



Northern Territory Government

Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Environment

PART A – Introduction and Description

GUIDELINES FOR PREPARATION OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE PROPOSED BLACKTIP GAS PROJECT

MARCH 2004

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION.....	1
2	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	1
2.1	OFFSHORE PROCESSING CASE	2
2.2	ONSHORE PROCESSING CASE.....	2
2.3	ONSHORE PIPELINE.....	2
2.4	PROJECT ACTIVITIES.....	3
3	PURPOSE OF THE EIS.....	3
4	EIS PROCESS.....	5
5	ADMINISTRATION	6

1 INTRODUCTION

These Guidelines have been developed to assist Woodside Energy Limited (Woodside) in preparing a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Blacktip Gas Project in accordance with Clause 8 of the Environmental Assessment Administrative Procedures of the *Environmental Assessment Act (1982)* of the Northern Territory and to meet the requirements as provided for in Chapter 4 Division 6 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (1999)* of the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth and the NT have decided that an EIS must be prepared for the proposal. Agreement has been reached on processes to minimise duplication by utilising one set of documents with one public review process. This process will satisfy the administrative requirements of both jurisdictions.

These Guidelines consist of two sections:

- Part A (this section) is the introduction and description of the project and the EIS process; and
- Part B (attached) details the type and extent of information to be included in the draft EIS. The list includes issues and concerns that were identified before the public and Government review period (for the draft Guidelines).

2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Blacktip Field comprises gas condensate reserves of approximately 1 trillion cubic feet (Tcf) located in the Joseph Bonaparte Gulf, in permit WA-279-P near the boundary between Western Australia and Northern Territory waters.

Woodside Energy and ENI Australia proposes to cooperatively install and operate the following:

- offshore unmanned wellhead platform (WHP) in Australian Government waters;
- approximately 110km of gas export subsea pipeline coming onshore near Wadeye in NT via Commonwealth waters and NT coastal waters;
- onshore gas processing facility and or compressor station, located near the shore crossing in the vicinity of Wadeye; and
- onshore export dry gas pipeline and potentially a condensate pipeline to Gove (the Wadeye to Gove pipeline is not part of this scope and has been referred to both the NT and Australian Governments as a separate proposal).

As a base case it is envisaged that the Blacktip field will be developed as an unmanned Wellhead Platform (WHP), and a 110km long subsea pipeline to shore. Two options are being considered for gas processing centred on either an **onshore** or **offshore** gas processing plant. Both these options will be carried forward and assessed by the proponent through the statutory process until such time as the preferred option is selected. These two options are detailed further in the following text.

2.1 Offshore Processing Case

Under the offshore processing scenario the following facilities for production and processing would be installed:

Offshore facilities on the WHP would include production processing of Blacktip raw wellstream into hydrocarbon gas and a mixed condensate/water stream. It is proposed to reinject the condensate to the reservoir and discharge the produced water to sea after treatment in line with current industry practice or alternatively both condensate and water would be reinjected. A hydrocarbon gas product will be produced at a rate of up to 80 Pj/annum and exported to shore via the dry gas export submarine pipeline for domestic use.

Onshore Facilities would include: Inlet pig-receiver, compression station, condensate stabilisation, storage and export, utility systems including flare, instrument air and drains, construction camp. The footprint required would be 750m*750m.

2.2 Onshore Processing Case

Under the onshore processing case the following facilities for production and processing would be installed:

Offshore facilities on WHP would include: Minimal offshore facilities with Blacktip wellstream products routed directly from wells to a multi-phase export pipeline at a flow rate consistent with a production of up to 80 PJ/year of domestic gas.

Onshore facilities would include: Slug catcher, water and hydrocarbon dew-pointing, compression, condensate stabilisation and storage, water treatment and disposal via ocean outfall or to an onshore injection well, utility systems including power generation, firewater, instrument air, liquid and gaseous fuel systems, condensate export facilities, gas metering. Condensate export of up to 1000bbl/day would be via subsea pipeline to swamp mooring, to fuel storage at Wadeye for export via barge or via an export pipeline utilising the gas pipeline trench. Produced water treatment would cater for up to 15,000 bbl/day plus rainwater drainage. The footprint for the onshore processing facilities, including construction, would be in the region of 750m*750m. Onshore facilities would also include necessary access and haul routes for use during construction and operation. The location of these haul routes will be determined during the detailed planning stages and assessed during the environmental approvals process.

2.3 Onshore Pipeline

A short length of onshore pipe corridor potentially for both gas and condensate export (from the low water mark to the onshore infrastructure) is included in the scope of this Referral. The length of this component of the onshore pipelines will be determined by the location of the onshore gas receiving infrastructure, but is likely not to exceed 10km in length.

2.4 Project Activities

The activities associated with the facilities include:

- construction of onshore worker camp;
- construction of maintenance and operational accommodation;
- installation and hook-up of the WHP;
- construction of wells, pipelines/flowlines;
- construction of onshore facilities including access and haul routes;
- construction of onshore pipeline and associated systems;
- commissioning and testing of installed facilities;
- production operations; and
- decommissioning of facilities at end of field life.

The domestic gas proposal involves options for processing well fluids from the Blacktip Field as well as potentially supplying controls and services to, and receiving well fluids from, other fields. Therefore, a number of design and operational options exists, which will be addressed in the course of the development and defined in the statutory environmental approvals.

3 PURPOSE OF THE EIS

The draft EIS aims to provide:

- a source of information from which individuals and groups may gain an understanding of the proposal, the need for the proposal, the economic and other benefits that might arise from the proposal, the alternatives, the environment that it would affect, the impacts that may occur and the measures taken to minimise those impacts;
- a basis for public consultation and informed comment on the proposal; and
- a framework against which decision-makers in conjunction with traditional landowners can consider the environmental aspects of the proposal, set conditions for approval to ensure environmentally sound development and recommend an environmental management and monitoring program.

The object of these Guidelines is to identify those matters that should be addressed in the draft EIS. The Guidelines are based on the initial outline of the proposal in the Notice of Intent. Not all matters indicated in the Guidelines may be relevant to all aspects of the proposal. Only those matters that are relevant to the proposal should be addressed. The Guidelines, however, are not necessarily exhaustive. They should not be interpreted as excluding from consideration any matters which are currently unforeseen that emerge as important or significant from scientific studies or otherwise during the preparation of the draft EIS, the public consultation process and the preparation of the Supplement to the draft EIS (response to submissions).

The proposal has been declared a controlled action under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* because it was considered likely to have significant impacts on listed threatened species and communities, listed migratory species and on Commonwealth marine waters. The impacts on the controlling actions should be focused on in the EIS to provide adequate information for the Commonwealth Minister to make a decision on approval of the action.

The draft EIS should be a self-contained and comprehensive document written in a clear, concise style that is easily understood by the general reader. Being mindful that the major stakeholders in the EIS process will be Aboriginal communities, the draft EIS should be able to be presented in such a way as to enable the Aboriginal community to properly understand the nature of the proposal and provide informed comment. Cross-referencing should be used to avoid unnecessary duplication of text. Text should be supported where appropriate by easily interpretable maps, plans, diagrams or other descriptive material. Detailed technical information and baseline surveys should be included as appendices.

Content in the draft EIS should include both quantitative and qualitative analysis as appropriate. Impacts should not just be treated as adverse: beneficial effects should also be identified.

The justification of the project in the manner proposed should be consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development. Assessment of the environmental impacts of the proposal and alternatives should be comprehensive. For the purpose of these Guidelines, the “principles of ecologically sustainable development” are as follows:

- the precautionary principle - namely, that if there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation;
- inter- and intra-generational equity - namely, that the present generation should ensure that the health, diversity and productivity of the environment are maintained or enhanced for the benefit of future generations;
- conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity; and
- improved valuation and pricing of environmental resources.

4 EIS PROCESS

The EIS process, as described by the Administrative Procedures of the *Environmental Assessment Act 1982 (EA Act)* of the Northern Territory, is displayed in Figure 1. The Australian Government's process of referral, assessment and approval under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)* is shown in Figure 2.

Overview of the Process

It has been agreed that the Blacktip proposal will be assessed cooperatively by the NT and Australian Governments to meet the requirements of the *EPBC Act* and the *EA Act*. As the proposal is located partly in Commonwealth waters, it is not possible for the project to be assessed under the bilateral agreement with the NT or by case by case accreditation under the *EPBC Act*. The Commonwealth and NT have agreed, however, to work cooperatively and have directed the proponent to prepare one EIS to meet the guidelines agreed by both jurisdictions. The NT consults with relevant advisory bodies in preparing draft Guidelines for preparation of an EIS.

These draft Guidelines are then subject to public review for a 14-day period. At the end of this period, OEH and DEH will finalise the draft Guidelines within 14 days for Ministerial approval. When approved, final Guidelines are forwarded to the proponent.

When the proponent has prepared a draft EIS to a publishable standard, this document is exhibited for public review and comment for a minimum of 28 days, during which time advisory bodies also comment on the document.

Issues raised in the public comment period are addressed by the proponent in a Supplement to the draft EIS. The Commonwealth process requires that the Final EIS be of an adequate standard before publishing to ensure that each matter protected by controlling actions has sufficient information for the Minister/delegate to make a decision. NT advisory bodies review the Supplement.

The NT OEH then has 35 days to prepare an Environmental Assessment Report and Recommendations based on the draft EIS and Supplement. If the Minister approves the Report and Recommendations, these are forwarded to the responsible (consent) Minister(s) for inclusion in permit, lease or license conditions and in relevant management procedures (eg. Environmental Management Plans).

The Assessment Report and Recommendations are included on the OEH website and hard copies are provided to respondents and selected public libraries and viewing sites.

The Commonwealth process allows 30 business days from acceptance of the final EIS for the Department of the Environment and Heritage (DEH) to prepare an Assessment Report and provide it to the Minister/Delegate. The Minister/Delegate then has a period of 30 days to prepare his approval conditions. While Commonwealth assessment reports which form part of the Minister's/Delegate's approval are not normally published, they will be provided on application. However, the approval and conditions are included on the DEH website.

5 ADMINISTRATION

The Project Officer is Rod Johnson from the Office of Environment and Heritage, Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Environment. The contact number is (08) 8924 4002 and facsimile (08) 8924 4053, e-mail: roderick.johnson@nt.gov.au.

Three “Preliminary” copies of the draft EIS should be lodged with the Office of Environment and Heritage for internal review prior to release for public and advisory body comment. A further three preliminary copies should be lodged with the Environment Assessment and Approvals Branch, Department of the Environment and Heritage (DEH).

Once this internal review is complete and any necessary changes implemented by the proponent, approximately 28 bound copies of the draft EIS will be required for distribution to the Australian Government, NT advisory bodies and public viewing locations (e.g. libraries, council offices, etc.). A further five copies should be provided to DEH. In addition, 8 CD ROM copies (in ADOBE*.pdf format) plus two unsecured Microsoft Word copies should be submitted (to allow placement on the Office’s Internet site and to facilitate production of the Assessment Report and Recommendations). A CD ROM version and two unsecured Microsoft word copies should also be provided to DEH to facilitate preparation of the Assessment Report.

The proponent should also consider producing at least several copies for direct sale to the public, on request.

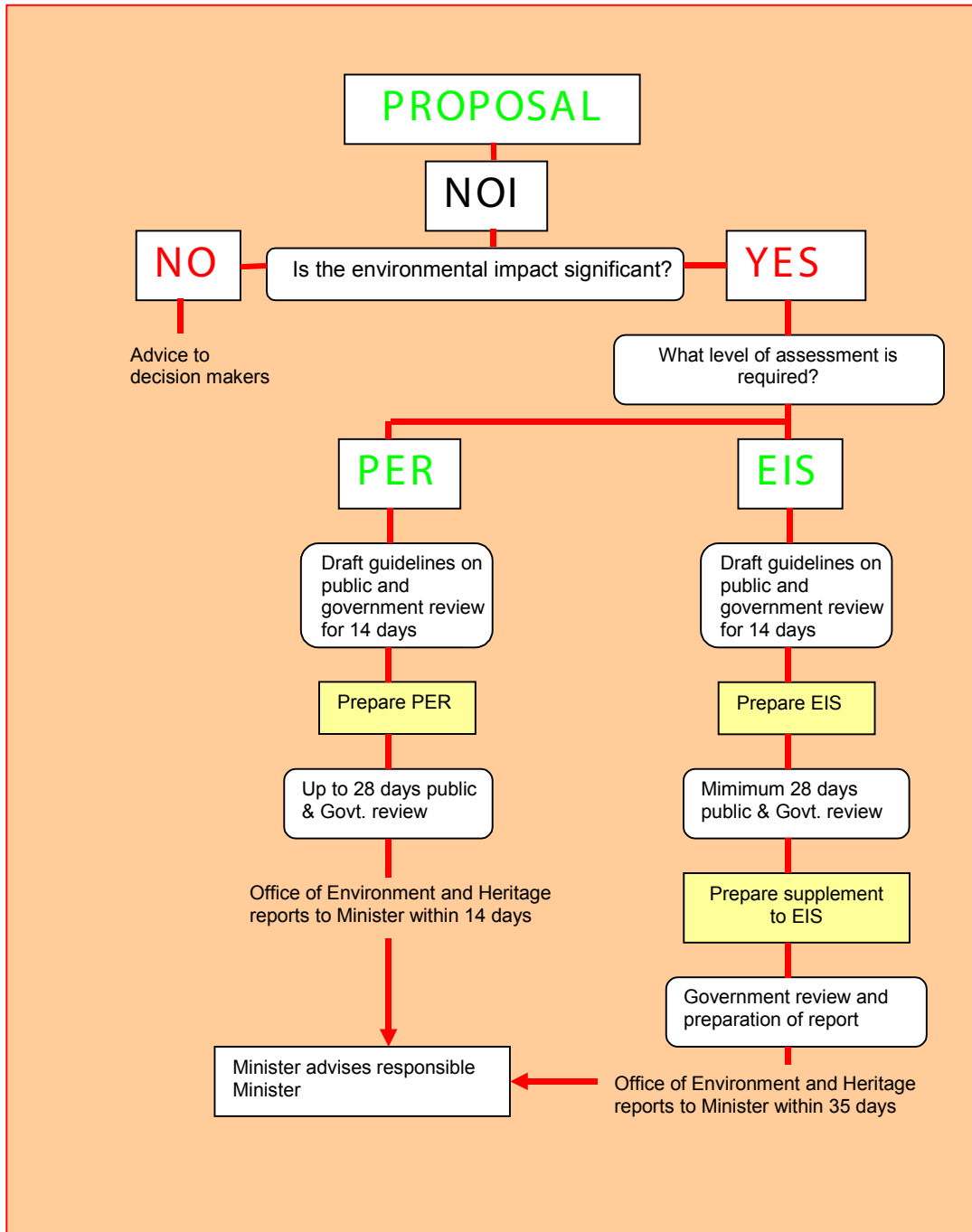


Figure 1 – The Northern Territory Environmental Assessment Process.

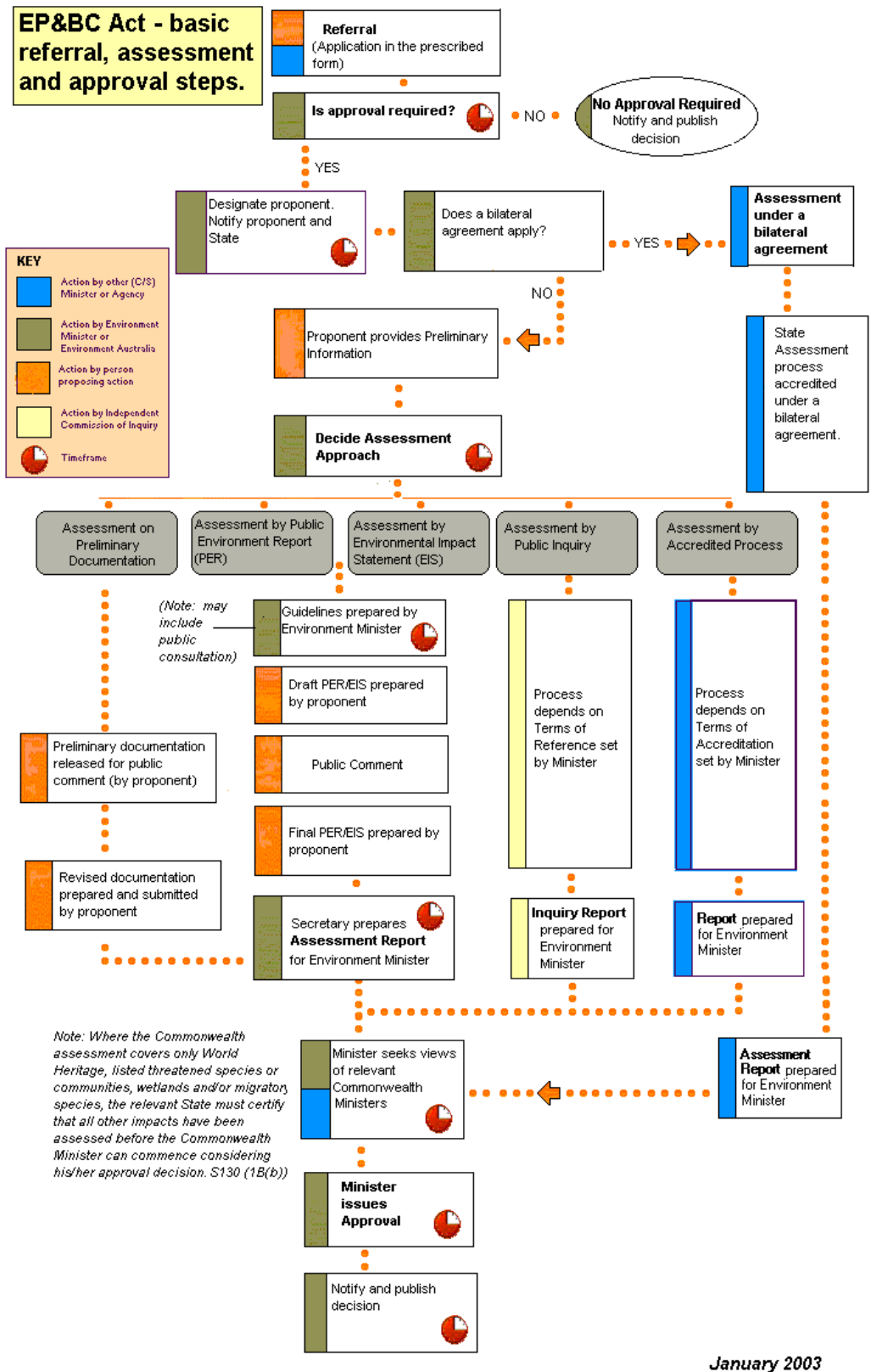


Figure 2 – Flowchart of the referral, assessment and approval process under the EPBC Act.