

**CONSULTATION PAPER: DETERMINING THE NEED FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (EC DIRECTIVE 97/11/EC)**

**Comments by The Institution of Environmental Sciences.**

**Point 24**

Having reviewed the "exclusive" thresholds, where the respondents have practical experience, IES generally consider that the thresholds are set at the pragmatic levels.

Concern is expressed about the "indicative" threshold and how these will be employed. Although they may be seen as useful guidance, it can be foreseen that they will in practice become the lower threshold for projects requiring EAs. There is a gap between exclusive and indicative thresholds for most projects, e.g. pipelines where the exclusive threshold is 500m and the indicative threshold is 5km. There may be confusion about projects falling in the gap or planning authorities may ruled they do not requiring an EA with little thought. Guidance about the use of indicative thresholds needs to be carefully described and worded.

**Point 29**

IES agree that projects affecting areas of national or international importance should always be considered for an EA. In AONBs etc. a case for "exclusive" thresholds for the following projects can be made: Water management for agriculture, afforestation, livestock installations, electricity etc. installations, overhead cables, dams etc., groundwater abstraction and waste-water treatment.

**Point 30**

IES agree that the Secretary of State should have the power to require a project to be subjected to an EA even though it falls below the exclusive thresholds.

**10c - 10h**

The proposal suggests an EA may be required if 1km of a linear project passes very close to a sensitive area. It is the closeness of the new structure and not its length that may affect the sensitive area. The guidance should be given in terms of proximity to a sensitive area. Consider a wetland and alteration to drainage caused by a nearby road.

**12b Marinas**

The exclusive threshold is given in terms of area, but the indicative threshold in terms of berths. Area is probably a better measure, although marine marinas with boats discharging effluent into the sea will have a greater adverse impact with increasing boat numbers.