Preparation of a Scoping Report

Applicant Guidance and Template

# PART 1 - Guidance for Preparing a Scoping Report

This document forms part of the scoping process under Part 10 of the *Mining Regulations 2020* (SA). The scoping process is outlined in the Department for Energy and Mining’s (the department’s) scoping guideline [MRG MG44 *Leading practice for undergoing scoping*](https://sarigbasis.pir.sa.gov.au/WebtopEw/ws/samref/sarig1/image/DDD/MRGMG44001.pdf).

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Figure 1 - Scoping Process

The purpose of this document is to guide applicants in the preparation of a scoping report (Step 3 as shown above) that proposes the method and level of assessment required for the environmental and social impact assessment based on the significance of potential impacts posed by a proposed operation. When finalised (Step 5 as shown above), this report will form the scope of work (previously known as terms of reference) for the tenement application or change in operations application, and impact assessment.

This document outlines the structure and minimum requirements for the preparation of a scoping report. While applicants may use their own templates, formatting and corporate branding in the preparation of scoping reports, it must incorporate the headings and content outlined in this document.

Guidance to assist applicants in preparing a scoping report is provided throughout this document, for example:

This section should provide a brief introduction to the applicant, the proposed operation and its setting, in no more than 1-2 paragraphs.

#### Components

The scoping report will include three components:

1. Main Scoping Report - An integrated, plain English document that describes the proposed operation’s potential impacts. The Scoping Report does not require extensive information nor detailed studies and is based on information provided within the Preliminary Impact Assessment and Preliminary Impact Assessment Meeting (steps 1 and 2 – Figure 1).
2. Impact Scoping – The scoping report must include a table which identifies the proposed operation’s potential impacts and assigns each one an impact rating and proposed level of assessment which is appropriately scaled to the proposed operation. This table is initially generated in Step 4 of the department’s [Preliminary Impact Assessment Tool](https://www.energymining.sa.gov.au/__data/assets/excel_doc/0011/959222/20230911-TOOL-Preliminary-Impact-Assessment-Tool.xlsx) (Preliminary Identification and Evaluation of Impacts. Following stakeholder engagement, this table must be updated to reflect stakeholder feedback and provided to the department in support of the scoping report (see Chapter 5 and Appendix A of this document).
3. Supporting Studies – Any existing technical outputs and desktop or preliminary investigations that have informed the scoping report.

#### Content and level of detail

The scoping report does not require extensive information or detailed studies, as these are done at the tenement application or change in operations application stage. The scoping report should be specifically targeted, providing information on the proposed operation’s setting and the key issues that will be considered in detail in the impact assessment.

Information previously provided in the Preliminary Impact Assessment can be incorporated into the scoping report, with additional detail added as required (including the outcomes of stakeholder engagement and/or the findings of any subsequently completed supporting studies). As the scoping report is intended for a wider audience (including members of the public), the report should be written in ‘plain English’ and clearly explain the full context scope, background and proposed development and rehabilitation plan for the proposed operation.

To ensure the scoping report is prepared to a high standard, the document should:

* be focussed, clear and succinct
* be structured in a logical way, making it easy for readers to draw clear links between the summary of the findings in the main report and any detailed appendices
* use objective analysis and provide reasons and evidence to support any conclusions
* avoid using jargon
* use maps, photographs, interactive digital tools, figures, graphics, and tables to improve the presentation of information
* ensure the scoping report does not contain any false or misleading information.

#### Draft and final scoping reports

Once completed, the scoping report should be submitted to the department in draft form. The department will then review the draft scoping report in consultation with co-regulatory government agencies and provide comments and feedback. Applicants will then be requested to re-submit a final scoping report which considers and responds to all matters raised by the government. The final scoping report must include a table which addresses all government feedback and comments (refer to Appendix C). For ease of reference, two versions of the final scoping report must be provided to the department: ‘clean’ and ‘tracked’ (to indicate where changes have been made to the draft scoping report).

# PART 2 - Template for Preparing a Scoping Report

# Executive Summary

The Executive Summary should provide a high-level overview (i.e. 1-2 pages) of the scoping report and its key findings. This summary must:

* Identify the applicant, site location (including distance to the nearest town) and proposed operation name.
* Briefly describe the proposed operation and its key components.
* Identify the key stakeholders and provide a brief summary of engagement undertaken to date (including key issues raised and how these issues will be addressed in the assessment).
* Briefly summarise the outcomes of Impacts Scoping (see Chapter 5). This summary should indicate the number of impact events identified and the number of matters which have a high, moderate and low preliminary impact rating. Any matters assessed as having a preliminary impact rating of ‘high’ should be specifically identified.

1. Introduction

The introduction should provide a brief introduction to the applicant, the proposal and its setting. This chapter should be succinct (i.e. 1-2 pages) and incorporate the sections described below.

## Key Project Details

This section should introduce the applicant. This section should include, as a minimum, a completed ‘Key Project Details’ table (see below).

Note: The table below require the same detail as provided in the “Overview” tab of the Preliminary Impact Assessment Tool.

Key Project Details

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Aspect** | **Applicant Detail** |
| Applicant name(s) |  |
| Name of Proposed operation |  |
| Applicant Details | |
| Postal Address |  |
| Company Email |  |
| Company Website |  |
| Phone number(s) |  |
| Name of Contact Person |  |
| Position of Contact Person |  |
| Email of Contact Person |  |
| Phone number(s) of Contact Person |  |
| Commodity Information | |
| Mineral type |  |
| Primary Mineral(s) sought |  |
| Other mineral(s) sought |  |
| Site Details | |
| Site Location including certificate of title.  Describe the site’s location, including the distance (in kilometres) between the site and  • the nearest town  • The nearest residence or third-party property |  |
| Details of the existing tenement(s) giving authority to apply for a tenement |  |
| Native title land |  |
| Details of relevant land ownership, notices, consents and agreements |  |
| Exempt land |  |
| Restrictions or easements |  |
| Local Council Area (if applicable) |  |

## Project Background

This section should provide a brief overview of the background to the proposed operation, including how and when the applicant became involved with the site, and the relationship to existing or proposed development.

1. Existing Environment

This chapter should provide an overview of the proposed operations geographic, environment, social and economic context, supported by explanatory figures. This section must include, as a minimum, the sections described below.

Note: The sections described below require the same detail as provided in the “Step 1 – Existing Environment” tab of the Preliminary Impact Assessment Tool.

Each of the sections below should include an overview of available data which has informed the scoping report. Available data may come from both public and private sources and should include:

* Stakeholder feedback
* Government-endorsed online tools (e.g. SARIG, NatureMaps and the Commonwealth Protect Matters Search Tool)
* site maps, diagrams and photographs
* preliminary site layout plans and other design drawings
* any preliminary supporting studies undertaken to date (these supporting studies should be included as appendices to the scoping report (e.g. Appendix D and onwards).

Additionally each of the sections below should identify any assumptions for the purposes of the scoping report, as well as any information gaps or uncertainties which will require further investigation or assessment.

## Landscape, Soil, Geology and Geochemistry

Briefly describe the topography and landscape (including any known caves), soil profile and characteristics (including soils characteristics that may be an issue for disturbance), regional and local geology, and the geochemistry of rock types to be disturbed (in particular where there may be sulfide minerals that have the potential to generate acid)

## Groundwater

Briefly describe the groundwater environment (including local and regional hydrogeology). This section should identify:

* landowners using bores in the area
* any mapped aquatic or terrestrial groundwater dependent ecosystems in the area
* whether the site is located within a prescribed water resource area under the *Landscape South Australia Act 2019* and if so, this section should provide details on the current availability of groundwater resources within the prescribed area.

## Surface Water

Briefly describe the surface water environment (including identification of any named watercourses which may be impacted by the proposed operation). This section should identify whether the site is located:

* within water protection areas, including under the *River Murray Act 2003*
* within a prescribed water resource area under the Landscape South Australia Act 2019
* within the Murray Darling Basin boundary under the Commonwealth *Water Act 2007*.

## Vegetation and Fauna (including Weeds, Plant Pathogens and Pests)

Briefly describe native and introduced vegetation and fauna (including pests) which are known to occur or likely to occur. In particular, applicants should identify any state and/or nationally listed native vegetation species, ecological communities and fauna species on or close to the site, and their respective listing status (for example, listed as vulnerable under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972 or Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*).

In addition, this section should provide details about the extent that declared weeds (for example, broomrape or buffel grass) and plant pathogens (including phytophthora) known in the area.

## Local Community, Infrastructure and Housing

Briefly describe the local community and economy, and identify any nearby residence and other human infrastructure (including any exempt land under Section 9 of the Mining Act 1971).

This description should (at a minimum) identify the local population and employment rate (based on most recent census data), the location of the nearest population centres (relative to the proposal site), key local industries and livelihoods and any other significant developments or third-party infrastructure (whether existing or proposed) within the locality which may create potential cumulative impacts.

## Landowners and Land Use (including Pre-existing Site Contamination)

Briefly describe the current and historical land use of the proposal site and its immediate surroundings (e.g. cropping or grazing), identify any relevant pastoral leases and identify the zoning as defined by the Planning and Design Code or relevant council development plans.

Identify any known existing contamination of the site (including disturbance by previous operators and landowners), as well as plans for potential future land use changes by other parties within the surrounding area.

## Amenity, Air Quality and Noise

Briefly describe the scenic or aesthetic values for the proposal site and the surrounding locality, including features of community or visitor/tourist interest. Briefly describe the existing levels of dust and noise, and contributors to air quality and noise (both natural and anthropogenic).

## Heritage (Aboriginal, Non-Aboriginal, Geological)

Briefly describe any Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultural or archaeological sites, objects or remains known to exist on site.

Describe any geological heritage sites.

## Conservation Areas

Identify both proclaimed and private conservation areas in proximity to the proposed site and specify the distance (in kilometres) to proposed operations.

In this section, applicants should consider whether the proposed site provide a linkage or corridor to areas of protected habitat under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972* or *Native Vegetation Act 1991*.

Applicants must also specify if the proposed site falls within the Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary, Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary or a Marine Park.

1. Proposed Operations

This chapter provides a description of the proposed operation, supported by an indicative site plan. The length of this chapter will vary depending on the complexity of the project.

Changes to proposed operations are expected as more information becomes clear, the scoping report should aim to set out a process for adapting to any changes and how they can be incorporated.

## Project Opportunities and Objectives

This section should describe the purpose of the proposed operation and outline (in bullet point form) its key opportunities and objectives.

## Description of Proposed Mining Operations

This section must include, as a minimum, a completed ‘Description of Mining Operations’ table. If additional explanatory text is required, this may be provided in paragraph form after the table.

It is expected that information provided at the scoping stage will be high level, to retain future optionality. However, this overview should be sufficiently detailed to provide a reasonable understanding of the proposed operation and its potential impacts.

Note: The table below require the same detail as provided in the “Step 2 – Proposed Operations” tab of the Preliminary Impact Assessment Tool.

Description of Mining Operations

| **Proposal Aspect** | **Proposal Details** |
| --- | --- |
| Reserve/resource and products | |
| Resource |  |
| Production rate and products |  |
| Mine life |  |
| Exploration activities | |
| Exploration activities (if required) |  |
| Mining operations | |
| Type or types of mining operations |  |
| Sequence of mining and progressive rehabilitation |  |
| Waste rock and tailings storage facilities (if required) |  |
| Stockpiles |  |
| Use of explosives |  |
| Modes and hours of operation |  |
| Processing |  |
| Product transport |  |
| Waste |  |
| Supporting surface infrastructure |  |
| Vegetation clearance |  |
| Site water management |  |
| Description of site at completion |  |
| Project workforce |  |

## Potential Alternatives

This section must describe alternatives, including a broad range of conceptual proposal options under consideration. This description should highlight any particular impacts (positive or negative) associated with each alternative.

Alternatives may include methods of mine access, mining methods, ore handling, ore processing, alternatives for mine ventilation systems, alternatives for mine dewatering, etc. This must include a ‘do nothing’ option, where baseline conditions continue in the absence of the proposed operation.

Note: This section require the same detail as provided in the “Step 2 – Proposed Operations” tab of the Preliminary Impact Assessment Tool.

## Other Approvals, Permits and Planning Processes

This section should identify other approvals, permits and planning processes necessary to carry out the development. For example, proponents should identify whether:

* the proposed operation is likely to require consideration of the Commonwealth *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*
* a rezoning is required to carry out the proposal
* water licence or permit is required under the *Landscape South Australia Act 2019*
* a licence is required under the *Environment Protection Act 1993*
* a consent to clear native vegetation is required under the *Native Vegetation Act 1991*

Note: This section requires the same detail as provided in the “Step 2 – Proposed Operations” tab of the Preliminary Impact Assessment Tool.

1. Stakeholder and Community Engagement

This chapter must provide an overview of stakeholder engagement undertaken to date and outline the plan for continuing engagement during development of the tenement application or change in operations application, and impact assessment.

This chapter should describe stakeholders’ early views and concerns regarding potential impacts on the natural environment and aspects such as livelihoods, health and wellbeing, cultural practices or way of life, and how this has shaped the approach to environmental and social impact assessment.

All engagement should be carried out in line with good practice engagement principles,[[1]](#footnote-2) as well as the department’s engagement guidelines. Engagement should be proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposed operation and the likely level of stakeholder interest.

## Social and Community Context

This section should summarise (e.g. in table format, with maps graphics and maps as appropriate), who has been consulted, when and how they were consulted, what their feedback and key concerns were and how these issues will be addressed in the development of the mineral tenement application or change in operations application.

Note: This requires the same detail as provided in the “Step 3 – Social & Community” tab of the Preliminary Impact Assessment Tool.

## Level of Stakeholder Interest and Key Issues

This section should provide an overall evaluation of the level of community interest in the proposed operation, based on engagement undertaken to date. This section should also distil the key issues of community concern identified to date.

Key issues raised by stakeholders should be described systematically and transparently, avoiding oversimplification or misrepresentation of issues. All major impacts identified (perceived or real) through stakeholder engagement should be listed, appropriately addressed, and validated or dismissed using scientific and logical justification.

## Engagement Plan

This section should summarise the engagement plan for the impact assessment. See *MG24 - Preparing a community engagement plan for further guidance on preparing an engagement plan*: https://sarigbasis.pir.sa.gov.au/WebtopEw/ws/samref/sarig1/image/DDD/MRGMG34.pdf

1. Impact Scoping

The scoping report must include a table which identifies the proposed operation’s potential impacts and assigns each one an impact rating and proposed level of assessment which is appropriately scaled to the proposed operation.

This table is initially generated in “Step 4 – Preliminary Impacts” tab of the Preliminary Impact Assessment Tool.

Following stakeholder engagement, this table must be updated to reflect stakeholder feedback and provided to the department (in MS Excel format) as Appendix A of the Scoping Report.

This chapter should summarise the key findings of impact scoping (as presented in Appendix A), including:

* A simplified breakdown (e.g. in table format) of identified impact events and their respective impact ratings (high, moderate or low), their corresponding level of assessment and proposed studies and actions for assessment.
* A summary of identified social considerations, including the level of assessment required and the likely level of community concern (high, moderate or low).

Based on the findings presented in this section, applicants should then review and update the Mining Proposal Checklist in Appendix B. This checklist will summarise the requirements for the tenement application or change in operations application, and impact assessment.

For example: A simplified breakdown from Step 4 – Preliminary Impacts tab of the Preliminary Impact Assessment Tool may use Columns F, G, N, Q, S as shown below.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Impact Event ID** | **Impact Event Description** | **Justification for Preliminary Evaluation of Impact** | **Preliminary Impact Rating** | **Proposed studies and actions for assessment** |
| GW1 |  |  | High |  |
| AQ1 |  |  | Low |  |

Appendix A – Impact Scoping

Appendix B – Mining Proposal Checklist

Applicants must attach a completed mining proposal checklist using the template relevant to their proposed operation.

See:

* [Terms of Reference 003-Extractive mineral quarry lease/ licence applications (TOR003)](https://sarigbasis.pir.sa.gov.au/WebtopEw/ws/samref/sarig1/image/DDD/MD003.pdf)
* [Terms of Reference 006-Mineral mine/lease applications (TOR006)](https://sarigbasis.pir.sa.gov.au/WebtopEw/ws/samref/sarig1/image/DDD/MD006.pdf)
* [Terms of Reference 025-Change in operations applications (TOR025)](https://sarigbasis.pir.sa.gov.au/WebtopEw/ws/samref/sarig1/image/DDD/MD025.pdf)

Appendix C – Applicant Response to Government Feedback (Final Scoping Report Only)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Agency** | **Comment/feedback** | **Where comment/feedback is addressed in final scoping report** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

**Appendix D (and onwards) – Supporting Studies**

1. See, for example: IAP2 Core Values: <https://iap2.org.au/about-us/about-iap2-australasia/core-values/>, the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water’s *Interim Engaging with First Nations People and Communities on Assessments and Approvals* under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*: https://www.dcceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/interim-engaging-with-first-nations-people-and-communities-assessments-and-approvals-under-epbc-act.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-2)