

Instructions on how to define the key characteristics of a proposal

Purpose of these instructions

To assist proponents to characterise their proposal for an environmental impact assessment under Part IV of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (EP Act).

The instructions do not apply to strategic proposals.

Purpose of defining the key characteristics of a proposal

To describe the key elements of the proposal and quantify the proposed extent of impacts of the key elements on the environment:

- to assist the EPA to identify the preliminary key environmental factors for the assessment of the proposal and
- to identify and verify the elements and their associated impacts that form part of the legally binding implementation conditions in a Ministerial Statement

How to define the key characteristics of a proposal

Template

The template provides the structure for defining the key proposal characteristics for new proposals and for changes to approved proposals.

Advice

Proponents may contact the Office of the EPA if they need assistance to define the key characteristics of a proposal.

General proposal description

Proponents will need to provide a general proposal description at various stages of the environmental impact assessment (EIA) process, including:

- Stage 1 – Referral
- Stage 3 – Assessment of proposals (e.g Step 1 Scoping and Step 2 Preparation of Environmental Review Document)
- Stage 5 – Implementation of proposals (e.g Change to proposal).

The *general proposal description* describes the elements of a proposal that relate to the environment, including:

- what the proposed development is and how big it is (production rate etc)
- the main physical elements (e.g. mine, port, rail, road etc) and operational elements (e.g. dewatering, dredging, emissions and discharges etc)
- the proposal timeframe (including start and finish dates and details of any staging of the proposal, if applicable)
- regional context, including the cumulative context with other nearby proposals.

Relevant maps include maps of the regional location and context of the proposal.

The EPA expects that the description will become more precise as the EIA process progresses.

Key proposal characteristics

The key proposal characteristics document the specific development, action, activities or processes to be performed in the implementation of a proposal.

The key proposal characteristics must be defined in four formats (see Template Attachment 1 for example):

1. proposal summary table
2. proposal elements table
3. spatial data
4. maps and figures.

The units used for the key proposal characteristics must be consistent across the four formats (e.g if hectares is used to describe the amount of clearing in the written description, hectares must also be used for the other formats).

The requirements for the key proposal characteristics at the following stages of the EIA process are outlined in the table below.

Stage	Key proposal characteristics requirements
Stage 1 – Referral	Proponent identifies key proposal elements and quantifies if possible (if studies have been undertaken) and provides proposal development envelope and indicative footprint (see Templates 1 and 2, and Attachment 1 - Example 1).
Stage 3 – Assessment of proposals	
Step 1 Scoping	Proponent updates the key proposal elements (including development envelope and indicative footprint), if required
Step 2 Preparation of Environmental Review Document	Proponent confirms and accurately quantifies the key proposal elements (based on the results of studies and investigations) and provides accurate proposal boundaries (see Templates 1 and 2, and Attachment 1 - Example 1).
Stage 4 – EPA report	EPA documents the key proposal elements provided by the proponent and recommends whether any or all of the proposal elements need to be controlled through an authorised extent in the Ministerial Statement.
Stage 5 – Implementation of proposals	
Implementation of proposal	Proponent provides EPA with spatial data of the actual footprint of the proposal to assess compliance.
Change to proposal under s. 45C	Proponent provides modified key proposal characteristics as part of the change to proposal request (see Template 3, and Attachment 1 - Example 2).

The accuracy of the key proposal characteristics is critical to the assessment of the proposal, and the future monitoring of the proposal if it is implemented (as the key proposal characteristics are incorporated into the Ministerial Statement issued under section 45(5) of the EP Act).

The implementation of the proposal in accordance with the Ministerial Statement provides a defence to certain environmental protection offences under the EP Act. A clear description of the key proposal characteristics being implemented will have a bearing on whether a person (the proponent) is able to rely upon that defence.

1. Proposal summary table

Summarise the proposal in tabular format (see Template):

- Proposal title.
- Proponent name.
- Short description – type of development, location, key proposal elements.

2. Proposal elements table

Detail the key proposal development, action, activities or processes (referred to as elements) which are likely to cause an impact on the environment, including those that are or may be regulated by other decision-making authorities) (see Template).

The elements can be divided into:

- the physical elements of the proposal (e.g mine, road, port)
- the operational or activity elements of the proposal (e.g. water abstraction, dredging).

Describe the key development, actions, activities or processes the proponent intends to undertake and details of the extent and limits (e.g number of hectares of clearing of vegetation, discharge of discharge of waste water as a volume per period of time). The extent defines the maximum likely impact.

3. Spatial data

The EPA requires spatial data to identify and verify the following proposal boundaries:

- **development envelope/s** – the maximum area within which the proposal footprint will be located)
- **footprint** – the location where the physical proposal elements occur.

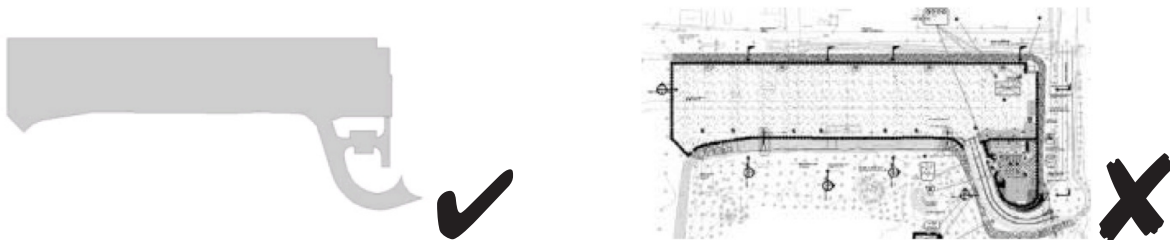
The development envelope approach provides some flexibility for the location of the proposal footprint, to allow for changes to the proposal design, or to avoid or minimise impacts.

The development envelope should be as small as possible to:

- minimise the spatial extent of impacts
- avoid overlapping proposal boundaries
- minimise the survey effort (as the EPA requires that surveys cover the entire development envelope as a minimum standard).

The EPA will not accept development envelopes that are much greater than the proposed extent of impacts (e.g large mining lease, see Template Attachment 1 – Example 1, Figure 1).

The footprint data should only include the boundary of the footprint, not complex engineering detail (see below).



Provide spatial data that is geo-referenced and conforms to the following parameters:

- Data type: closed polygons that represent the proposal boundary (development envelope) and the activity areas for all physical elements of the proposal (footprint).
- Attribution: Name the development envelope and each activity area in the attribute table of the spatial data.
- Format: ESRI geodatabase or shapefile.
- Coordinate System: GDA94 (datum) and projected into the appropriate Map Grid of Australia (MGA) zone.

4. Maps and figures

Provide maps and figures showing the development envelopes/s, footprint and key elements of the proposal.

End of instructions. Template starts on next page.

Template for defining the key characteristics of a proposal

Template 1: Key proposal characteristics – new proposal

[provided by proponent with referral or during assessment]

Table 1: Summary of the Proposal

Proposal title	
Proponent name	
Short description	

Table 2: Location and proposed extent of physical and operational elements

Element	Location	Proposed extent
<i>Physical elements</i>		
<i>Operational elements</i>		

Template 2: Key proposal characteristics – revised proposal

[provided by proponent with referral or during assessment]

Table 1: Summary of the Proposal

Proposal title	
Proponent name	
Short description	

Table 2: Location and proposed extent of physical and operational elements

Element	Location	Existing approval (Ministerial Statement/s and other regulatory approvals)	Proposed change (This proposal)	Proposed extent (Revised proposal) <i>[total of existing approval + proposed change]</i>
<i>Physical elements</i>				
<i>Operational elements</i>				

Template 3: Key proposal characteristics – change to approved proposal under s. 45C

[provided by proponent with request to change proposal]

Table 1: Summary of the Proposal

Proposal title	
Proponent name	
Short description	

Table 2: Location and proposed extent of physical and operational elements

Element	Location	Authorised Extent	Proposed Extent <i>[highlight changes in extent in bold]</i>
<i>Physical elements</i>			
<i>Operational elements</i>			

Example 1: Key proposal characteristics – new proposal

Table 1: Summary of the proposal

Proposal title	Hard Rock Mine
Proponent name	Metallica Ltd
Short description	The proposal is to develop above and below water table iron ore deposits, 75 km north of Newman WA.
	The proposal includes the development of mine pits and associated infrastructure, processing facilities, water management infrastructure for groundwater abstraction and discharge of surplus water, temporary and permanent waste landforms, tailings storage facility for disposal of tailings.

Table 2: Location and proposed extent of physical and operational elements

Element	Location	Proposed extent
Physical Elements		
Mine and associated infrastructure	Figure 1	Clearing of no more than 322 ha of native vegetation within the 734 ha Mine Development Envelope
Railway and associated infrastructure	Figure x	Clearing of no more than x ha of native vegetation within the x ha Rail Development Envelope
Operational Elements		
Dewatering	Figure x	Abstraction of no more than 4 GL/a of groundwater
Surplus dewater management	Figure x	Disposal of up to x GL/a of dewater through controlled discharge to x creek
Ore processing (waste)	Figure x	Disposal of no more than 10,000 tonnes per annum of tailings into the tailings storage facility

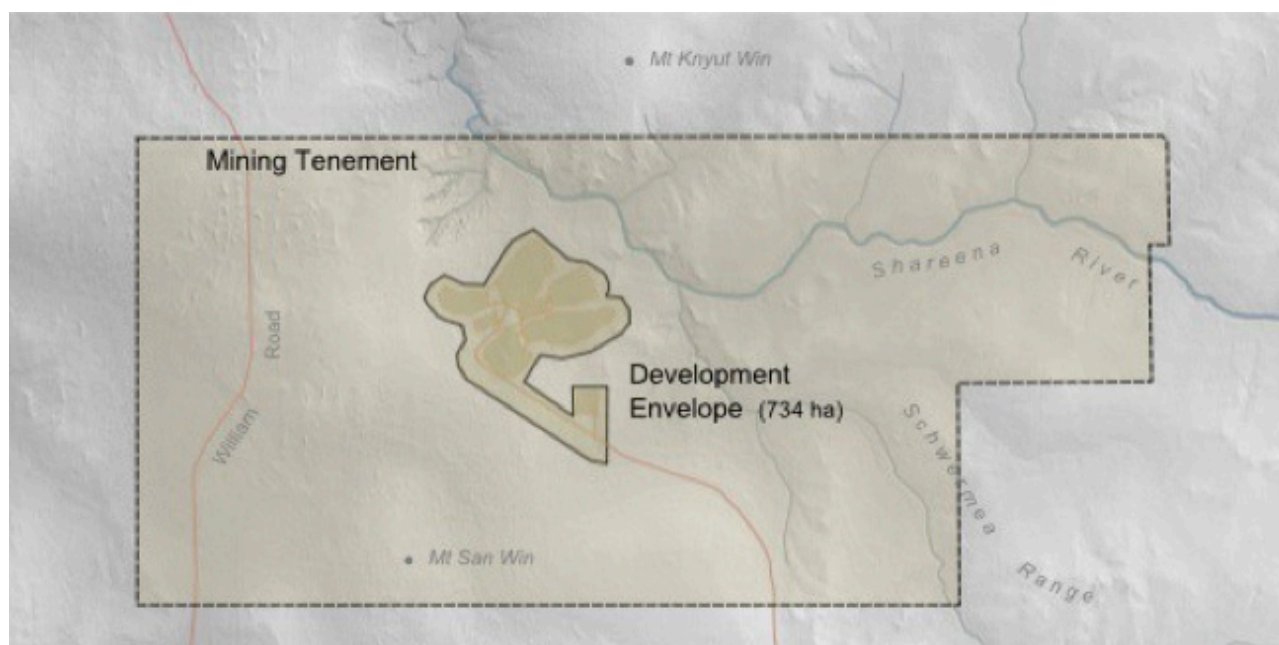
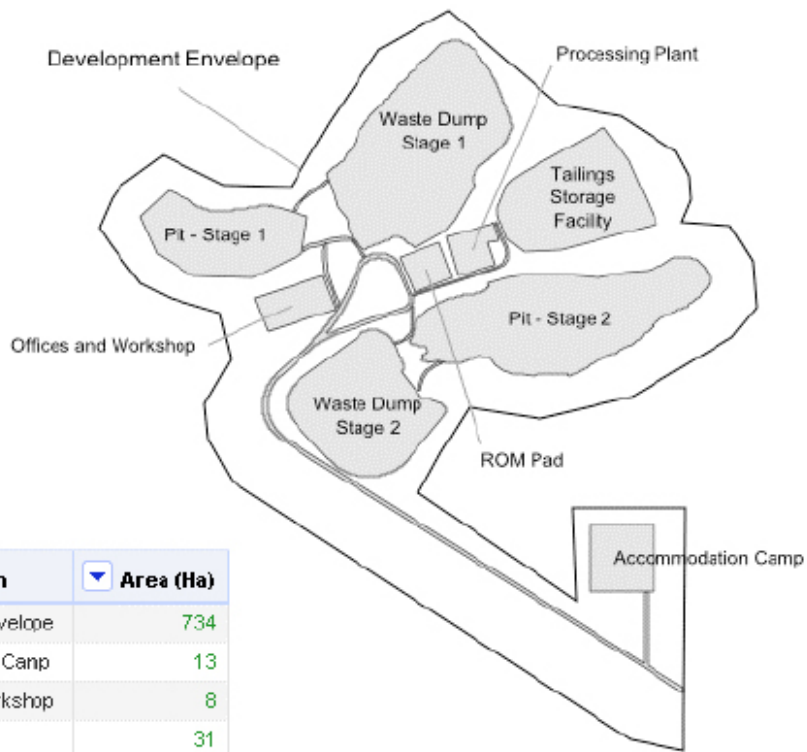


Figure 1: Hard Rock Mine development envelope and indicative footprint

[provided with referral or during assessment]



Description	Area (Ha)
Development Envelope	734
Accommodation Camp	13
Offices and Workshop	8
Pit - Stage 1	31
Pit - Stage 2	67
Processing plant	5
Roads	13
ROM Pad	4
Tailings Storage Facility	39
Waste Dump - Stage 1	73
Waste Dump - Stage 2	45

Figure 2: Hard Rock Mine development envelope and actual footprint polygons
[provided during proposal implementation with compliance assessment report]

Example 2: Key proposal characteristics – change to approved proposal under s. 45C

Table 1: Summary of the proposal

Proposal title	Hard Rock Mine
Proponent name	Metallica Ltd
Short description	The proposal is to develop above and below water table iron ore deposits, 75 km north of Newman WA.
	The proposal includes the development of mine pits and associated infrastructure, processing facilities, water management infrastructure for groundwater abstraction and discharge of surplus water, temporary and permanent waste landforms, tailings storage facility for disposal of tailings.

Table 2: Location and proposed extent of physical and operational elements

Element	Location	Authorised Extent	Proposed Extent <i>(highlight changes in extent in bold)</i>
Physical elements			
Mine and associated infrastructure	Figure 1	Clearing of no more than 322 ha of native vegetation within the 734 ha Mine Development Envelope	Clearing of no more than 400 ha of native vegetation within the 734 ha Mine Development Envelope
Railway and associated infrastructure	Figure x	Clearing of no more than x ha of native vegetation within the x ha Rail Development Envelope	Clearing of no more than x ha of native vegetation within the x ha Rail Development Envelope
Operational elements			
Dewatering	Figure x	Abstraction of no more than 4 GL/a of groundwater	Abstraction of no more than 6 GL/a of groundwater
Surplus dewater management	Figure x	Disposal of up to x GL/a of dewater through controlled discharge to x creek	Disposal of up to x GL/a of dewater through controlled discharge to x creek
Ore processing (waste)	Figure x	Disposal of no more than 10,000 tonnes per annum of tailings into the tailings storage facility	Disposal of no more than 10,000 tonnes per annum of tailings into the tailings storage facility
Workforce		990 people	Removed as not a key proposal characteristic relevant to the environment