

# Environmental Impact Assessment Systems in Latin America and the Caribbean<sup>1,2</sup>

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*Abstract. The paper presents a comparative analysis of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Systems adopted by twenty Latin American countries. The analysis finds that in many Latin American countries EIA has become de facto a substitute for biodiversity conservation regulations, pollution control regulations, and effective land use planning. The paper further assesses differences in roles and responsibilities of project proponents, authorities, and community's consultation throughout the EIA process. The analysis finds that such differences, which largely stem from the diverging conceptions of EIA, have a substantial impact on whether EIA is a valuable tool to prevent and reduce environmental and social impact or a red tape for project development.*

## 1. Introduction

Most Latin American countries have adopted formal Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) requirements. In 1974, five years after the U.S. adopted its National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requiring EIAs, Colombia became the first Latin American country to incorporate EIA in its legal framework. Since then, countries across the region have instituted EIA requirements for public and private investment projects.

This paper reviews EIA procedures adopted by 22 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), and discusses the differences and similarities among them.<sup>3</sup> It also generates hypothesis related to the differences between EIA procedures in the region and those established in 1969 in the U.S. NEPA. Sources for this analysis consisted mainly of EIA policies currently in place in each of these countries. The analysis does not consider other policy instruments that are independent of EIA, but that regulate areas reviewed in this paper (for instance, the analysis considers the requirements for access to information contained in EIA regulations, but not the requirements that are part of specific policies or regulations on access to information). Furthermore, this analysis does not cover the subnational level for those countries having federal administrations.

This paper has ten additional sections. Section 2 comments on the nature of EIA as a policy instrument. Section 3 discusses institutional leadership and inter-agency coordination during EIA. Section 4 focuses on the screening process used to determine whether or not a proposal should be subject to EIA and, if so, at what level of detail. Section 5 analyzes the scoping process that identifies the issues and impacts likely to be important. Section 6 centers on public participation, access to information, and dissemination during the EIA process. Section 7 reviews the evaluation of alternatives. Section 8 assesses the evaluation criteria used in the EIA process. Section 9 considers environmental management and follow-up mechanisms. Section 10 summarizes the results of our analysis and section 11 presents conclusions.

## 2. Nature of EIA as a Policy Instrument

As a result of the enactment of NEPA in 1969, the U.S. became the first country to adopt the use of EIA in its contemporary sense. The main purpose of the Act is to foster excellent action “by requiring that a process be undertaken to “help public officials make decisions that are based on understating of environmental consequences, and take actions that protect, restore, and enhance the environment.”<sup>4</sup> Thus, under NEPA, EIA could be described as a process to open up decision making to public scrutiny (Ortolano and others 1987). NEPA's provisions cover all U.S. policies, regulations, and public laws, as well as recommendations or reports on proposals for legislation and other major federal actions<sup>5</sup> with the potential to significantly affect the quality of the human environment.<sup>6</sup>

Countries in LAC have adopted a number of environmental assessment tools. These include DA (Environmental Diagnostic), EAE (Strategic Environmental Assessment), EAI (Initial Environmental Evaluation), EEA (Evaluation of Cumulative Impacts), EIS (Social Impact Assessment), ERA (Environmental Risk Assessment), and EsEIA (Environmental Impact Assessment Study).

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<sup>1</sup> The findings, interpretations, and conclusions herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank and its affiliated organizations, or those of the Executive Directors of The World Bank or the governments they represent.

<sup>2</sup> This paper is based on the poster “Comparative Matrix of Environmental Impact Assessment Systems in Latin America” prepared by the World Bank in 2007 and updated up to 2013 (Tiffer and others, 2014).

<sup>3</sup> These countries are Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, El Salvador, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

<sup>4</sup> 40 C.F.R. § 1500.1.

<sup>5</sup> Federal actions are defined as those that require the approval of a governmental agency at the federal level.

<sup>6</sup> 42 U.S.C. § 4332.

A review of EIA requirements in countries in LAC suggests that these tools have been designed to safeguard the environment from damages by investment projects. In countries such as Brazil, EIAs are associated with three different environmental licenses for pre-installation, installation, and operation. Through EIA, authorities often establish design and operation conditions that aim to tailor a command and control regulation to specific investments.

Differences in the nature of EIA translate into differences in most of the EIA system's components, including stakeholders' roles and responsibilities, formal requirements for the EIA process, and the degree to which EIA can influence public decision making. In LAC, responsibility for environmental compliance falls on project developers, who must meet EIA-related requirements that are evaluated and enforced by the relevant government authority.

### **3. Institutional Leadership in the EIA System and Inter-Agency Coordination**

Under NEPA, a federal government official is responsible for preparing the statement on the environmental impacts of each major federal action.<sup>7</sup> In this context, the EIA process is led by the line agency with a sectoral mandate to regulate actions having the potential for significant environmental impacts. That line agency is responsible for making the relevant decision on EIA approval, as well as supervising the process, hiring the consultants, organizing public consultations, and meeting other regulatory requirements.

In LAC, the project developer is responsible for contracting the consultants and supervising the preparation of assessments. With this approach, the environmental authority acts as an evaluator that assesses whether the proposed project satisfies the criteria for obtaining an environmental license or other type of authorization. The approval of environmental assessment documents is mostly the responsibility of environmental agencies. The only exception to that approach is Grenada, where the Physical Planning Unit and the Ministry for Civil Works are in charge of the EIA process. In some cases—such as Argentina, Panama, and Peru—other sector agencies (rather than environmental ones) have a lead role awarding environmental licenses.

In 60% of the countries considered in this paper, national environmental agencies in charge of the EIA process must consult other institutions or sectoral or local agencies as part of the EIA process. In 18% of the countries, such consultations are not required, while in another 18%, interagency coordination and consultation take place only if the national authority considers it necessary. Interagency coordination becomes a critical aspect in EIA to ensure that the EIA process complies with relevant environmental legislation (on protected areas, indigenous people, cultural resources sites, forests, and urban areas).

### **4. Screening**

Under NEPA, the screening process for a "Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)" establishes the steps to identify significant environmental effects. When the action is expected to significantly affect the human environment, the action's proponent must prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), "entailing a deeper and more comprehensive analysis of the action's impacts."<sup>8</sup> The two variables that determine significance of project's impacts are context and intensity.<sup>9</sup> When the lead agency is uncertain of whether the action is likely to generate significant impacts or not, an Environmental Assessment (EA) is required. The EA should provide sufficient evidence and analysis to determine whether an EIS is called for. If the EIS is necessary, the EA should facilitate its preparation. Alternatively, if the statement is not necessary, the agency must prepare a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), which is a document that explains why the action will not have significant effects on the human environment.<sup>10</sup> NEPA also contemplates "categorical exclusion", a category applicable to actions that do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment and that have been found to cause no such effect in previous projects undertaken by the federal agency in compliance with NEPA. Actions in this category require neither EA nor EIS.<sup>11</sup>

In LAC, screening is based mostly on the use of lists that indicate which projects are subject to an EIA. The main differences across countries in the LAC region center on the flexibility that the lead agency has for expanding, narrowing, or interpreting the list. The widespread use of lists as screening devices in Latin America presents a series of challenges, given that this instrument is conducive to ineffective and inefficient screening processes. The rigidity of the lists limits their ability to filter out projects that would not generate significant environmental effects, and thus, a wide range of projects must undergo EIA.

The weaknesses of lists as screening mechanisms are not overcome by providing authorities flexibility to decide how and when to use such lists. In fact, the use of discretionary criteria has been found to be more closely associated with increased probability of error, unequal treatment of similar projects, and opportunities for illegally influencing the decisions taken by authorities, rather than with better environmental outcomes.

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<sup>7</sup> 42 U.S.C. § 4332(b).

<sup>8</sup> 40 C.F.R. § 1502.1.

<sup>9</sup> *Id.* at § 1508.27.

<sup>10</sup> *Id.* at § 1508.13.

<sup>11</sup> *Id.* at § 1508.4.

## **5. EIA Scoping**

Public consultations during the scoping process under the U.S. NEPA provide an opportunity to ensure that the EIA considers the impacts of major concern for all stakeholders. However, in Latin America, only a few countries include consultations during the scoping process. In the rest of the region's countries, the EIA's scope and depth are defined by EIA legislation, the national environmental agency, or in specific guidelines or Terms of Reference, without providing opportunities for public input.

Approximately 30% of countries included in this analysis have defined generic terms of reference that determine the scope of the EIA instruments and, therefore, do not necessarily consider each action's specific characteristics. In 10% of the countries, the national environmental agency and the developer define the TORs. In 14% of the countries, the proponent submits a proposal for the ToR and thereby defines the EIA's scope. In other countries, there may be generic guidelines and ToRs, but those are subject to revision and adaptation for each individual project.

The generic content of TORs demands an equal treatment of environmental variables whose relative importance varies depending on the specific action. These inefficiencies are not necessarily solved by granting discretion to the authority during the elaboration of specific TORs. In fact, administrative discretion is another source of inefficiency. In these cases, one or several public servants are responsible for determining the contents of the TORs, based on the information provided by the action's proponent, and in some instances, a field visit. Consequently, the content of the TORs depends on the education, expertise, experience, and degree of discretion of the individuals involved. The outcome under these circumstances may be the extreme opposite of the case where generic TORs are used, namely that the EIAs of projects with very similar characteristics may be required to consider significantly different components.

In Latin America, project developers are responsible for hiring the consultant who prepares the EIA, resulting in a clear conflict of interests. Developers may therefore have incentives to hire a consultant who will do the bare minimum to meet the legal requirements and instead focus on overcoming any potential objections to the project.

Out of the 22 LAC countries examined, 64% have adopted legal provisions stating the qualifications and/or expertise that the consultant must have in order to ensure adequate preparation of EIA documents. In addition, 55% of the countries require that the consultant be enrolled in a formal registry. While these requirements do not modify the developers' incentives, they do constitute barriers to entry that provide a level of quality assurance regarding the consultant.

Only 36% of the countries examined require evaluation of cumulative impacts as part of the EIA scoping. However, there are significant gaps in the definition of methodologies, guidelines, and regulations that guide effective cumulative impact assessments and that require stand-alone projects to reduce impacts if found in the same watershed or locality. New tools such as geographic information systems (GIS) are beginning to help consultants to improve the analysis of cumulative effects and to adopt land-use planning tools to improve the decision-making process.

## **6. Public Participation, Access to Information, and Dissemination**

All 22 countries reviewed in this paper legally require some form of public participation during the EIA process, although in most such consultations, participants are only notified about decisions that have already been made. Regarding public participation, 60% of the countries provide opportunities to receive public input during various stages of the EIA process; some countries require that consultations take place prior to the evaluation of the EIS.

Public participation has been one of the assets for improving the region's EIA processes. Participation has been a topic permanently claimed by NGOs. In addition, participation has also helped to make visible the problems, constraints, opportunities, and challenges that tended to be hidden by limited screening, scoping, and TOR-preparation stages. These recent improvements have been translated into concrete actions such as requesting developers to publish a notification in newspapers, setting specific periods of time to receive feedback from the public, or developing public hearings to discuss the project. However, while most Latin American countries considered in this analysis have adopted one or more public participation mechanisms, there is significant variation in how well these mechanisms are regulated and the extent to which the input collected through them may actually influence the authority's decision. Although this mechanism would offer an opportunity for affected groups to express their opinions, it does so at a stage where many crucial decisions have already been made.

A number of variables may hinder or enhance the meaningfulness of public consultations. For instance, a number of countries require that public comments be submitted in writing and be supported by legal, scientific, or technical evidence. While such a requirement may be effective in reducing the number of frivolous complaints about the proposed action, it may easily become an obstacle for the participation of disadvantaged groups.

Legal provisions regarding access to information also vary significantly across countries. While all EIA-related information (except classified information) is available to the public in 22% of the countries, only the final EIS is available to the public in 40% of the countries, the public has access to a summary or abstract of the EIS in 14% of the countries, and there is no provision on this issue in 10% of the countries.

Finally, in 23% of the countries, public hearings are mandatory, at least for one category of EIA. In 41% of the countries, public hearings may be organized if deemed necessary by the authority or if requested by interested parties. The remaining 36% do not contemplate public hearings in their legal frameworks. Public hearings can have a more significant effect in building consensus or incorporating communities' concerns into the EIA than the exchange of written information. However, public hearings are often resource-intensive and, if not properly organized, can easily turn into a community's opportunity to voice demands for issues with little or no relationship to the project.

## **7. Evaluation of Alternatives**

The evaluation of alternatives allows public access to information on the impacts that different alternatives would have. According to the NEPA regulations, the analysis of alternatives is "the heart of the environmental impact statement."<sup>12</sup> The prepared statement must present the environmental impacts of the proposal and of the alternatives in a comparative form to facilitate the selection of options by the decision maker and the public.

In LAC, 68% of the countries currently require the evaluation of alternatives for proposed projects as part of the EIA process, the scope of this study is very different in each country. Most of the time, alternatives are evaluated to justify the proposed project's selected site or approach. A few countries, such as Brazil, ask for evaluating the "no project" option. The evaluation of alternatives seems to have limited influence on the authority's decision making, as one alternative has already been selected and the exercise is simply carried out to confirm that choice.

## **8. Evaluators and Evaluation Criteria**

In the U.S., once the lead agency has produced an EIS that meets the content and procedural requirements, it may make its decision, which must be formalized in a public record of the decision. The record must state what the decision was; identify the alternatives considered by the agency and discuss the environmental, technical, and economic considerations of each alternative and the way in which these were balanced in the decision-making process; and explain whether all practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm from the selected alternative have been adopted or the reasons for not adopting them.<sup>13</sup>

Under the model adopted by Latin American countries, the designated authority evaluates the EIA prepared by the developer and determines whether the assessment meets all legal requirements. With this approach, the authority has limited involvement in the elaboration of the necessary studies and in ensuring that public input is duly incorporated in the EIA process. In 41% of these countries, there are no explicit evaluation criteria and the authorities must therefore assess whether the documents are consistent with the legal framework. In the remaining countries, the legal framework provides evaluation criteria, which range from verifying that the documents are consistent with the TORs, to general environmental goals that the proposed project is expected to advance. In all cases, the decision maker has significant discretionary powers to decide whether the EIA is valid or not, and the decision to approve the EIA is based on the official's own interpretations or views. This does not guarantee that the EIA process will result in a better decision being made, as it is not necessarily associated with received public input, systematized environmental information, or the existence of clearly defined criteria to interpret environmental regulations.

## **9. Environmental Management and Follow-Up Mechanisms**

In the U.S., the record of the decision made by the lead agency must explain what mitigation measures have been adopted, as well as the reasons why additional measures were not adopted, and provide a monitoring and supervision program.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, the lead agency must include the appropriate conditions in grants, permits, and other approvals; condition funding of actions on mitigation; and, upon request, make available to the public the results of relevant monitoring.<sup>15</sup>

In general, reduction, prevention, mitigation, and compensation measures as environmental management plans (EMP) are part of the EIA policies in 95% of the LAC countries considered in this analysis. In spite of these countries' efforts, negative impacts and unresolved claims by the public have forged significant issues across the region against different types of projects. The main challenges relate to developers' responsibilities to apply mitigation measures. More important is supervision—by the relevant agency issuing the EIA license—to confirm appropriate application of the measures. Most countries include some type of monitoring instrument such as periodic reports, inspections, third-party audits, or audits conducted by the environmental agency.

Independently of the number of EMPs or follow-up plans or programs that are required, these plans are often used as remedies for the lack of legally established environmental standards or formal governmental programs. In these cases, the mitigation measures are not necessarily related to the impacts that the project is expected to generate, but to activities, such as reforestation or education, that are socially desirable but that the authority is unable to carry out because of its constrained resources.

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<sup>12</sup> 40 C.F.R. § 1502.14.

<sup>13</sup> *Id.* at § 1505.2.

<sup>14</sup> 40 C.F.R. § 1505.2(c).

<sup>15</sup> *Id.* at § 1505.3.

One of the greatest paradoxes of EIA systems in Latin America is that, although EIA seems to be used as an environmental management tool through which the authority aims to ensure that a large number of projects or activities operate within specific environmental parameters, most countries rarely monitor the action's impacts after the corresponding license or permit has been issued. This is due mainly to lack of resources.

## 10. Results

The use of EIA as an instrument for the evaluation and mitigation of environmental impacts is a common practice across LAC. Our analysis of the main elements of current EIA procedures in LAC provides preliminary support for two hypotheses. The first hypothesis is that the nature of EIA in LAC aims to manage the environmental impacts of specific projects, rather than serving as a planning tool based on participatory efforts to discuss the environmental and social concerns of different stakeholders as part of governmental agencies' decision making. The second hypothesis is that, by focusing on the environmental impacts of specific projects, EIA has become a "de facto substitute" for biodiversity conservation regulations, pollution control regulations, and effective land-use planning. Both hypotheses should be tested through in-depth analysis at the country level.

## 11. Conclusions

This paper's comparative analysis of EIA systems highlights the differences and similarities of the systems that have been adopted across LAC. There are differences between countries in each of the components considered in this analysis, stemming from the level of detail with which EIA systems have been regulated, as well as from the relative importance that each country has assigned to the components of the system, such as public participation or inter-agency coordination. However, EIA systems also have similar characteristics and have evolved to expand the potential of specific aspects such as public consultation.

The trends explored by this paper suggest that the EIA approach of most countries in LAC focuses predominantly on managing the negative environmental impacts of—and avoiding damages to third parties by—specific projects, rather than on strengthening decision-making processes. By making EIA the predominant environmental management tool, many countries in LAC have placed an inadequate burden on it, not always taken sufficient advantage of EIA's potential roles in policy development and implementation. A major challenge in increasing the effectiveness of EIA to improve decision making is for countries to develop an adequate environmental policy and regulatory framework in which different command and control regulations, market-based instruments, and information and disclosure tools complement one other. For most countries in LAC, the development of such a framework could be based on the identification of their environmental priorities, particularly those related to poverty alleviation.

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## Annex 1 – Legislation Consulted in Preparing this Paper

Country	Legislation
Argentina	Ley 25.675 [Law 25.675], Sanctioned Nov. 06, 2002. Partially promulgated Nov. 27, 2002; Ley 24051 [Law 24051], Sanctioned Dec. 17, 1991. Promulgated Jan. 17, 1992.
Belize	ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT, art. 20 (Rev. Ed. 2000 Law Revision Commissioner); ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS, reg. 2 (Rev. Ed. 2003 Law Revision Commissioner).
Bolivia	Ley 1,333, LEY DEL MEDIO AMBIENTE [LAW OF THE ENVIRONMENT], Mar. 23, 1992; REGLAMENTO DE PREVENCIÓN Y CONTROL AMBIENTAL [REGULATIONS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PREVENTION AND OVERSIGHT], <i>Gaceta Oficial de Bolivia</i> , Jun. 15, 1992; DECRETO SUPREMO 29894, ESTRUCTURA ORGANIZATIVA DEL PODER EJECUTIVO DEL ESTADO PLURINACIONAL [SUPREME DECREE ON THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE MULTINATIONAL STATE EXECUTIVE POWER], <i>Gaceta Oficial de Bolivia</i> , Feb. 7, 2009.
Brazil	Lei No. 7.804 [Law 7,804], 18 de julho de 1989, D.O.U. de 04.01.1990; Resolução CONAMA No. 001 [Resolution No. 001 of 1986], 23 de janeiro de 1986, D.O.U. de 17.02.1986; Resolução CONAM 237 of 1997 [Resolution 237 of 1997], Dec. 19, 1997.
Chile	Ley 19.300: BASES GENERALES DEL MEDIO AMBIENTE [GENERAL LAWS REGARDING THE ENVIRONMENT] [Law 19.300], Mar. 1, 1994, D.O. Mar. 9, 1994; REGLAMENTO DEL SISTEMA DE EVALUACIÓN DE IMPACTO AMBIENTAL [REGULATIONS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

	ASSESSMENT SYSTEM], D.S. No. 95 of 2001.
<b>Colombia</b>	Colombia, Law No. 99, 1993; Law No. 768, 2002; Decree No. 2820, 2010.
<b>Costa Rica</b>	Costa Rica, Law No. 7554 LEY ORGÁNICA DEL AMBIENTE [ORGANIC ENVIRONMENTAL LAW] [Law 7554]; Decreto No. 31849-MINAE-S-MOPT-MAG-MEIC, REGLAMENTO GENERAL SOBRE LOS PROCEDIMIENTOS DE EVALUACIÓN DE IMPACTO AMBIENTAL (EIA) [GENERAL REGULATIONS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) PROCEDURES] [GENERAL REGULATIONS FOR EIA PROCEDURES], 24.05.2004, <i>La Gaceta</i> , No. 125, Jun. 28, 2004.
<b>Dominican Republic</b>	LEY GENERAL SOBRE MEDIO AMBIENTE Y RECURSOS NATURALES (64-00) [GENERAL LAW ON ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES (64-00)] [Law 64-00]; REGLAMENTO DEL SISTEMA DE PERMISOS Y LICENCIAS AMBIENTALES [REGULATIONS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PERMITS AND LICENSES SYSTEM], created through Resolución Resolution 02, 2011
<b>Ecuador</b>	Ley 37 LEY DE GESTIÓN AMBIENTAL [LAW OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT] [Law 37], RO/245, Jul. 30, 1999; Decreto 3399, TEXTO UNIFICADO DE LEGISLACIÓN SECUNDARIA, LIBRO VI [UNIFIED TEXT OF SECONDARY LEGISLATION, BOOK VI], Nov. 28, 2002, R.O. 725, Dec. 16, 2002.
<b>El Salvador</b>	Decreto 233, LEY GENERAL DEL AMBIENTE [GENERAL LAW REGARDING THE ENVIRONMENT] [Decree 233], Mar. 02, 1998, D.O. Tomo No. 399, NUMERO 79, May 4, 1998; Decreto 17, REGLAMENTO GENERAL DE LA LEY DE MEDIO AMBIENTE [GENERAL REGULATIONS OF THE LAW OF ENVIRONMENT] [Decree 17], <i>Diario Oficial</i> , No. 73, Apr. 12, 2000.
<b>Grenada</b>	Physical Planning and Development Control Act No. 25 (2002); Waste Management Act No. 16 (2001).
<b>Guatemala</b>	Decreto Número 68-86 LEY DE PROTECCIÓN Y MEJORAMIENTO DEL AMBIENTE [LAW OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND IMPROVEMENT], <i>Diario de Centro América</i> , No. 27, Tomo 255, Dec. 19, 1986, amended several times; Acuerdo Gubernativo No. 023-2003, REGLAMENTO DE EVALUACIÓN, CONTROL Y SEGUIMIENTO AMBIENTAL [REGULATIONS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION, OVERSIGHT, AND FOLLOW UP] [Governmental Agreement 23 of 2003], Jan. 27, 2003.
<b>Guyana</b>	ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) GUIDELINES, VOL. 1, RULES AND PROCEDURES FOR CONDUCTING AND REVIEWING EIAs, [EIA GUIDELINES], p. 5, (Version 4, Nov. 2000, Environmental Protection Agency/Environmental Assessment Board).
<b>Haiti</b>	Decree of Environmental Management (1995).
<b>Honduras</b>	Decreto 104-93, LEY GENERAL DEL AMBIENTE [GENERAL LAW OF ENVIRONMENT] [Decree 104-93], art. 5, May 27, 1993, <i>La Gaceta</i> , June 3, 1993; REGLAMENTO DEL SISTEMA NACIONAL DE EVALUACIÓN DE IMPACTO AMBIENTAL (SINEIA) [REGULATIONS FOR THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT SYSTEM (SINEIA)] [SINEIA REGULATIONS], art. 6, <i>La Gaceta</i> , No. 27.291, March 5, 1994.
<b>Mexico</b>	LEY GENERAL DEL EQUILIBRIO ECOLÓGICO Y PROTECCIÓN AL AMBIENTE [GENERAL LAW OF ECOLOGICAL EQUILIBRIUM AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION] [LGEEPA], D.O.F. Jan. 28, 1988, amended several times, last version: DOF 16-01-2014; REGLAMENTO DE LA LEY GENERAL DEL EQUILIBRIO ECOLÓGICO Y LA PROTECCIÓN AL AMBIENTE EN MATERIA DE EVALUACIÓN DE IMPACTO AMBIENTAL [REGULATIONS OF THE GENERAL LAW OF ECOLOGICAL EQUILIBRIUM AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT] [LGEEPA EIA REGULATIONS], D.O.F., May 30, 2000, amended several times, last version: DOF 26-04-2012
<b>Nicaragua</b>	Ley 217, LEY GENERAL DEL MEDIO AMBIENTE Y LOS RECURSOS NATURALES [GENERAL LAW OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES] [Law 217], art. 5, Mar 27, 1996, <i>La Gaceta</i> No. 105, June 6, 1996; Decreto 45 de 1994, REGLAMENTO DE PERMISO Y EVALUACIÓN DE IMPACTO AMBIENTAL [REGULATIONS FOR PERMITS AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT] [Decree 45 of 1994], art. 3, <i>La Gaceta Diario Oficial</i> , October 31, 1994.
<b>Panama</b>	Ley No. 41 de 1 de Julio de 1998 [Law 41], art. 2, <i>Gaceta Oficial</i> No. 23578, Jul. 3, 1998. Decreto 209 [Decree 209], arts. 3 and 7, <i>Gaceta Oficial</i> 25625, Sep. 6, 2006.
<b>Paraguay</b>	LEY 294/93 DE IMPACTO AMBIENTAL [LAW 294/93 OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT] [Law 294/93]; Decreto 14,281 [Decree 14,281], <i>Gaceta Oficial</i> , July 31, 1996; Ley 1,561/00, QUE CREA EL SISTEMA NACIONAL DEL AMBIENTE, EL CONSEJO NACIONAL DEL AMBIENTE Y LA SECRETARIA DEL AMBIENTE [Law 1,561/00 THAT ESTABLISHES THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEM, THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL, AND THE SECRETARY OF ENVIRONMENT], May 29, 2000.
<b>Peru</b>	Ley 27446, LEY DEL SISTEMA NACIONAL DE EVALUACIÓN DE IMPACTO AMBIENTAL [LAW OF THE NATIONAL SYSTEM OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT] [Law 27446], Mar. 16, 2001, <i>El Peruano</i> , Apr. 23, 2001; Ley 29968, LEY DE CREACIÓN DEL SERVICIO NACIONAL DE CERTIFICACIÓN AMBIENTAL PARA LAS INVERSIONES SOSTENIBLES - SENACE [LAW OF THE NATIONAL SERVICE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CERTIFICATION OF SUSTAINABLE INVESTMENTS] [Law 29968], Dec. 19, 2012, <i>El Peruano</i> , Dec. 20, 2012; Decreto Legislativo N° 1078, Modificatoria de la Ley del Sistema Nacional de Evaluación de Impacto Ambiental, Jun. 27, 2008; Decreto Supremo N° 019-2009-MINAM, Reglamento de la Ley del Sistema Nacional de Evaluación de Impacto Ambiental, Sep. 25, 2009.
<b>Uruguay</b>	Ley No. 17.283 art. 7, Nov. 28, 2000, D.O. 25663; Ley 16.466 [Law 16.466], Jan 3, 1994, D.O. No. 23977, Jan. 26, 1994; Decreto No. 349/05, REGLAMENTO DE EVALUACIÓN DE IMPACTO AMBIENTAL Y AUTORIZACIONES AMBIENTALES [REGULATIONS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORIZATIONS] [Decree 349/05], D.O. Mar, 10, 2005.
<b>Venezuela</b>	Decreto No. 1.257, NORMAS SOBRE EVALUACIÓN AMBIENTAL DE ACTIVIDADES SUSCEPTIBLES DE DEGRADAR EL AMBIENTE [NORMS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF ACTIVITIES THAT ARE SUSCEPTIBLE OF DEGRADING THE ENVIRONMENT] [Decree 1.257], Mar. 13, 1996.
<b>United States of America</b>	40 C.F.R. §§ 1500-1508 (As of July 1, 2012); 42 U.S. Code § 4331 (2005).