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**A Quality Review of EIA: A Comparative Study of State-Funded and International Aid Agency-funded Development Projects in Sri Lanka**

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**Abstract**

A development project's environmental impact assessment (EIA) is a tool for mitigating the effects on the environment and promoting sustainable development. EIA is an expensive and professionally engaged process that involves the public. Many countries around the world have long-standing laws in place connected to this topic, as well as solid knowledge and experience. One persistent argument against the efficacy of EIA in developing nations is that the procedure and quality differ from country to country. The International Aid Agencies (IAA) have their guidelines for protecting the environment while following local environmental assessment standards for any financing requirements. IAA involvement in the EIA process might significantly affect how well-written EIA reports are. To evaluate the assessment quality, six EIA reports from state-financed development projects (SL-EIAs) and another six development projects EIAs funded by the IAA (IAA-EIAs) in Sri Lanka were randomly chosen. LeeCooley review package (1990) was used to evaluate the Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) of each EIA. In this investigation, it was discovered that IAA-EIAs and SL-EIAs had a significant difference in overall quality. IAA-EIAs show values that range from highly satisfactory to satisfactory and each share 50 percent, whereas SL-EIAs indicate 83 percent satisfactory and 17 percent of borderline quality. In comparison to the SL-EIAs, all four review areas of the IAA-EIAs performed notably well. While the SL-EIA shows good to borderline quality (0.66-0.72), all evaluated IAA-EIA reports reveal highly satisfactory to satisfactory (0.81-0.93) quality. The engagement of IAA in the environmental assessment has a considerable impact to improve assessment quality in comparison to the only domestic assessment. Finding the weak area in the SL-EIA process and adhering to the IAA standards would elevate the standard of the report.

**Keywords:** EIA quality, Review, International Aid Agency, Development projects