

# Evaluation of the effectiveness and the performance of EIA studies in Greece

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## Abstract

The study investigates the effectiveness and performance of environmental impact assessment (EIA) studies in Greece, in the context of its current implementation. It seeks to emerge its added value and aims to detect the strengths of the system as well as its deficiencies that need to be addressed. It focuses mainly on the outcomes of the EIA system rather from the substansive perspective than from a procedural one. In other words, seeks answers to the main question: does the institution fulfill the objectives it meant to do? In Greece the EIA studies and their administrative approval is the main tool for preventing and managing adverse environmental effects of proposed projects and activities. The studies under investigation are those which are being conducted for projects and activities with major or significant effects to environment and consequently are categorized as subcategory A1 and A2 according to Greek legislation (Hellenic Republic, 2011).

The effectiveness of EIA systems has been subject of numerous international studies, the majority of which researched the procedural dimension of effectiveness; few studies used multicriteria analysis tools. Nevertheless, effectiveness evaluation of an EIA system needs to be done in its socioeconomic, political and cultural context, because of the plurality and differentiations of its use among countries (Morgan, 2012). As far as the effectiveness of current Greek system is concerned, it has been recently studied (Pediaditi et al., 2018), though using different method and approach than the proposed one here.

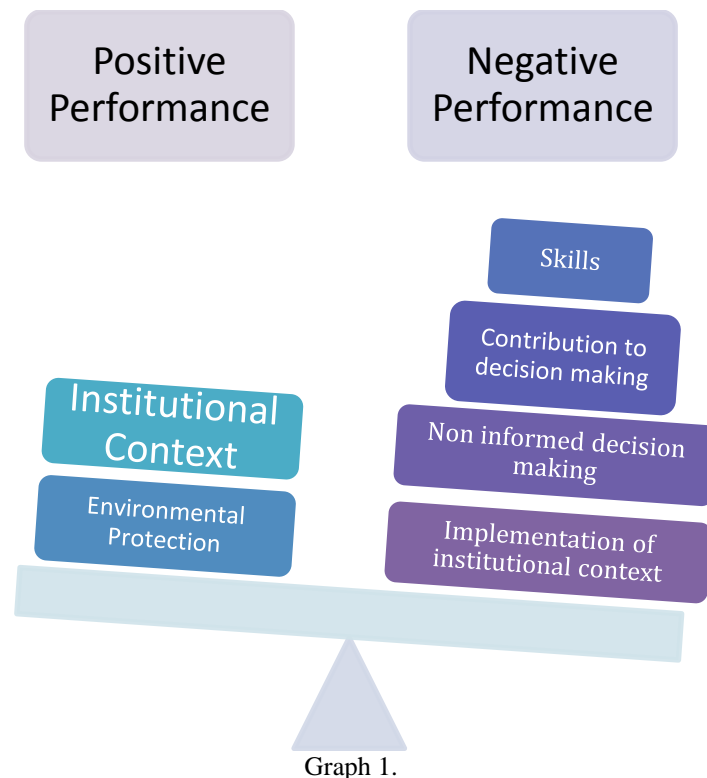
Prior to analyzing this issue, a thorough review of the international literature was conducted. The criteria used for evaluation of the system were categorized in respect of the way they affect the effectiveness, positively or negatively. Furthermore, other external factors, which can contribute to effective EIA or are preventive ones, were examined as well. Thus, an analysis and prioritization of EIA system's main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats constructed through the combined SWOT-AHP analysis. In this way, results have a quantitative form. The SWOT analysis groups consists the AHP analysis criteria, while the elements (factors of each SWOT group) used as AHP sub-criteria.

A combined method used for data collection. Source of secondary data was the international literature. Additionally legal and administrative documents review was conducted too. On the other hand, primary data was collected through questionnaires which prepared and distributed electronically on a pan-Hellenic scale. The questionnaire was structured using criteria mainly based on the international literature. The surveys' role was twofold; it contributed to the final criteria selection for the SWOT analysis construction, while the results used for the prioritization of them and pair-wise comparing them through AHP Analysis.

The results indicate that the foundations of the institution in Greece are strong in terms of context; however, the system suffers in many respects, mainly concerning the implementation of the institution. Another significant deficiency that arises is that the constitution does not contribute to informed decision – making. A

dominant criterion in the analysis was found to be the economic crisis, as a threat, not unreasonably given the dynamic of this deep recession. On the contrary, the technological and scientific background, in general, can be an opportunity for improving effectiveness of EIA studies.

According to study's conclusions the institution of EIA studies in Greece, although has positive elements and contributes to some extent to environmental protection, it deals with common problems that are met in most EIA systems; furthermore it faces problems that often are found in the systems of poor countries, according to international literature.



Graph 1.

## References

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