Environmental Impact Assessment	
School	Scottish Agricultural College
Module Leader	Clare Wharmby
	Dr Emilia Kondili
Module Number	B59E6
Credits	12
Assignments	YES
Exams	YES
Student Effort ours	120
Pre-reading/Other Program-related Activities	12 hours
Formal Lectures/Workshop	26 hours
Discussions/Group Activities/Case Studies/Demonstrations	6 hours
Laboratory work	4 hours
Independent Study & Coursework	72 hours

Objectives

The aim of this module is to provide the candidate with knowledge and understanding of the principles and process of Environmental Impact Assessment.

Subjects
• Introduction to Environmental Impact Assessment
• European EIA Legislation
• Screening and Scoping
• Baseline Studies, Analysis and Prediction of Impact
• Consultation, Review and Monitoring
• Beyond EIA: Strategic and Social Impact Assessment

Content

The structure of the module is intended to enable the student to achieve the learning outcomes by introducing some of the basic principles to start with and then gradually increasing the input from the student. By the end of the module, the student should be familiar with the European EIA legislation and its translation into the Scottish planning system, be able to demonstrate an understanding of the EIA process, the tools and the agents involved in an EIA and the possible problems with using EIA as a decision making tool. It is

also intended that the student will be able to appreciate the purpose of the EIA process from a number of perspectives; that of a developer, an EIA practitioner and a policy maker.

Topic 1 An introduction to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)
Every development that takes place will have an impact on the environment, whether positive, negative or a mixture of both. EIA is a management tool that aims to gather information, predict impacts and disseminate findings in order for interested parties to make rational decisions about whether a particular project should go ahead. The first session starts off by looking at some definitions and then goes on to explore a bit about the historical and geographical spread of EIA. The last part of this session introduces the concept of EIA as a process with a number of stages, including scoping the impacts, public consultation, providing alternatives and monitoring and evaluation.

Topic 2 Becoming familiar with the European EIA legislation
The legislative background is a very important part of understanding the EIA process. Although many countries have incorporated EIA into their legislation, this session will concentrate on the legislation that was agreed by the European Union in 1985 and the amendments that were finalized in 1997.
Sections 1 and 2 contain various exercises designed to make students familiar with the content and format of the articles and annexes of the consolidated directive. Section 3 uses Scotland as an example of how one Member State has interpreted and implemented this legislation into its planning system and law.

Topic 3 Methods 1 - Screening and Scoping
This session returns to the concept of EIA as a process and takes a more in-depth look at two of the early stages: screening (deciding if a project requires an EIA) and scoping (determining what areas the EIA will focus on). The session starts of by looking at the groups of people who might be involved in the various stages of the EIA process. It then goes on to look at project screening: what are the legislative requirements? And, what tools are used to gather information and make decisions? After this section, a case study is introduced, which will be used as an example throughout the remainder of the methodology sections of the module. The last part of the session deals with the scoping stage – what are the legislative requirements? Which groups of people are involved? And what tools and techniques can be used this for information collection and management?

Topic 4 Methods 2 - Baseline Studies, Analysis and Prediction of Impacts
This session builds on methods identified in Session 3 that showed how to identify the scope of actions and environmental attributes associated with a given project and introduced tools that allow us to highlight impacts (where an action and environmental attribute intersect). The next stage is explain how the information required to assess those scoped environmental impacts is collected, measured and presented and then how that information is used to predict the significance of environmental impacts. Once the range of impacts that need to be studied is defined, it follows that we will know the type of information and subject matter that we need advice on and therefore the sort of specialists we will need to involve. This session explains, in general terms, how those people might go about gathering information to make an accurate assessment of specific environmental impacts.

Topic 5 Methods 3 – Review, Consultation and Monitoring
This last methodology session looks at the latter stages of the process – from what happens when the Environmental Impact Statement is submitted through review and consultation to the post-decision project monitoring. This session starts of by looking at the how

Environmental Impact Statement can be reviewed and judged by the competent authority and other interested parties. The second part takes a more in-depth view at the role of public participation and consultation – what the ideal level is and what the minimum legislative requirements are. Finally this session takes a brief look at how the actual impacts can be monitored and audited if the project is given the go-ahead.

Topic 6 Offshoots of EIA – the social and strategic approaches
As EIA methodology matures, many legislators and practitioners have been looking for ways to overcome the deficiencies of the EIA process. The last session will explore two more recent innovations in EIA process: Strategic EIA and Social Impact Assessment. The former has been suggested as the way forward for the European Union and requires an EIA to be conducted further up the decision making process, at the level of plans and policies. This tries to reduce the problems caused by incremental damage and it is one of the most recent legislative developments to come from the EU. The latter attempts to look at project impacts from a social point of view and include some of the costs and benefits of the project to the local and national community.