



**NATIONALE
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National Environmental Authority (NMA)

Environmental Impact Assessment in Suriname's Energy Evolution





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1. Introduction: Navigating the Green Frontier

Welcome to the National Environmental Authority (NMA) of Suriname. As Suriname emerges as a pivotal player in the global energy landscape, the NMA stands as the primary regulatory guardian of the nation's natural heritage. Suriname, a country blessed with rich biodiversity, pristine rainforests, and vital natural resources, recognizes the profound responsibility that comes with economic advancement. Within the framework of the Environmental Framework Act (Milieu Raamwet), the NMA is tasked with ensuring that economic development—particularly in the burgeoning oil, gas, and energy sectors—proceeds in harmony with environmental preservation and social responsibility.

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) department, within the NMA, is one of the cornerstones of this mission. By integrating scientific rigor with transparent administrative procedures, the EIA department ensures that every major energy project is scrutinized for its potential environmental footprint before a single drill hits the seabed or a pipeline is laid. The NMA is staffed by a dedicated team of environmental scientists, engineers, social specialists, and legal experts. Their collective expertise ensures a multidisciplinary approach to assessing complex development proposals.

Why NMA at SEOGS 2026?

Regulatory clarity is the bedrock of sustainable investment. Our presence at the Suriname Energy, Oil & Gas Summit (SEOGS) aims to provide operators, investors, and contractors with a comprehensive understanding of the EIA process, ensuring project alignment with Surinamese law and international best practices.

2. The EIA Process: A Strategic Roadmap

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is not merely a bureaucratic hurdle; it is a strategic tool designed to identify, predict, and mitigate the physical, biological, and socio-economic impacts of proposed developments.

Phase	Description & Objectives
1. Screening	Determining whether a project requires an EIA based on its scale, location, and potential risk levels. Projects in the oil and gas sector almost universally fall under mandatory review.
2. Scoping	Identifying the key issues that must be investigated. This stage involves the development of the “Terms of Reference” (ToR), ensuring the EIA focuses on relevant environmental and social impacts.
3. Impact Assessment	The developer hires a consultancy team to conduct environmental and social studies. This includes baseline data collection (marine biology, air quality, etc.) and predicting how the project will alter these conditions. At the end of this phase an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is formulated, which also includes or can be an Environmental Management Plan (EMP). This outlines specific actions to mitigate (prevent or minimize) negative impacts and enhance positive outcomes.
5. Review	The NMA, in some cases with assistance of external experts, reviews the submitted EIS. Transparency is key; stakeholders and local communities are given the opportunity to provide feedback.
6. Decision Making	If Acceptable, the NMA issues a Certificate of Approval with specified conditions to the applicant, determining if the project can proceed and under what specific environmental safeguards.

3. Synergy: Linking EIA to the Oil & Gas Sector

The oil and gas industry operates in complex ecosystems, often involving offshore deep-water environments or sensitive coastal regions. The EIA process is specifically linked to this sector through three critical pillars:

A. Risk Mitigation and Asset Protection

An EIA helps companies identify geological and ecological risks early in the planning phase. For the energy sector, this means avoiding costly delays or environmental disasters (such as oil spills) by implementing rigorous prevention standards from day one.

B. Social License to Operate

Suriname’s energy wealth belongs to its people. Through the EIA public consultation process, the NMA facilitates a dialogue between energy companies and the public. This builds trust and ensures that local communities benefit from development while their livelihoods and health remain protected.

C. International Standards

Many international operators and financiers follow the IFC Performance Standards or the Equator Principles. The NMA’s EIA process is designed to align with these global benchmarks, ensuring that Suriname remains a competitive and reputable destination for high-quality global capital.



4. The EIA Repository: Transparency through Technology

The NMA is committed to making Environmental Impact Statements accessible. Our digital repository serves as a centralized hub for current and historical Environmental Impact Assessments. This allows for:

- Data Integrity: Access to baseline environmental data for researchers and industry peers.
- Continuous Monitoring: Tracking the progress and compliance of ongoing projects.
- Educational Outreach: Providing the public with the tools to understand the environmental footprint of national development.

Visit our digital repository at:

<https://sites.google.com/view/nma-mea-eia-repository/home>

5. Working with the NMA: Our Commitment

The EIA Department of the NMA is not just a regulator; we are a partner in sustainable growth. We offer technical guidance to ensure that Environmental Impact Statements meet national standards on the first submission, streamlining the path from oil and gas exploration to production.

As we look toward 2026 and beyond, the NMA remains dedicated to ensuring that Suriname's energy "boom" is synonymous with environmental "stewardship". Together, we can power the future while protecting the present.

Contact

 +597 490044

 Zinniastraat 33 - 35

 secretariaat@nmasuriname.org

 www.nmasuriname.org

Bezoek onze Socialmediakanalen

