion of and construction of new railway line (DE)	No explicit legal timeframe has been set.		N/A
Construction of new highway section (HR)	4 months from the reception of the request from the developer. Possible extension of 2 months.	357 days from reception of the request from the developer	
Expansion of a stone quarry (LV)	60 days (+30 days max extension) from reception of environmental report	49 days from revised EIA report following request for additional information	

[32] Poland has not set a specific legal deadline for the completion of the EIA procedure or development consent procedure. General deadlines for administrative procedures from the Law of June 14, 1960 Code of Administrative Procedure (Journal of Laws of 2023, item 775, as amended) apply – i.e. a case should be resolved within 1 month, and a complicated case up to 2 months.

[33] The duration was calculated from the date when the environmental report was considered complete by the competent authority (after submission by the developer of additional information requested by the authority).

2.3.2.6. Total duration of EIA procedure

The table below provides a summary of the duration of each step of the EIA procedure for all EIA case studies. As explained above, it was not always possible to single out the consultation period from the review of the environmental report. To separate the review of the environmental report and the decision phase (reasoned conclusion or development consent), different milestones were taken into consideration depending on the project – the end of the public consultation, the reception date of the last opinion from consulted authorities, or the request for additional information from the competent authority to the developer – as the procedures were slightly different (e.g. whether deadlines for public consultation and contributions from authorities were the same or different, whether there was a request for additional information or not). The duration of each step reflects the duration of the administrative procedure (excluding time taken by the developer to prepare documents).

The review of the environmental report and consultations is generally the longest step in the EIA procedure. The duration of this step varies greatly across case studies – which refers to the results found in Task 2 of a large range between minimum and maximum duration for this step. The average duration of this step is 6.6 months (and 5 months without Italy, which is an outlier in the sample in terms of duration). The average duration of the decision phase (resulting in either reasoned opinion or development consent decision) is around 2.3 months.

The total duration of the EIA procedure that is provided in the table below is the duration from the first notification of the developer's intention to carry out the project to the decision (reasoned opinion or development consent). This duration includes in several cases the time taken by the developer to prepare the environmental report or additional documents requested by the authority and does not solely reflect the duration of the administrative procedure (which explains that in many cases the total duration is longer than the sum of each step). It was attempted, to the extent possible, to provide an estimate of the duration of the whole EIA process, including the time taken by the developer to prepare all the necessary documents before the submission of the first notification to the authority. This information was requested during interviews with developers and is presented for case studies where it could be collected. In general, the total duration of the EIA procedure reported by developers (including all preparation time) is significantly longer (on average around 30 months) than the administrative procedure (on average around 12 months). In the sample of case studies, the administrative procedure represented between 24% and 49% of the overall duration provided by the developer[34].

In 11 case studies, developers stated that the duration of the procedure fairly corresponded to what they had expected before starting the procedure, while in six case studies, developers stated that the procedure was longer that what they had planned. In the latter case, three developers out of six specified that the duration of the procedure could have been reduced if the procedure had been handled more efficiently. The other three did not believe that the procedure could have been shortened, either because of the complexity of the assessments, which required time to prepare and to review, or because some of the drivers of delays were not possible to anticipate or control (e.g. public opposition, Covid).

[34] The Italian case was not considered in this analysis as the information provided by the developer did not allow making the distinction between the administrative procedure and the overall duration.

Table 22: Duration of EIA procedure – overall and for each step – in EIA case studies

Case studies	Screening	Scoping	Environmental report[35]	Public consultation	Reasoned opinion or development consent decision	Duration of administrative procedure	Overall duration of EIA procedure	Overall duration of EIA procedure incl. preparatory work by developer
Construction of a geothermal power plant and geothermal drilling (SK)	N/A	2.3	6.7*	1.2	3.7	12.7	20	26
Construction of cross-border underground electrical power line between IT and AT (Italian section)	N/A	N/A	23*	2	2.8	25.8	26	26
Installation and operation of two experimental tidal turbines (FR)	3.5	NIA[36]	6.2	1	3.4	14.1	31	36
Construction of fuel storage facility (LU)	1.5	2.1	7.7	1	3.4	15.7	32	42
Construction of compressor station as part of extension of gas pipeline (BG)	0.5	0.9	1.3	1	1.6	5.3	14	14
Airport expansion (PL)	N/A	2	5.8*	1.9	2.4	10.2	20.7	20.7
Construction of biogas pipeline (DK)	N/A	5.6	2.3*	1.8	1.6	9.6	25.4	25.4

[35] This step is understood as the time between the submission of the environmental report and the end of the consultation / review period. The procedural milestone ending this procedure is depending on the project the end of the public consultation, the reception date of the last opinion from consulted authorities, or the request for additional information from the competent authority to the developer. The duration from this milestone to the reasoned opinion or development consent decision is indicated in the next column (Reasoned opinion or development consent decision).

[36] The scope of the environmental report was discussed at a meeting between the developer, the competent authority and the environmental authority and during informal exchanges with the authorities. The exact duration of these exchanges could not be quantified. No formal scoping opinion was issued.

Case studies	Screening	Scoping	Environmental report[35]	Public consultation	Reasoned opinion or development consent decision	Duration of administrative procedure	Overall duration of EIA procedure	Overall duration of EIA procedure incl. preparatory work by developer
Construction of cross-border overhead electrical power line between FI and SE (Finnish section)	N/A	EIA 1: 2 EIA 2: 4.3	EIA 1: 2.5* EIA 2: 3.7*	EIA 1: 2 EIA 2: 2	EIA 1: 1.6 EIA 2: 1.3	EIA 1: 7.1 EIA 2: 9.3	EIA 1: 15.2 EIA 2: 19	EIA 1: 30 EIA 2: 30
Construction of hydrogen-based steel mill (SE)	N/A	3.4[37]	5.2*[38]	2.2	2	10.6	17.3	30
Expansion of and construction of new railway line (DE)	N/A	N/A	NIA	1	NIA	NIA	NIA	> 10 years
Construction of new highway section (HR)	N/A	N/A	9.2*	1	2.5	11.7	11.7	45
Expansion of a stone quarry (LV)	0.2	1.3	5.7*	1.4	1.6	8.8	27.5	N/A

Durations provided for the step 'environmental report' marked with an asterisk (*) include the public consultation.

[37] Exact duration of scoping period is not known – this reflects the duration between the first permit request to the start of the public consultation.

[38] The durations provided for the environmental report, public consultation/hearings and decision phases are the sum of the durations of these phases for the partial and final permits.

2.3.3. Factors influencing costs and duration of EIA and screening procedures

2.3.3.1. Drivers of costs and delays

The cost and duration driver most frequently mentioned by project developers (12 case studies out of 23) is the requests for additional assessments or extensive revisions to the environmental report by the competent authorities. Such request can also happen at screening stage if additional information is required to decide whether a full EIA should be carried out (three screening case studies have reported such request). These requests are justified by the competent authorities either because the initial document submitted by the developer is of poor quality or because a number of the assessments or information required at scoping stage are missing from the environmental report. The requests suspend the EIA procedure until the additional information is submitted by the developer – in the case studies, these requests have suspended the procedure between three months and one year. They impact both the costs and duration of the procedure as they add manhours for the developer to submit the documents and manhours for the competent authority to process the additional information.

Project developers and competent authorities in nine case studies identified as factors having a significant impact on the costs and duration of EIA procedures factors related to the volume and complexity of the assessments to be carried out for the environmental report. Both are largely influenced by the characteristics and the location of the project, for instance the need to jointly carry out appropriate assessment or an assessment of the impacts of the project on specific species (which may require surveys at specific times of the year and/or during several seasons); the need to carry out assessments related to the implementation of the Water Framework Directive; or the need to carry out field surveys that require expensive external expertise or expensive equipment. These factors have an impact on the manhours and time necessary for the developer to prepare the environmental report and for the authority to review the report. It may also lead to the consultation of more authorities and experts, which increase the total manhours and potentially the duration of the consultation process.

Project developers and competent authorities also identified factors linked to the handling of the EIA procedure, including mainly the lack of human resources and capacity of the competent authorities to carry out the procedure (six case studies) and the lack of or slow responsiveness of consulted authorities (four case studies), which can have a significant impact on the duration of the procedure. In three case studies, authorities mentioned that the type of project concerned was either rare – and they had no prior experience with such projects – or concerned new technologies, which required more time for the authority to review the project documentation than for a more standard project.

In several case studies, developers mentioned factors not related to the procedure such as public opposition to the project, which led to extending the consultation period and/or the time to process the feedback (five case studies), or external factors such as the Covid pandemic (one case) or political priorities (one case).

2.3.3.2. Good practices identified in case studies

Although interviews mainly focused on factors leading to increased costs and delays, in eight case studies, interviewed developers and authorities mentioned good practices supporting the timely delivery of the EIA procedure:

- Most of them (six cases) indicated that good communication and cooperation between the developer and the authority increases the efficiency of the procedure as it can improve the completeness and quality of the documents submitted by the developer. Two of these cases indicated that informal exchanges between the

developer and the competent authority prior to the start of the procedure had a positive impact on the efficiency of the procedure as it helped the developer understand what were the important aspects to be developed in the screening dossier or environmental report to enable the competent authority to make a decision.

- The experience of the project developer with the EIA procedure was mentioned in two cases as a positive factor as it allowed the developer to plan the EIA already at the project design stage.
- As mentioned in section 0, in two EIA case studies (installation of tidal turbines in France and construction of fuel storage facility in Luxembourg) the consultation of relevant authorities was carried out prior to the public consultation revisions were made to the environmental report to address the concerns of consulted authorities. In one case (LU), this was mentioned as a good practice as it ensures that all the important issues for the authorities (that often will subsequently grant the necessary authorisations for the project) have been addressed at an early stage, which allows to launch the permit granting procedure immediately after the reasoned conclusion is published.
- Two case studies mentioned the existence of fast-track / streamlined procedure for certain projects – especially energy infrastructure projects contributing to national objectives of decarbonation or energy security – as a good practice.

2.3.4. Benefits of EIA and screening procedures

2.3.4.1. Environmental Benefits

As presented in Table 23, the evidence gathered from a total of 23 case studies suggests that the EIA and screening procedure lead to environmental benefits. This was stated for a total of 18 case studies (12 EIA and 6 screening procedures). For four screening procedures it was unknown whether they resulted in environmental benefits, and one provided no information. However, when asked about what environmental benefits the EIA and screening procedures lead to, the case studies were mostly describing measures to mitigate adverse environmental impacts of developments - i.e. mitigation measures (Article 5 and Annex IV of the EIA Directive). These are presented later in this section.

Based on analysis of descriptions provided, broad types of environmental benefits derived from EIA and screening case studies were identified (see Table 23). While the screening studies mostly stated that the EIA provides environmental benefits without stating specific examples beyond mentioning of mitigation measures, EIA studies provided some more information.

In total eight case studies stated that the environmental benefits related to EIA and screening procedures result from the requirements of these procedures to identify potentially adverse environmental impacts of developments and measures to mitigate these early in the planning process. More specific types of environmental benefits identified included: habitat, plant, and species protection (six mentions in total); prevention or mitigation of (drinking) water, soil and noise pollution (five mentions in total), as well as protection of landscapes (mentioned once). One case study also mentioned wider environmental benefits of EIA and screening procedures including promotion of high-level environmental protection and sustainable development. Monitoring requirements related to EIA were also mentioned as leading to better environmental outcomes.

Measuring environmental benefits

The results of the case study analysis showed that gathering information on monetary or other values of environmental benefits resulting from EIA is extremely challenging. While the environmental benefits were identified for most of the case studies (18), it was stated

that these are either not possible to quantify in monetary or other terms (e.g. in ha or m2 of new or enhanced habitats) or no information was given to this regard. Only one case study (Construction of new highway section - HR) stated new habitats were created, however no information was provided on their size.

Table 23: Environmental benefits reported in case studies

Case studies	Does the EIA or screening procedure lead to environmental benefits?	Broad types of environmental benefits mentioned
EIA procedure		
Construction of a geothermal power plant and geothermal drilling (SK)	Yes	Plants protection (tree)
Construction of cross-border underground electrical power line between IT and AT (Italian section)	Yes	Identification of mitigation measures leading to better environmental outcomes Introduction of monitoring requirements
Installation and operation of two tidal turbines (FR)	Yes	Prioritization and address of environmental issues leading to better environmental outcomes
Construction of fuel storage facility (LU)	Yes	Identification of mitigation measures leading to better environmental outcomes Prevention of drinking water pollution
Construction of compressor station as part of extension of gas pipeline (BG)	Yes	Identification of mitigation measures leading to better environmental outcomes Habitat protection Prevention of pollution
Airport expansion and modernisation (PL)	Yes	Surface wate protection Prevention of noise pollution
Construction of biogas pipeline (DK)	Yes	Habitat protection (conservation of protected habitats) Soil protection Plants/ habitat/ landscape protection (vineyard)
Construction of cross-border overhead electrical power line between FI and SE (Finnish section)	Yes	Habitat protection (conservation of protected habitats)
Construction of hydrogen-based steel mill (SE)	Yes	Identification of mitigation measures leading to better environmental outcomes
Expansion of and construction of new railway line (DE)	Yes	Species protection
Construction of new highway section (HR)	Yes	Habitat protection Introduction of monitoring requirements

Case studies	Does the EIA or screening procedure lead to environmental benefits?	Broad types of environmental benefits mentioned
Expansion of a stone quarry (LV)	Yes	Identification of mitigation measures leading to better environmental outcomes Prevention of soil pollution Prevention of water pollution
EIA screening procedure		
Construction of educational and sport centre (CZ)	I do not know	n/a
Construction of commercial complex (MT)	Yes	Identification of mitigation measures leading to better environmental outcomes
Amendment to decision regarding the operation of a quarry (EL)	Yes	Promoting sustainable development Promoting high-quality environmental protection
Windmill installation (BE)	I do not know	n/a
Dam & hydroelectric power station renovation (DE)	I do not know	n/a
Installing an electrocompressor at the Minerbio Gas Storage plant (IT)	No information given	n/a
Operation of a sand, gravel and stone extraction area (DK)	Yes	Identification of mitigation measures leading to better environmental outcomes
Development and operation of solar park of 9,000 MWh/year (SE)	Yes	Prioritization and address of environmental issues leading to better environmental outcomes
Development and operation of solar park 19 GWh/year (SE)	Yes	No information given
Construction of combined rail/highway bridge (LV)	Yes	Identification of mitigation measures leading to better environmental outcomes Mitigating noise pollution
Extension of solar power plant (SI)	I do not know	n/a

Measures to mitigate environmental impacts

The evidence gathered from the 23 case studies suggests that the EIA and screening procedures lead to the identification of appropriate measures to mitigate environmental impacts. This was stated for a total of 15 case studies (10 EIA and five screening procedures). Three screening and one EIA case study did not lead to the identification of mitigation measures, four provided no information (1 is missing). Across the cases, studies environmental mitigation includes measures for plant and species protection, (drinking)

water quality safeguarding, noise pollution management, habitats conservation, and protection of landscape including its visual qualities. Specific examples include:

- Plant/tree protection: **Construction of a geothermal power plant and geothermal drilling (SK):** protecting tree root systems from compaction within a 2.5-meter radius from the trunk, avoiding cutting roots thicker than 3 cm, preventing mechanical damage to tree trunks by crating up to a height of at least 2 m without harming the tree, and safeguarding the tree's crown by tying off branches rather than pruning them.
- Landscape protection: **Construction of commercial complex (MT):** modification of a number of project parameters, including the dimensions of the project, and avoiding certain colours; **Construction of biogas pipeline (DK):** the project had to accommodate a vineyard and ensure the pipeline will not interfere the roots of the plants.
- Water quality safeguarding: **Construction of hydrogen-based steel mill (SE):** the development of industrial techniques to avoid discharging wastewater at the operation site of the plant; **Development and operation of solar park 19 GWh/year (SE):** maintaining distance from waterways.
- Species protection: **Construction of biogas pipeline (DK):** the project design was revised to accommodate and mitigate risks for a local species of bats; **Construction of compressor station as part of extension of gas pipeline (BG):** avoid/minimize the areal loss of natural habitats and habitats of species of conservation concern; minimise disturbance and negative implications on animals (including during the breeding seasons); mitigate negative impacts on aquatic organisms; restore habitat loss with extensive preservation of its characteristics**.**

Prevention or mitigation of risks

The evidence gathered from the 12 EIA case studies suggests that the EIA may lead to prevention or mitigation of environmental risks. This was stated for a total of 10 out of 12 EIA case studies. Examples of prevented risks unsurprisingly correlate with stated environmental benefits (and mitigation measures). Most commonly mentioned are prevention of risks to habitats (stated in four EIA case studies) and mitigation of water pollution (stated five EIA case studies).

Examples of case studies include:

- mitigating risks to species and habitats: Construction of biogas pipeline- DK, Construction of cross-border overhead electrical power line between FI and SE -FI; Construction of new highway section- HR; Expansion of and construction of new railway line- DE; Construction of compressor station as part of extension of gas pipeline- BG.
- prevention of (drinking) water pollution: Construction of fuel storage facility- LU; Construction of hydrogen-based steel mill- SE; Expansion of a stone quarry- LV; Construction of compressor station as part of extension of gas pipeline- BG; Airport expansion and modernisation- PL
- prevention of damage to tree vegetation: Construction of a geothermal power plant and geothermal drilling- SK;
- managing risks posed to top soil: Construction of biogas pipeline- DK.

For the screening case studies, three out of 13 case studies stated that the screening procedure led to prevention or mitigation of environmental risks. It is not surprising that in comparison to EIA there is less information on environmental risk prevention and mitigation for screening case studies. Once completed, the authorities in charge of the screening

procedures do not commonly track or collate date on the project's outcomes all the way to their implementation stage.

The prevented risks included preventing adverse impact on species in this case local frog (Operation of a sand, gravel and stone extraction area- DK); mitigating negative impacts on waterways (Development and operation of solar park 19 GWh/year- SE), mitigation of noise pollution (Construction of combined rail/highway bridge- LV).

2.3.4.2. Social Benefits

The social benefits arising from the EIA and screening procedures considered for this analysis were employment benefits, human health benefits and other social benefits, such as safety and preserving visual amenity. As presented in Table 24, the evidence gathered from a total of 23 case studies suggests that the EIA and screening procedures infrequently lead to employment benefits. A total of three case studies (all full EIA procedures) stated that the EIA procedure led to employment benefits. For 19 of the case studies (eight full EIA, 11 screening procedures), no information was provided on whether the EIA and screening procedure lead to employment benefits. For one case study, it was stated that the EIA procedure does not lead to employment benefits.

All three case studies that identified employment benefits from the EIA procedure stated that employment is increased due to the EIA procedure. However, for one of these case studies it was suggested that the job creation is only temporary, because it results from the expertise required to prepare the EIA report.

Only one of the 23 case studies stated that EIA and screening procedures required changes that would have increased or reduced employment directly related to the development. For this case study, where the development was the expansion of a stone quarry, the EIA stipulated a 500m protection zone around a nearby nuclear reactor. It was suggested that this requirement arising from the EIA procedure could have affected the extent of mining involved in the development, and thus the number of people involved.

The results of the case study analysis showed that quantifying employment benefits resulting from EIA is extremely challenging. While employment benefits were identified for three of the case studies, it was stated that these are either not possible to quantify in monetary or other terms or no information was given in this regard.

Table 24: Employment benefits reported in case studies

Title	Did the EIA procedure lead to any employment benefits?	Employment benefits mentioned
Construction of cross-border underground electrical power line between IT and AT (Italian section)	Yes	The EIA required an increase in employment related to the environmental monitoring required before and after construction.
Installation and operation of two tidal turbines (FR)	Yes	Temporary job creation due to the expertise required to carry out the EIA report. But no long-term impact on employment.
Construction of new highway section (HR)	No	
Expansion of a stone quarry (LV)	Yes	Likely had a positive impact on job creation

Note: No other case studies provided information about employment benefits resulting from the EIA and screening procedures.

As presented in Table 25, the evidence gathered from a total of 23 case studies suggests that the EIA and screening procedures sometimes lead to human health benefits. A total of eight case studies (five full EIA procedures, three screening procedures) stated that the EIA procedure led to human health benefits. For 15 of the case studies (six full EIA, eight screening procedures), no information was provided on whether the EIA and screening procedure lead to human health benefits. For one case study, it was stated that the EIA procedure does not lead to human health benefits.

Of the eight case studies that identified human health benefits from the EIA and screening procedures, five mentioned noise reduction as a benefit of the EIA and screening procedures. Other human health benefits that were mentioned include:

- Mitigation measures to improve safety and reduce the likelihood of fatal accidents
- Location of disruptive and potentially dangerous infrastructure away from residential areas
- Mitigation measures to prevent damage to human health from air, water and soil pollution

The results of the case study analysis showed that quantifying human health benefits resulting from EIA and screening procedures is extremely challenging. While human health benefits were identified for eight of the case studies, none of the case studies were able to give information relating to the quantification of these benefits.

Table 25: Benefits to human health reported in case studies

Title	Were there benefits to human health directly linked to the completion of the EIA procedure?	Human health benefits mentioned
Construction of a geothermal power plant and geothermal drilling (SK)	No	
Construction of compressor station as part of extension of gas pipeline (BG)	Yes	Mitigation measures to reduce the likelihood of accidents leading to mortality of individuals.
Airport expansion and modernisation (Poland)	Yes	Noise reduction
Construction of hydrogen-based steel mill (SE)	Yes	Extensive noise assessments and other studies conducted to minimise impacts. The DRI facility and electric arc furnaces, which are considered the most disruptive parts of the operation, are located approximately 800 meters away from the nearest residential property.
Construction of new highway section (HR)	Yes	Benefits for human health (e.g. damage from noise, air, water, soil pollution, etc.) are prescribed by protection measures in the Decision on EIA.

Title	Were there benefits to human health directly linked to the completion of the EIA procedure?	Human health benefits mentioned
Expansion of a stone quarry (LV)	Yes	An assessment was conducted to estimate if there could be health threats from the nearby Salaspils nuclear reactor as result of the activities from the field of gypsum stone (i.e. from blasting/ use of explosives). As part of the EIA, it was determined in what radius and what methods could be used in gypsum mining that won't cause these risks.
Construction of educational and sport centre (CZ)	Yes	There had to be some slight changes implemented during the EIA, to accommodate the public's concerns including noise caused by the construction, and the blocking of afternoon sunlight into peoples' apartments by the new building.
Development and operation of solar park of 9,000 MWh/year (SE)	Yes	The screening procedure changed the minimum space between the project's location and the road, mitigating potential impacts of traffic. The focus of this was safety rather than environmental impact in this instance.
Construction of combined rail/highway bridge (LV)	Yes	Compensation measures based on the noise impact assessment conducted as part of the screening procedure (e.g. changes in the location of noise cancellation walls due to planned changes in the railroad track).

Note: No other case studies provided information about human health benefits resulting from the EIA and screening procedures.

Other Social Benefits

Of the 23 case studies analysed, five stated other social benefits resulting from the EIA and screening procedures. The following are specific examples:

Mitigation of impacts on cultural heritage

- Construction of hydrogen-based steel mill (SE): The location of the plant is within winter pastures. As a result of the EIA procedure, protective measures will be implemented to mitigate cumulative effects on reindeer husbandry from traffic and outdoor activities.

Visual amenity

- Construction of educational and sport centre (CZ): Changes were implemented due to the EIA procedure, to accommodate the public's concerns. This was mainly related to the location of the bus stop, the location of the rubbish bins, the noise caused by the construction, and the blocking of afternoon sunlight into peoples' apartments by the new building.
- Construction of com**mercial complex (MT):** The visual impact assessment undertaken as part of the EIA led to the avoidance of certain colours that would have had a negative impact on the surrounding area.
- Development and operation of solar park 19 GWh/year (SE)**:** Adjustments were made to mitigate potential impacts, such as preserving the view for neighbours.

Safety

- Construction of compressor station as part of **an extension of the gas pipeline (BG):** Mitigation measures to reduce the risk of fires.

2.3.4.3. Economic Benefits

The economic benefits arising from the EIA and screening procedures considered for this analysis were material assets, resource savings, better project design and other economic benefits. In addition to these, more efficient technology and reduced construction costs were mentioned as economic benefits by some of the case studies.

From the evidence gathered across the 23 case studies, it is not possible to determine whether the EIA and screening procedures lead to economic benefits. As presented in Table 26, seven case studies indicated that the procedures led to economic benefits (five EIA and two screening procedures), two case studies indicated that they did not (both EIA case studies), fourteen indicated no information, and for one case study it was unknown.

Where it was stated that the EIA and screening procedures did lead to economic benefits, the most common benefit stated (indicated by five case studies) was improvements in project design. One EIA case study went into greater detail, describing how a high standard of procedure would allow the developer to anticipate risks and costs, and evaluate the planned activities. Furthermore, when the studies were directly asked whether the EIA procedure led to better project design, a further three indicated that it did. However, two had not indicated any economic benefits when initially asked, and one did not provide any additional information to the follow-up question, despite suggesting that it did lead to better project design initially.

The next most common economic benefit stated (indicated by two full EIA case studies) was more efficient technology. One case study elaborated on this point by suggesting that the reason for this benefit was due to the EIA's ability to highlight carbon emission sources in the manufacturing process, giving way to innovative potential.

The two other economic benefits stated were reduced construction costs (by one full EIA case study) and resource savings (by one screening case study). The case study that mentioned resource savings as an economic benefit, however, said the screening represented a resource saving compared to conducting a full EIA, rather than compared to not conducting a screening at all, which is an important distinction.

The two case studies which indicated that no economic benefits were achieved stated that this was due to more involvement from internal and external staff, market developments, the environmental topics having already been discussed with stakeholders, and changes to the project design. Both case studies were full EIA procedures.

No information was gathered on the quantifiable evidence of these procedures, with one case study indicating that it was not possible, four indicating that this was unknown, and twenty providing no information.

Table 26: Economic benefits reported in case studies

Case studies	Does the EIA or screening procedure lead to economic benefits?	Economic benefits mentioned
EIA case studies		
Installation and operation of two tidal turbines (FR)	Yes	Better project design for future projects
Construction of biogas pipeline (DK)	Yes	More efficient project design More efficient technologies
Construction of hydrogen-based steel mill (SE)	Yes	Highlights the innovative potential of the manufacturing process to effectively eliminate carbon dioxide emissions
Construction of new highway section (HR)	Yes	Reduced construction costs Better project design
Expansion of a stone quarry (LV)	Yes	The developer can anticipate risks/costs and plan for them The developer can evaluate planned activities
Screening case studies		
Construction of commercial complex (MT)	Yes	Better project design
Windmill installation (BE)	Yes	Resource savings

Note: The other case studies either were not able to provide information about economic benefits resulting from the EIA and screening procedures or stated that there were no economic benefits.

Better project design

Of the eight case studies that indicated the EIA and screening procedures led to better project design (five answered yes when initially asked whether there were any economic benefits and three answered yes when asked directly about better project design) six were full EIA procedure case studies and two were screening procedures.

Across the case studies, specific examples of better project design include:

- Planning/reassessment of procedures
    - **Installation and operation of two tidal turbines (FR):** The EIA procedure emphasised to the developer the importance of navigating a range of regulations and codes, and engaging with stakeholders;
    - **Construction of commercial complex (MT);** The screening process gives the developer the opportunity to study the potential impacts of the project prior to development;
- Public engagement
    - **Construction of biogas pipeline (DK):** The EIA process enables close contact between the project developer and the public, which often results in changes to the project design;
- Environmental concerns

- **Constructions of hydrogen-based steel mill (SE):** The EIA process ensures that the construction of the steel plant is done in a way that mitigates current environmental concerns and impact;
- **Construction of new highway section (HR):** The EIA process ensures environmental protection measures are applied.

Resource savings

Although when asked if the EIA procedure had led to any economic benefits, only one case study (a screening procedure) described an economic benefit that can be categorised as a resource saving, later on when directly asked the question of whether the EIA procedure led to any resource savings specifically, a further two full EIA studies and one screening study indicated that it did. This takes the total number of studies which indicated resource savings to four. The reasons given were similar to those for better project design, due to the strong correlation between the two.

Specific examples for resource savings include:

- Planning/reassessment of procedures
  - **Construction of new highway section (HR):** The EIA procedure is able to determine when the cost to the environment is greater than the benefits of the project itself, thereby preventing the project from being developed;
  - **Expansion of a stone quarry (LV):** The EIA procedure means the developer is able to anticipate risks and costs, and identify early on what revisions to the project need to be made (or whether it needs to be cancelled altogether);
- Construction costs
  - **Construction of new highway section (HR):** The EIA procedure led to a change in the project design which in turn led to a reduction in construction costs;
- Screening procedure less burdensome compared to a full EIA
  - **Windmill installation (BE):** A screening procedure imposes lower costs and requires less time than a full EIA does. However, this saving is negligible considering that screening procedures require almost the same amount of information as full EIAs.
  - **Development and operation of solar park of 9,000 MWh/year (SE):** A screening procedure streamlines the EIA process by limiting its size and complexity, prioritizing the most important information, and reducing the overall duration of the environmental permitting process.
- Screening procedure requires less public consultation compared to a full EIA
  - **Windmill installation (BE):** A screening procedure requires less public consultation, in terms of geographical scope and duration, than a full EIA does. Therefore, having a screening procedure before a full EIA is conducted is beneficial.

The two screening studies which indicated resource savings were achieved stated that the screening procedures save time and costs, compared to the full EIAs. However, they did not indicate whether the procedures led to resources savings compared to no procedures at all.

2.3.4.4. Wider Benefits

As presented in Table 27, the evidence gathered from a total of 23 case studies suggests that the EIA and screening procedures sometimes lead to wider benefits to EU citizens. A total of nine case studies (six full EIA procedures, three screening procedures) stated that the EIA and screening procedures led to wider benefits for EU citizens. For 14 of the case studies (six full EIA, eight screening procedures), no information was provided on whether the EIA and screening procedure led to wider benefits for EU citizens.

Among the nine case studies that identified wider benefits to EU citizens of the EIA and screening procedures, the most commonly mentioned wider benefits were public involvement and public acceptance of the project.

Table 27: Wider benefits to EU citizens reported in case studies

Title	Did the EIA procedure/ or EIA screening procedure lead to any wider benefits to EU citizens?	Description
Construction of a geothermal power plant and geothermal drilling (SK)	Yes	Increased public information allows citizens to monitor the state of their environment. Increased public acceptance of the project reduces risks of public opposition during project implementation.
Construction of cross-border underground electrical power line between IT and AT (Italian section)	Yes	Increased public acceptance of the project. Increased public information on the project its environmental impacts and the measures taken to minimise them.
Construction of fuel storage facility (LU)	Yes	Increased public information: the public has the opportunity to consult the full EIA report with all the information on the project. Access to the same level of information for all relevant authorities: having one document in which all issues and mitigation measures are described and on which everyone is consulted ensures that all authorities (some of which are required to grant specific authorisations) have access to the same information.
Airport expansion and modernisation (Poland)	Yes	Increased social acceptance
Construction of new highway section (HR)	Yes	Encouraging and enabling citizens' involvement in planning and decision-making processes. Increase awareness of citizens about potential environmental implications of planned developments.
Expansion of a stone quarry (LV)	Yes	Assessment of impacts on private properties for nearby communities/assessing the monetary value of their properties
Construction of educational and sport centre (CZ)	Yes	Identification of public concerns related to the particular case.

Title	Did the EIA procedure/ or EIA screening procedure lead to any wider benefits to EU citizens?	Description
Operation of a sand, gravel and stone extraction area (DK)	Yes	Public consultation
Extension of solar power plant (SI)	Yes	Increase transparency and clarity for the general public through public access to information. It protects the developer from public opposition. Increased social acceptance due to identification of potential environmental impacts

Note: No other case studies provided information about the wider benefits to EU citizens resulting from the EIA and screening procedures.

Public Acceptance

The evidence gathered from a total of 23 case studies suggests that the EIA and screening procedures sometimes lead to better public acceptance of projects. A total of eight case studies (six full EIA procedures, two screening procedures) stated that the EIA and screening procedures led to better public acceptance of projects. For 14 of the case studies (five full EIA, nine screening procedures), no information was provided on whether the EIA and screening procedure led to better public acceptance of projects. One case study stated that the EIA procedure did not lead to better public acceptance of the project.

Specific examples of better public acceptance include:

- **Construction of cross-border overhead electrical power line between FI and SE (Finnish section):** The early engagement process with landowners resulted in increased awareness and acceptance of the benefits of the project. The public consultation process was comprehensive, involving multiple authorities and stakeholders, as well as benefiting from an extended consultation period (60 days) to ensure thorough engagement.
- **Construction of biogas pipeline (DK):** Meetings were held with farmers approximately every two months, to address concerns and find mutually beneficial solutions. Other stakeholders, for example owners of summer houses, highlighted in a newspaper article, that their input was heard and that they felt their concerns were being addressed during the EIA process.
- **Extension of solar power plant (SI):** Identifying the potential environmental impacts of the developments as part of the screening procedure has positive effects on the social acceptance of projects and the public perception of different development sectors (e.g. energy and importantly renewable energy, but also transport) with respect to their impacts.

Awareness of Environmental Implications

The evidence gathered from a total of 23 case studies also suggests that the EIA procedure sometimes leads to increased awareness about the potential environmental implications of planned developments. A total of five case studies (all full EIA procedures) stated that the EIA procedure led to increased awareness about the potential environmental implications of planned developments. For 17 of the case studies (six full EIA, 11 screening procedures), no information was provided on whether the EIA and screening procedures led to increased awareness about the potential environmental implications of planned developments. One

case study stated that the EIA procedure did not lead to increased awareness about the potential environmental implications of planned developments.

Specific examples of increased awareness about the potential environmental implications of planned developments include:

- **Construction of a geothermal power plant and geothermal drilling (SK):** Through the EIA procedure, citizens can gain awareness about the potential environmental implications of planned projects and, in this way, can become more involved in the protection of the environment.
- **Construction of cross-border underground electrical power line between IT and AT (Italian section):** The EIA process improved citizens' knowledge of the project, its potential environmental impacts and the measures enacted to minimise them.
- **Construction of biogas pipeline (DK):** Resistance to the project was minimised through the public consultation process carried out as part of the EIA procedure. At the start of this process, people found it difficult to understand why a gas route had been chosen. However, by explaining the long-term perspective that the project would transition to cleaner natural gas (biogas) in the future during the public consultation process, public acceptance of the project was improved.

In addition to the identified wider benefits to EU citizens, one case study identified the existence of wider benefits to other citizens:

- **Construction of new highway section (HR):** The EIA is procedure is beneficial for all stakeholders involved in the process, including: the affected population, various associations dealing with environmental and nature protection issues, environmental and nature experts, and archaeologists protecting cultural assets.

3. Conclusions on costs, duration and benefits of the EIA and screening procedures

Costs of EIA and screening procedures for developers

Costs incurred by developers vary considerably across projects, illustrating the broad range of projects covered by the EIA Directive. In the 10 case studies where estimates could be provided, the costs ranged from as low as €30 000 (geothermal plant in Slovakia) to €500 000-600 000 (installation of tidal turbines in France). Costs of screening procedure were significantly lower but showed similar variations (from around €2 500 to €60 000 for external work).

The main cost for project developers is the preparation of the environmental report, including all individual assessments that are required for various environmental impacts. Costs are largely influenced by the characteristics and the location of the project, which determine the extent and the complexity of the environmental report and may add specific assessments or field surveys. Hiring specialist expertise (air quality experts, noise experts etc) was flagged in several case studies as a strong determinant of the overall cost of the EIA. However, the EIA cost as a percentage of the total project cost did not exceed 0.5% in any of the case studies[39]. In their reporting, Member States also often reported estimates below 1%, suggesting that the EIA procedure represents a small part of the costs of the project development.

Costs for of EIA and screening procedures competent authorities

Costs for competent authorities correspond to manhours spent to coordinate the EIA procedure (in particular the consultation processes) and assess the reports submitted by the developer and take the screening and development consent decisions. Manhours reported by competent authorities varied considerably across different case studies (from 45 to around 1,800 manhours for EIAs and from 25 to 250 manhours for screening). As for the project developers, the step of the procedure that takes most manhours is the evaluation of the environmental report. The time spent by the competent authority vary mainly according to the complexity of the case as well as the quality of the initial documentation provided by the developer.

Duration of EIA and screening procedures

The duration of the EIA procedure is influenced by multiple factors linked to the characteristics and complexity of the project and the organisation of the procedure at national level and therefore can vary greatly across projects. In their reporting questionnaire, Member States reported an average duration of around 20.6 months for the EIA procedure, which is close to the average duration found in the case studies – around 22 months (from first notification to decision). The case studies however showed a large difference between the administrative procedure (around 12 months on average) and the whole procedure, including the time taken by the developer to prepare the required documentation (22 months – around 30 months including the preparation time prior to the start of the procedure). In the EIA procedure, the review of the environmental report is the longest step. Regarding the screening procedure, both the reporting questionnaire and the case studies indicated an average duration of 3-4 months, which is roughly consistent with the legal deadline of 90 days provided in the EIA Directive.

[39] 7/12 developers provided an estimate of EIA cost as a % of project cost.

An important factor influencing the duration of the procedure is the completeness and quality of the initial submission by the developer, which if insufficient can trigger requests for additional information from the competent authorities. Requests for additional information were the most frequent factor of delay reported by developers in the case studies and were justified by competent authorities by either the low quality of the initial submission or missing documents or assessments. The consultation of relevant authorities and generally low human resources in authorities involved in the procedure were other frequent factors of delay.

Benefits of EIA and screening procedures

Environmental benefits

The information and data gathered from the case studies suggests that there are environmental benefits arising from the completion of EIA and screening procedures. These are predominantly associated with the implementation of mitigation measures and often include:

- avoidance or mitigation of negative impacts of developments on habitats, plants, and species; and
- prevention or mitigation of pollution (resulting from developments) including water, soil and noise.

Some evidence implies that the EIA and screening procedures contribute to wider environmental benefits including promotion of high-level environmental protection and sustainable development.

Based on the information and data gathered from the case studies it was not possible to provide any conclusions about monetary or other values of the benefits arising from EIA and screening procedures. The evidence shows that environmental benefits arising from the completion of EIA and screening procedures are challenging or impossible to quantify in monetary or other terms (e.g. in ha or m2 of new or enhanced habitats).

The evidence from the case studies show that the EIA and screening procedures lead to the identification of appropriate measures to mitigate environmental impacts, which in most cases also successfully lead to mitigation or prevention of environmental risks. Environmental risks mitigated or avoided align with most commonly reported environmental benefits and include prevention of risks to habitats (stated in four EIA case studies) and mitigation of water pollution (stated in five EIA case studies).

Social benefits

The information and data gathered from the case studies suggests that the EIA and screening procedures infrequently lead to employment benefits. However, the case study evidence suggests that the EIA and screening procedures sometimes lead to human health benefits. The human health benefit most frequently identified across the case studies relates to noise reduction. Other identified human health benefits include:

- Mitigation measures to improve safety and reduce the likelihood of fatal accidents
- Location of disruptive and potentially dangerous infrastructure away from residential areas
- Mitigation measures to prevent damage to human health from air, water and soil pollution

Aside from employment and human health benefits, other social benefits resulting from the EIA and screening procedures that were identified by the case studies relate to:

- Mitigation of impacts on cultural heritage

- Preservation of visual amenity
- Mitigation measures to improve safety

Based on the information and data gathered from the case studies it was not possible to provide any conclusions about monetary or other values of the social benefits arising from EIA and screening procedures.

Economic benefits

The information and data gathered from the case studies suggests that the EIA and screening procedures lead to some economic benefits. However, the evidence was inconclusive, with only 8 of the 23 case studies (35%) for which information was gathered stating that the EIA procedure did lead to some form of economic benefit. The most commonly mentioned benefits were improvements in project design and resource savings.

Wider benefits

The information and data gathered from the case studies suggests that the EIA and screening procedures sometimes lead to wider benefits to EU citizens. The most commonly mentioned wider benefits were public involvement in the process and improved public acceptance of the proposed development.

Further, the EIA and screening procedures sometimes lead to increased awareness about the potential implications of planned developments.

Only one case study provided evidence to suggest that the EIA and screening procedures lead to wider benefits for non-EU citizens.

Annex I: Case studies template: Screening

Case description

Name of case study	
Member State(s) where the project is located:	
Region / city where the project is located (If the project connects two locations, specify both)	
Project category as per the EIA Directive	*Annex X paragraph X – name of project category in Directive*
Sector	Choose an item.
Case description	*Brief contextual information on the project including type (e.g. type of works carried out) and size of the project (unit depending on project, ha, km of pipeline/railways etc.), whether it is a new project or changes to/extensions of existing project*
Developer name	
Developer type	Choose an item.
If the developer is a state-owned or a private company: size of company	Choose an item.
If the developer is an authority: level of governance	Choose an item.
If the developer is a mixed entity or other, please specify.	
Name of authority responsible for taking screening decision	
Type of authority	Choose an item.
Name of the authority to which the developer addresses the information on the characteristics of the project (according to Annex IIA of the EIA Directive) *[Could differ from authority competent for screening if there is a one stop shop for the entire development consent procedure]*	
Type of authority	Choose an item.
Name(s) and type(s) of authority(ies) consulted during the screening process (if applicable)	
Were there any other authorities consulted during the screening procedure? If yes, which?	

Name of case study	
Was the screening decision based on:	Choose an item.
Is the information on the characteristics of the project sent to the authority through an online form? If not, how is it communicated to the authority?	
If thresholds have been used (including in combination with case-by-case examination), describe them (inclusion/exclusion thresholds, criteria used).	
Did the screening decision require that an EIA was carried out?	Choose an item.

Cost of screening procedure

Costs borne by the authority competent for screening

How many person-hours were required by the development consent authority to carry out the following steps of the screening procedure?

If the interviewee cannot provide a detailed breakdown of person-hours by step, an overall figure for the procedure can be sufficient – it can be included in the last row.

If the interviewee finds it difficult to speak in person-hours and is more comfortable with person-days, ask what an average day is (so we can get comparable data across cases).

EIA step / activity	Person-hours
Review screening dossier and take screening decision	
Consult with other authorities *(if applicable)*	
Draft public statement on screening decision with justification of the decision and notification to developer	
Overall screening decision	

If the interviewee cannot provide a detailed breakdown of person-hours:

- *Ask how many staff members were involved in the screening decision?*
- *Can the interviewee estimate the proportion of the staff members' time that was spent on the screening decision? And if possible for each step?*

Was any element of the screening procedure delivered by external contractors?

- If yes, which ones?
- If yes, can the authority provide the fixed costs of hiring external contractors?
- Is it common practice for the authority to hire external contractors for screening procedures?

What were the main cost drivers in this screening procedure?

Examples of drivers in separate document.

Do you think that costs could have been reduced (i.e. fewer person hours spent) if the developer had planned or implemented screening differently? If yes, what could have been done differently and how?

Costs borne by the consulted authorities

How many person-hours were required by consulted authority(ies) to examine the screening dossier and provide their opinion?

EIA step / activity	Person-hours
Name of authority	
Provide opinion on screening	
Name of authority	
Provide opinion on screening	

If the interviewee cannot provide a detailed breakdown of person-hours,

- *Ask how many staff members were involved in the screening decision?*
- *Can the interviewee estimate the proportion of the staff members' time that was spent on the screening decision? And if possible for each step?*

What were the main cost drivers in this screening procedure?

Examples of drivers in separate document.

Do you think that costs could have been reduced (i.e. fewer person hours spent) if the developer had planned or implemented screening differently? If yes, what could have been done differently and how?

Costs borne by the developer

How many person-hours were required to carry out the following steps of the screening decision? If any step was outsourced, what were the costs of hiring external contractors?

If the interviewee cannot provide a detailed breakdown of person-hours by step, an overall figure for the procedure can be sufficient – it can be included in the last row.

EIA step / activity	Person-hours	Fixed costs (if outsourced) (€)
Prepare screening dossier		
Dossier submission		
Dossier revision / additional information request		
Overall screening decision		

What were the main cost drivers in this screening procedure?

Examples of drivers in separate document.

Do you think that person hours (spent by the developer) could have been reduced if the screening had been planned or implemented differently?

Do you think that person hours (spent by the developer) could have been reduced if screening had been managed differently by the competent authorities?

If the screening decision concluded that an EIA should be carried out, was the information gathered for the screening dossier reused in the EIA? Did this reduce staff time / cost of external expertise during the EIA procedure?

Duration of screening procedure

What was the duration of the following steps of the screening procedure?

We need the duration in a common unit (calendar days), not necessarily the dates – these are included in the template in case it is easier for the interviewee.

Steps	Duration
Time limit for the competent authority to issue the screening decision in the Member State (maximum 90 days)	X days *We have this information for almost all Member States. This can be checked with the authority during the interview.*
Does the national law provide that the competent authority can extend that deadline to make its determination? *We have this information for almost all Member States. This can be checked with the authority during the interview.*	Choose an item.
If yes, in which cases can the deadline be extended? (EIA Directive refers to *'exceptional cases, for instance relating to the nature, complexity, location or size of the project')*	
Duration of the screening procedure (i.e. from the acceptance of the complete screening dossier by the authority to the notification of the screening decision to the developer)	Date of acceptance of screening dossier: Date of screening decision: X days
If the deadline for the screening decision has been extended, explain on which criteria the extension was decided by the authority, how long was the extension and how the developer was notified of the extension.	
Overall duration of the screening process from preparation of screening dossier to screening decision	X days *To be provided by the developer*

[Question for all stakeholders] **Has the establishment of a time limit impacted the duration of the screening procedure? Did it have other benefits (increased certainty for the developer etc.)?**

[Question for the developer] **If there was an extension of the deadline for the screening decision – what were the consequences for the overall EIA procedure? Was the**

developer sufficiently informed of the extension and did the developer feel that the extension was justified?

What are the main factors influencing the duration of the overall screening process (from preparation of screening dossier to screening decision)?

Examples of factors / drivers in separate document

Do you think that the duration of the of the overall screening process (from preparation of screening dossier to screening decision) could have been reduced if you had planned or implemented the screening differently or if screening had been managed differently by the competent authorities?

Benefits of Screening

[Question for all stakeholders] **Is the screening procedure beneficial for developers and competent authorities? Does it add value to the EIA process?**

Has the screening procedure changed the project in any way (design, route, preventive or compensation measures)? (even if an EIA was not required).

Information sources

Project website (if any), link to screening dossiers, screening decision (if anything available online)	***(links if available online or brief description of documentation available or made available to us)***
List of interviews carried out	
Other sources	

Annex II Case study template: EIA

Case description

Name of the case study	
Member State(s) where the project is located:	
Region / city where the project is located (If the project connects two locations, specify both)	
Project category as per the EIA Directive	*Annex X paragraph X – name of project category in Directive*
Sector	Choose an item.
Case description	*Brief contextual information on the project including type (e.g. type of works carried out) and size of the project (unit depending on project, ha, km of pipeline/railways etc.), whether it is a new project or changes to/extensions of existing project, and any specific features of the project that are relevant for the EIA procedure (e.g. information on site, protection area, joint AA).*
Developer name	
Developer type	Choose an item.
If the developer is a state-owned or a private company: size of company	Choose an item.
If the developer is an authority: level of governance	Choose an item.
If the developer is a mixed entity or other, please specify.	
(If the EIA is integrated to the development consent decision in the MS) Name of authority responsible for granting development consent.	
Type of authority	Choose an item.
(If the EIA is not integrated into the development consent decision in the Member States) Name of the authority responsible for EIA procedure.	
Type of authority	Choose an item.
Was the case subject to a case by case examination leading to a screening decision?	Choose an item.
Name of authority responsible for taking screening decision	

Name of the case study	
Type of authority	Choose an item.
Were there any other authorities consulted during the screening procedure? If yes, which?	
Was a scoping opinion/report issued by the competent authority?	Choose an item.
Name of authority responsible for issuing the scoping opinion	
Type of authority	Choose an item.
Name(s) and type(s) of authority(ies) consulted on scoping	
Was the EIA joint or coordinated with an Appropriate Assessment (as per Article 2(3) of the EIA Directive)?	Choose an item.
Was the EIA joint or coordinated with an environmental assessment arising from another EU legislation (e.g. Water Framework Directive)?	Yes / No If Yes, indicate which environmental assessment and from which EU legislation the obligation comes from.
Name(s) and type(s) of authority(ies) consulted on the EIA and the request for development consent (as per Article 6(1) of the Directive)	
How many consultation activities were organised in the Member States?	
Geographical scale of the public consultation (e.g. local, covering several regions)	
Have transboundary consultations been carried out as per Article 7 of the EIA Directive?	Yes / No In which Member States have consultation been carried out?
How many authorities were consulted in other Member States?	
How many consultation activities were organised in other Member States?	
Implementation phase	Choose an item.

Cost of EIA procedure

Costs borne by the development consent authority

If the EIA is not integrated in the development consent decision, fill in this part for the competent authority responsible for the EIA procedure.

How many person-hours were required by the development consent authority to carry out the following steps of the EIA? Include in the table below the most detailed breakdown the interviewee can provide.

If the interviewee finds it difficult to speak in person-hours and is more comfortable with person-days, ask what an average day is (so we can get comparable data across cases).

EIA step / activity	Person-hours
Screening (total)	*If the interviewee cannot provide a detailed breakdown of person-hours by step, an overall figure for the screening can be included here.*
• Review screening dossier and take screening decision (if the development consent authority takes the screening decision in the Member State)	
• Consultation with other relevant authorities (if applicable)	
• Draft public statement on screening decision with justification of the decision and notification to developer (if the development consent authority takes the screening decision in the Member State)	
• Manage screening process (if the development consent authority does not take the screening decision in the Member State)	
Scoping	*If the interviewee cannot provide a detailed breakdown of person-hours by step, an overall figure for the scoping can be included here.*
• Preparation and issuance of the scoping opinion	
• Consultation with other relevant authorities for scoping	
Consultation on EIA report	*If the interviewee cannot provide a detailed breakdown of person-hours by step, an overall figure for the consultation can be included here.*
• Organise consultation of relevant authorities	
• Making all information and documentation related to the public consultation electronically accessible to the public (authority's website)	

EIA step / activity	Person-hours
• Liaise with other Member States' competent authorities (if transboundary consultation)	
Review of EIA report	*If the interviewee cannot provide a detailed breakdown of person-hours by step, an overall figure for the review of the EIA report can be included here.*
• Review of EIA report	
• Preparation of the reasoned opinion	
• Preparation of public statement on development consent decision	
Overall EIA procedure	*If the interviewee can only provide a global estimate of person hours for the whole procedure, it can be included here.*

If the authority cannot provide person-hours, the table above can be used as a basis for checking cost categories (in case we have missed any) and to start the discussion.

If specific person hours cannot be obtained from the interviewee:

- Ask how many staff members were involved in this case?
- Can the interviewee estimate the proportion of the staff members' time that was spent on the EIA? And if possible for each step?

Were any of the steps listed above delivered by external contractors? (Yes/No)

- If yes, which ones?
- If yes, can the authority provide the fixed costs of hiring external contractors for these steps?
- Is it common practice for the authority to hire external contractors for these steps of the EIA procedure?

If the EIA was joint or coordinated with an Appropriate Assessment or an environmental assessment required by another EU legislation (as per Article 2(3) of the EIA Directive), did this have an impact on the person-hours spent by the authority to manage the EIA procedure?

What were the main cost drivers?

Examples of drivers in separate document.

Do you think that costs could have been reduced (i.e. fewer person hours spent) if the developer had planned or implemented the EIA differently? if yes, what could have been done differently and how?

Costs borne by Consulted authorities

It is likely that several authorities will be consulted on the EIA. We might not be able to contact them all and may have to focus on some. Since there are not a lot of questions for them, it might be done entirely by email without interview. If there are statutory consultees (bodies systematically asked for opinion on certain developments) they should be targeted first.

How many person-hours were required by the consulted authority to carry out the following steps of the EIA?

EIA step / activity	Person-hours
Name of authority	
Screening *(if an authority other than the development consent authority takes the screening decision in the Member State)*	
• Review screening dossier and take screening decision	
• Draft public statement on screening decision with justification of the decision and notification to developer	
Provide opinion on scoping	
Provide opinion on EIA report	
Name of authority	
Provide opinion on scoping	
Provide opinion on EIA report	

If specific person hours cannot be obtained from the interviewee:

- *Ask how many staff members were involved in this case?*
- *Can the interviewee estimate the proportion of the staff members' time that was spent on the EIA? And if possible for each step?*

Were any of the steps listed above delivered by external contractors?

- If yes, which ones?
- If yes, can the authority provide the fixed costs of hiring external contractors for these steps?
- Is it common practice for the authority to hire external contractors for these steps of the EIA procedure?

If the EIA was joint or coordinated with an Appropriate Assessment or an environmental assessment required by another EU legislation (as per Article 2(3) of the EIA Directive), did this have an impact on the person-hours spent by the authority to manage the EIA procedure?

What were the main cost drivers?

Examples of drivers in separate document.

Do you think that costs could have been reduced (i.e. fewer person hours spent) if the developer had planned or implemented the EIA differently? if yes, what could have been done differently and how?

Costs borne by the developer

What was the cost of carrying out the EIA as a share of the total project cost (%)?

Does it correspond to what was anticipated at project planning stage?

How many person-hours were required by the developer to carry out the following steps of the EIA? If any step was outsourced, what were the costs of hiring external contractors?

EIA step / activity	Person-hours (if carried out internally)	Fixed costs (if outsourced) (€)
Preliminary studies		
Prepare screening dossier		
Submission of information to competent authority for scoping opinion		
Preparation of EIA report and consultations	*If the interviewee cannot provide a detailed breakdown of person-hours, an overall figure can be included here.*	
• Preparation of EIA report		
• Preparation of the non-technical summary and management of public consultation		
• Summary and integration of comments received from public consultation into EIA report		
• Revision of EIA report based on recommendations from development consent authority (if needed)		
Overall EIA procedure	*If the interviewee can only provide a global estimate of person hours for the whole procedure, it can be included here.*	

If specific person hours cannot be obtained from the interviewee:

- *Ask how many staff members were involved in this case?*
- *Can the interviewee estimate the proportion of the staff members' time that was spent on the EIA? And if possible for each step?*

What were the costs of the following activities?

EIA step / activity	Fixed costs (€)
Purchase of data (if any)	
Costs linked to organisation of public consultation, including:	*If the interviewee cannot provide a detailed breakdown of costs, an overall figure for the consultation activities can be included here.*

EIA step / activity	Fixed costs (€)
• Announcement of public consultation in media	
• Printing / distributing communication materials	
• Translation of documentation if transboundary consultation	
• Organisation of public hearing (venue, equipment)	
• Interpretation (if transboundary consultation)	
• Travel and accommodation (if transboundary consultation)	
• Translation of comments received (if transboundary consultation)	

If the EIA was joint or coordinated with an Appropriate Assessment or an environmental assessment required by another EU legislation (as per Article 2(3) of the EIA Directive), did this have an impact on the person-hours spent by the authority to manage the EIA procedure?

What were the main cost drivers? In particular if the EIA has exceeded the anticipated budget, what were the main drivers that led to this situation?

Examples of drivers in separate document.

Do you think that person hours (spent by the developer) could have been reduced if the EIA had been planned or implemented differently? If yes, what could have been done differently and how?

Do you think that person hours (spent by the developer) could have been reduced if the EIA procedure had been managed differently by the development consent authority? If yes, what could have been done differently and how?

Duration of EIA procedure

What was the duration of the following steps of the EIA procedure?

We need the duration in a common unit (days), not necessarily the dates – these are included in the template in case it is easier for the interviewee.

Steps	Duration
Screening	
Time limit for the competent authority to issue the screening decision in the Member State (maximum 90 days)	X days *We have this information for almost all Member States. This can be checked with the authority during the interview.*
Does the national law provide that the competent authority can extend that deadline to make its	Choose an item.

Steps	Duration
determination? *We have this information for almost all Member States. This can be checked with the authority during the interview.*	
If yes, in which cases can the deadline be extended? (EIA Directive refers to *'exceptional cases, for instance relating to the nature, complexity, location or size of the project')*	
Duration of the screening procedure (i.e. from the acceptance of the complete screening dossier by the authority to the notification of the screening decision to the developer).	Date of acceptance of screening dossier: Date of screening decision: X days
If the deadline for the screening decision has been extended, explain on which criteria the extension was decided by the authority, how long was the extension and how the developer was notified of the extension.	
Scoping	
Duration of the scoping stage (from the initiation of scoping – i.e. date when the developer requests the authority to issue a scoping opinion or if scoping is mandatory in the MS, date when the competent authority starts scoping – to the date of issuance of the scoping opinion or report). *Note: in particular if scoping is mandatory, it could be carried out at the same time as screening. If this is the case, it would be important to flag it.*	Date of initiation of scoping: Date of issuance of the scoping opinion or report X days
Consultations on the EIA report	
Has the Member States set a notice period for informing the authorities and the public (according to article 6(6)(a))?	*We have some information on this for most MS – however conformity studies were not always very clear.*
Has the Member State set a time limit to consult public authorities (according to article 6(6)(b))? Does the absence of response from an authority by a certain deadline means tacit approval?	*We have some information on this for most MS – however conformity studies were not always very clear.*
Time limit to consult the public in the Member State (minimum 30 days)?	*We have this information for most Member States. This can be checked with the authority during the interview.*
Duration of consultation process (from announcement of the consultation to closure of consultation)	Date of announcement of consultation: Date of closure to consultation: X days
Duration of transboundary consultation process (from announcement of the consultation to closure of consultation) – if not carried out at the same time.	Date of announcement of consultation: Date of closure to consultation: X days
EIA report and decision making / development consent	
Has the Member State set a time limit for the duration of the development consent procedure (according to	*We have this information for most Member States. In some cases there is no time limit, just an indication*

Steps	Duration
Article 8a(5))	*that it should be done within a reasonable period of time. This can be checked with the authority during the interview.*
Duration of the development consent procedure (from submission date of the dossier – including the EIA – to development consent decision) If EIA is not integrated in development consent, duration of the EIA procedure (from EIA submission to competent authority's decision)	Date of dossier submission: Date of development consent decision: X days
Overall procedure for the developer	
Overall duration of the overall EIA process for the developer (from the start of the preparatory work to the development consent decision)	X days

[Question for all stakeholders] **Has the establishment of a time limit for the screening decision impacted the duration of the procedure? Did it have other benefits (increased certainty for the developer etc.)?**

[Question for the developer] **If there was an extension of the deadline for the screening decision – what were the consequences for the overall EIA procedure? Was the developer sufficiently informed of the extension and did the developer feel that the extension was justified?**

[Question for all stakeholders] **Has the establishment of a time limit for the development consent decision impacted the duration of the procedure? Did it have other benefits (increased certainty for the developer etc.)?**

[Question for the developer] **How did the developer perceive the overall duration of the procedure? were there any unexpected delays?**

[Question for all stakeholders] **What are the main factors influencing the duration of the overall EIA process (from preparation of screening dossier to screening decision)?**

Examples of drivers in separate document.

[Question for all stakeholders] **Do you think that the duration of the of the overall EIA procedure (from dossier to screening decision) could have been reduced if you had planned or implemented the screening differently or if screening had been managed differently by the competent authorities?**

Benefits of EIA

This section relates to the benefits of the EIA procedure.

What were the benefits of the EIA procedure? *The following provide examples by benefit category, but please add rows as appropriate, according to your project.*

Benefit category	Benefits (if possible, **quantitative,** if not, qualitative/descriptive)	Benefits, if monetised (€)
Environmental benefits		
Biodiversity, e.g. new habitat creation/		

Benefit category	**Benefits (if possible, quantitative,** if not, qualitative/descriptive)	**Benefits, if monetised (€)**
existing habitat enhancement		
Land		
Soil		
Water		
Air		
Climate		
Landscape		
Other *(Please state)*		
Social benefits		
Job creation		
Human health		
Cultural heritage		
Other *(Please state)*		
Economic benefits		
Material assets		
Resource savings		
Better project design		
Other *(Please state)*		
Wider benefits		
Increased public acceptance of the project		
Awareness gained about potential environmental implications of planned developments		
Other *(Please state)*		

What were the environmental benefits from the completion of the EIA procedure?

Examples and questions to elicit answers:

- Did the EIA procedure lead to any environmental benefits (biodiversity, land, soil, water, climate, landscape, etc)? Please describe compared to the changes required / adopted compared to the original development proposal. Can they be quantified? If so, please provide relevant details (e.g. hectares of planting)

  - E.g. Was any new habitat created or existing habitat enhanced as a result of the EIA procedure? What was the area of this (e.g. in hectares, m2, or km2) ?
  - E.g. What surface of land (in hectares, m2, or km2) was planted/reforested/etc?
- Did the EIA procedure lead to the identification of appropriate measures to mitigate environmental impacts?
- Were certain environmental risks and impacts mitigated and/or prevented thanks to the EIA procedure? And if so, which? For example, prevention of the loss of high value habitat.

What were the social benefits from the completion of the EIA procedure?

Examples to elicit answers:

- Were there any employment benefits? And if so, which?
  - For example, how many jobs related with the EIA and screening procedures were created?
- Did the EIA require changes that would have increased / reduced employment directly related to the development? If yes, please explain which and quantify if possible.
- Were there benefits to human health directly linked to the completion of the EIA procedure? And if so, which?

What were the economic benefits from the completion of the EIA procedure?

- Did the EIA require changes that would have increased / reduced economic benefits directly linked to the development? If yes, please explain which and quantify if possible.
- Did the EIA procedure lead to resource savings by facilitating a better integration of environmental concerns into the design of projects, saving public and private resources in terms of both money and time (e.g. reducing the likelihood of projects having to appeal against rejection on the grounds of environmental impacts)?
- Did the EIA procedure lead to better project design by facilitating a more structured consideration of environmental concerns?

What were the wider benefits from the completion of the EIA procedure?

Examples to elicit answers:

- Was there a better public acceptance of the project that have undergone the EIA procedure in comparison to those which did not?
- Were there any wider benefits to EU citizens resulting from the relevant requirements for the EIA procedure (i.e. public consultation)?
  - From the EIA encouraging and enabling citizens' involvement in planning and decision-making processes?
  - From citizens gaining awareness about potential environmental implications of planned developments?
- Were there any wider benefits to other stakeholders?

Information sources

Project website	***(if available, include link)***
EIA documentation available for the case: EIA report, screening decision if any	*(links if available online or brief description of documentation available/made available to us by stakeholders)*
List of interviews carried out	
Other sources	

Annex III List of factors influencing costs and duration of screening and EIA procedure

These are our assumptions of factors that have an influence on costs and duration. Case studies will allow checking those assumptions and finding out which factors have more or less impact. This list of factors is used in interviews as prompts when discussing costs and duration of procedures.

Case specific
Environmental impacts linked to the type and location of the project
Scope of impacts to be covered by the EIA report
Uncertainties relating to data or environmental impacts (e.g. leading to extra impact study costs)
Difficulties to access data (e.g. leading to extra time spent / impact study costs)
Complexity of the case and difficulty in applying screening criteria or thresholds
Procedural
Organisation of the procedure: availability and ease of use of online application system for, availability of online signature, requirements for third party verification, availability and effectiveness of communication channels between developer and the competent authority, etc.
Need for exchange with developer to requests additional/complementary information (screening)
Poor quality of the EIA report (exchanges with developer needed)
Number of licenses / permits in development consent (e.g. cases where one permit can block the whole procedure)
Amount of information / documentation to be reviewed by authorities
Number of administrative forms to be submitted by developer
Number of authorities the developer is in contact with / existence of one-stop-shop
Lack of expertise in the competent authority
Lack of capacity / resources in the competent authority
Unclear guidance to developer
Lack of capacity of developer to carry out the procedure
Number of authorities to be consulted in the process
Geographical scale of public consultation, including obligation to carry out transboundary consultation
Lack of capacities for consultation activities (either authority or developer)
Delays in consultation of authorities (e.g. no legal provision allowing to consider absence of response as tacit approval)

Other
Public opposition or other indirect costs linked to the procedure being delayed by external factors - We are focusing on costs directly attributable to the EIA procedure, and not specifically on indirect costs but this is likely to come up in the case studies. .

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