

Navigating the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Process in Botswana for Industrial Projects

Environmental Impact Assessment for Industrial Projects

Content Partner: J. v. G. technology GmbH

Turnkey solar module production lines — since 1997

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Technical Overview: Botswana's Environmental Impact Assessment for Industrial Projects



Created as part of the PVKnowHow Knowledge Network



Prepared by J.v.G. Technology GmbH



European specialists in turnkey solar module production lines

Key Project Data

EIA

Process

Environmental Impact
Assessment – mandatory
under EA Act 2011

6–12mo

Timeline

Typical full EIA process
duration from submission to
decision

\$5K–\$...

Cost Range

Variable by project scale,
complexity, and specialist
fees

DEA

Competent Authority

Department of
Environmental Affairs,
Gaborone, Botswana

📄 Process: Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) · Region: Botswana · Authority: Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) · Source: PVKnowHow / J.v.G. Technology GmbH

The Problem: Regulatory Risk for Industrial Investors

The Core Challenge

- Industrial projects in Botswana require environmental clearance before construction
- The EIA is legally mandated under the Environmental Assessment Act of 2011
- Overlooking this step causes significant delays and unforeseen costs
- Non-compliance can result in complete halt of a project

Why It Matters for Investors

- Many international lenders require a completed EIA as a condition for financing
- Failure to plan for EIA adds months and cost to project timelines
- Social license and community acceptance depend on transparent EIA execution
- Early engagement dramatically reduces downstream risk

What Is an EIA? — Definition and Purpose

Definition

- A formal, systematic process to identify, predict, and evaluate potential environmental effects
- Conducted before major project decisions are made
- Mandatory in Botswana for activities listed under EA Regulations (Schedule 1)
- Costs are borne by the developer, not the state

Strategic Value

- Ensures legal compliance and environmental clearance
- Identifies environmental liabilities early — allows design modification
- Builds trust with communities through transparent consultation
- Prerequisite for access to international development finance

EIA Process: Key Stages

- 1 — Stage 1 — Project Brief Submission**
 - Developer submits Project Brief Form to the nearest DEA office
 - DEA reviews within 10 working days — screens activity and issues a decision letter
- 2 — Stage 2 — Scoping & Terms of Reference (ToR)**
 - Certified Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) engaged at developer's expense
 - Public notice published for a minimum of 21 days; community meetings held
 - Scoping Report and ToR submitted to DEA — reviewed within 28 working days
- 3 — Stage 3 — Environmental Impact Study**
 - Detailed EIA study conducted following approved Scoping Report and ToR
 - Baseline data collected; impacts predicted; mitigation measures formulated
 - Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Environmental Management Plan (EMP) prepared
- 4 — Stage 4 — Public Review & Technical Consultation**
 - EIS published in Gazette and newspaper for four consecutive weeks
 - DEA circulates EIS to relevant government departments for technical review
 - Affected communities, NGOs, and stakeholders may submit comments
- 5 — Stage 5 — DEA Decision**
 - DEA evaluates EIS, public comments, and inter-agency technical feedback
 - Outcome: Approve (with conditions), Request further information, or Reject
 - EIA and EMP reviewed within 60 working days of final submission

Key Documents in the EIA Process

Project Brief

- First submission to DEA; describes the proposed activity
- Includes location map, production process, land ownership proof
- Review fee: BWP 10.00 (standard)
- Screened within 10 working days

Scoping Report & ToR

- Defines scope of the impact study and issues to be addressed
- Must reflect input from public consultation process
- Reviewed by DEA within 28 working days
- Foundation for the full EIA study

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

- Central EIA deliverable — project description, baseline data, predicted impacts
- Includes proposed mitigation measures and monitoring commitments
- Reviewed by DEA within 60 working days
- Basis for DEA's final project decision

Environmental Management Plan (EMP)

- Mandatory document — appended to EIS or prepared independently
- Live document governing construction and operational compliance
- Includes monitoring, auditing, and corrective action protocols
- Continues as binding obligation after approval is granted

Public Participation: A Mandatory Requirement

Legal Obligations

- Public notice must be published in official languages for at least 21 days (Scoping)
- EIS published in Gazette and newspaper for four consecutive weeks
- Publication costs are borne by the developer
- All comments and objections must be formally considered by the DEA

Practical Implications

- Community meetings required after expiration of notice period
- Practitioner must explain project nature and effects to affected people
- Inadequate public participation is a common cause of EIA delays or rejection
- Early stakeholder engagement is the most effective risk mitigation strategy

Key Risks & Common Delay Factors

Regulatory Risk

- Only a registered, certified EAP (Environmental Assessment Practitioner) may prepare the EIS
- Practitioners must be listed with BEAPA (Botswana EAP Association)
- Conflict of interest must be formally declared — penalties apply for non-disclosure
- Activities within 2 km of environmentally sensitive areas trigger mandatory EIA

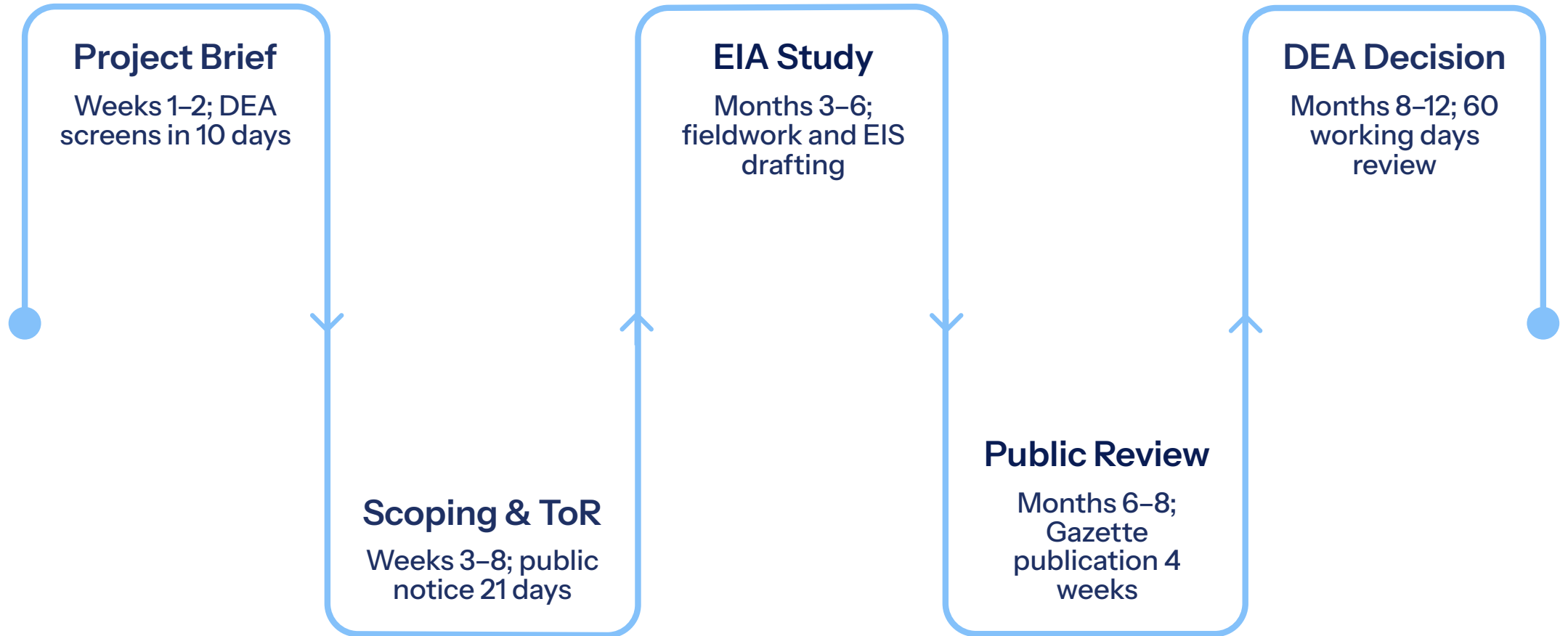
Process Risk

- Incomplete Project Brief or insufficient documentation causes rejection at screening stage
- Inadequate public consultation is a leading cause of EIA failure
- EIS that does not meet prescribed requirements requires revision — extends timeline
- Inter-agency review can surface objections from departments outside DEA's control

Strategic Risk

- Treating EIA as a formality rather than a planning tool increases project exposure
- Environmental liabilities not identified early can result in costly redesign
- Community opposition during public review can lead to politically driven project rejection
- Approval does not end environmental obligations — EMP compliance is ongoing


Indicative EIA Timeline for an Industrial Project



Total process duration: typically **6-12 months** from initial submission to final DEA authorization. Complex projects or those near sensitive environments may require additional time. Early planning and expert EAP selection are the primary determinants of schedule performance.

EIA Cost Structure: Key Variables

Cost Component	Indicative Range	Notes
Project Brief Review Fee	BWP 10.00	Fixed government fee
EIA Report Review Fee	Linked to project cost	Scaled by project scale
Certified EAP Practitioner Fees	\$5,000 – \$30,000+	Complexity and scope dependent
Public Notice & Publication Costs	Variable	Developer bears all costs
Specialist Studies (ecology, hydrology, social)	\$5,000 – \$20,000+	Triggered by project type and location
Total EIA Budget (indicative)	\$5,000 – \$50,000+	Highly project-specific

 Cost estimates are indicative ranges based on published guidance. Actual costs depend on project scale, location relative to sensitive areas, specialist studies required, and EAP market rates.

Strategic Importance: EIA as a Project Planning Tool

1

Legal Gateway

No industrial construction may commence without DEA authorization – EIA is the critical path item in all project timelines

2

Risk Management Tool

Early identification of environmental liabilities enables project redesign before capital is committed – reducing long-term exposure

3

Finance Enablement

International lenders and DFIs require a completed EIA – securing clearance early unlocks financing options and investor confidence

- An experienced turnkey project development partner with knowledge of Botswana's regulatory environment integrates EIA planning into the earliest phases of factory or industrial site development – reducing schedule risk and compliance exposure for new market entrants.

Conclusion: Key Takeaways for Industrial Investors

Start Early

- Integrate EIA into project planning from day one
- Allow 6–12 months for the full process
- Do not commit to construction schedules before DEA authorization

Use Certified Experts

- Only BEAPA-registered practitioners may prepare EIA documentation
- Local consultants with DEA relationships reduce process friction
- Expert selection is one of the highest-leverage decisions in the EIA process

Engage Communities

- Public participation is legally mandatory — not optional
- Proactive stakeholder engagement prevents objections during formal review
- Community trust is a long-term operational asset, not just a compliance box

About the Content Partner

J. v. G. technology GmbH – The DESERT Company

Founded in 1997 in Bavaria, Germany. Family-owned engineering company specializing in turnkey solar module production lines.

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Key areas:

Turnkey PV manufacturing lines | DESERT Technology® |
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Source:

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Created with the support of JvGLabs – specialist for AI systems

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