



Environmental Impact Assessment

Assessing Impacts Before We Go

It is a requirement of the Environmental Protocol to the Antarctic Treaty and New Zealand's Antarctica (Environmental Protection) Act (1994) that an environmental impact assessment be completed prior to any activity taking place in Antarctica.

Factors such as the scale of the activity and its duration, the sensitivity of the location, and the intensity of any planned sampling, or wildlife interactions will determine the likely impacts on the Antarctic environment. Whether the activity is likely to have less than, no more than, or more than a minor or transitory impact on the environment will determine the level of environmental impact assessment that should be applied to an activity.

There are three levels of prior Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) that can be applied sequentially:

- A Preliminary Environmental Evaluation (PEE) is required for activities likely to result in less than minor or transitory impacts
- An Initial Environmental Evaluation (IEE) is required for activities likely to result in no more than minor or transitory impacts
- A Comprehensive Environmental Evaluation (CEE) is required for activities likely to result in more than minor or transitory impacts

It is expected that any activity is assessed sequentially through this process until the level of assessment matches the anticipated impacts.

An EIA at any level needs to outline the intended activity, describe the current environmental state, identify the potential environmental impacts, and describe how those impacts will be avoided or mitigated to the fullest extent possible.

Once completed an EIA is submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade for assessment and approval. A notification of approval is issued by the Minister, which may include additional conditions to further regulate the activity.

It is important for all those travelling to Antarctica to:

- Be familiar with your EIA and the conditions of approval (which should be carried with you)
- Know the specific sites and activities your event is approved for
- Understand your reporting requirements
- Seek an amendment to the approval if your planned activities change
- Ensure that you have any additional permits that might be required

For further guidance on preparing an EIA see the below guidelines or contact Antarctica New Zealand's Policy and Environment Manager, [Ceisha Poirot](#)

Additional information and guidance material below:

Committee for Environmental Protection Guidelines for Preparing an EIA
Annex I to the Protocol on Environmental Protection