

2. ASSESSMENT REPORTING

The Aim of Assessment Reporting

2.1 The main aims of the assessment reporting process are:-

- to permit consideration of the likely environmental, economic and traffic effects of alternative proposals, and
- to allow the public and statutory bodies to comment on proposals taking account of their environmental, economic and traffic implications.

The Requirement for Assessment Reporting

2.2 Assessment reports are required at the three stages in a schemes preparation outlined below. Each report shall cover Engineering, Traffic, Economics and Environmental issues. Where at Stage 3 an Environmental Statement is published this shall form Part 1 of the Stage 3 Assessment Report. Part 2 will cover Engineering, Economics and Traffic.

2.3 Assessment reports are not intended to replace the more technical reports generated by studies for use within Overseeing Departments. They are, instead, intended to act as a summary of those reports, and their principal audience is the public. Where appropriate, they should refer to the availability of technical reports, but should not normally include them.

2.4 All the information presented in assessment reports should be:-

- unbiased: a factual style should be used, with both advantages and disadvantages of routes or corridors described impartially;

and

- easy to read: clear, non-technical language should be used, with the information presented in a logical manner using appropriate maps, diagrams, sketches, etc for illustration.

The 3 Stages of Assessment and Their Scope

2.5 In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, Stage 1 corresponds to a pre-programme entry assessment (in Scotland, this is known as preliminary assessment), and Stage 2 corresponds to a pre-public consultation assessment (route option assessment in Scotland). For all Overseeing Departments, Stage 3 corresponds to

assessment prior to the publication of orders (which includes publication of an Environmental Statement) but after the selection of a preferred route.

2.6 Progression through the stages of assessment is not automatic. At the conclusion of Stages 1 and 2 the Design Organisation should present to the Overseeing Department the assessment report for consideration by the Overseeing Department's Project Manager who will notify them of any decision to proceed further with assessment and development work.

2.7 Outline contents for the assessment reports at Stage 1, 2 and 3 are given at Annexes A, B and C respectively. The Design Organisation should consult the Overseeing Department's Project Manager for clearance before omitting any part of these contents from a report. Specific scheme issues may require additional headings to be included. These will normally be included in the project brief. Where this is not the case, they will be agreed between the Design Organisation and the Overseeing Department's Project Manager.

2.8 At each of the 3 Stages of assessment the objective is to ensure that assessment is sufficient to:-

Stage 1 - identify the environmental, engineering, economic and traffic advantages, disadvantages and constraints associated with broadly defined improvement strategies.

Stage 2 - identify the factors to be taken into account in choosing alternative routes or improvement schemes and to identify the environmental, engineering, economic and traffic advantages, disadvantages and constraints associated with those routes or schemes.

Stage 3 - identify clearly the advantages and disadvantages, in environmental, engineering, economic and traffic terms, of the Overseeing Department's preferred route or scheme option. A particular requirement at this stage is an assessment of the significant environmental effects of the project, in accordance with the requirements of section 105A of the Highways Act 1980 (England and Wales), Section 20A and 55A of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984, or Article 39B of the Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1980, implementing EC Directive 85/337.

2.9 The remaining Chapters in this Standard set out, for each Stage, what is required in each section of the assessment report.

INTERIM ADVICE

5. PREPARATION OF THE STAGE 3 REPORT

5.1 This should report the conclusions of the Stage 2 Assessment Report and the basis of the decision to proceed further with a particular route. Where at Stage 3 an Environmental Statement is produced the Stage 3 Scheme Assessment Report is divided into two parts: the Environmental Statement; and a report covering all other aspects of the assessment not covered in the Environmental Statement.

Environmental Statement

5.2 Environmental information should be presented in the Environmental Statement, discussed in detail in DMRB.11.4.3. For those schemes where an Environmental Statement is not required, the Stage 3 environmental assessment should still be reported. This should generally follow the format and guidance for an Environmental Statement. The Environmental Statement forms a separate part of the assessment report at this Stage. That part of the assessment report dealing with issues other than environmental may include a copy of the Non-Technical Summary (DMRB.11.4.3.3), which is part of the Environmental Statement.

5.3 A brief summary of the legal basis, purpose and composition of the Environmental Statement is provided at Annex E. Further information is provided in DMRB.11.4.3 This Standard provides no further guidance on the Environmental Statement.

Report on Other Aspects of the Assessment

5.4 The remainder of this Chapter provides guidance on that part of the assessment report which deals with issues not covered by the Environmental Statement.

Introduction

5.5 This should briefly summarise the history of the scheme since the Stage 2 assessment report and set out the basis of the preferred route.

Existing Conditions

5.6 The traffic, engineering and environmental condition in relation to the existing highway network should be described where relevant, references should also be made to changes which is known are due to take place. Changes in them since the Stage 2 assessment should be reported.

Description of scheme

5.7 At this Stage, the preferred scheme option will have been selected This should be described in detail, covering the following points:-

- (a) Length and cross section of road.
- (b) Line and level related to existing features.
- (c) Amount and nature of landtake.
- (d) Property demolished.
- (e) Volume of surplus excavated material for disposal off-site and/or volume of material required to brought on-site.
- (f) Structures to be demolished and/or constructed.

Note that a similar description should also appear in the Environmental Statement. Repetition here is justified by the need to ensure that this report is internally consistent.

Cost Estimates

5.8 Estimated costs for the scheme should be provided. The basis of the estimates should be given, together with details of any special factors taken into consideration. Any item of significant high cost should be identified and explained. A breakdown of the estimated costs should be provided, under the following headings: roads; structures; accommodation works; works by other authorities; and land. Cost in this section of the report should be in current prices.

Engineering Information

5.9 The engineering information provided should include:

- a summary of any geotechnical survey information;
- drainage issues,
- the results of the assessment of structures;
- a review of engineering problems, having regard to ground conditions identified;
- significant layout issues, such as proposed departures from standards, and the justification for them;
- any probable operational problems.

Traffic and Economic Information

5.10 At this stage, the traffic modelling, forecasting and economic appraisal work reported at Stage 2 may have been refined to enable decisions on standards, junction type etc to be made. However, there will not normally be significant changes in the scope of the work, thus the reporting required at this Stage will be similar to that required at Stage 2.

5.11 The reporting at Stage 3 should, therefore, follow the requirements for reporting at Stage 2, with particular attention being given to the issues discussed in the following paragraphs.

5.12 Refinements to the modelling and forecasting since Stage 2 should be discussed, explaining why they were considered necessary and what effect they have had on both traffic and economic results.

5.13 Forecast and economic results should be presented for the do minimum and the scheme only. Results for rejected options should not normally be presented. Where appropriate, supplementary results should be presented to support decisions on standards, junction type etc.

5.14 Reference should be made to the availability of detailed technical reports (including the Local Model Validation Report, the Forecasting Report and the Economic Appraisal Report) describing the traffic and economic appraisal work.