

## Typical significance criteria for assessing effects on air

Significance of effects	SEA Sub-objective			Comments/ additional criteria
	To improve air quality	To reduce levels of air pollution	To reduce the levels of nuisance	
<b>Major Positive (++)</b>	<p>An action very likely to lead to a significant improvement, or a series of long-term improvements, leading to large-scale and permanent benefits to air quality.</p> <p><i>E.g. Air quality, especially in the AQMAs, should improve. The action will have a positive impact on vulnerable groups (e.g. asthmatics, people with respiratory diseases).</i></p> <p><i>The number of days where air quality at monitoring stations is considered as moderate or low will decrease significantly – especially in relation to key pollutants (PM<sub>10</sub>, oxides of nitrogen, etc.).</i></p>	<p>An action very likely to lead to a significant decrease, or a series of long-term decreases in airborne emissions, leading to large-scale and permanent reduction of air pollution.</p> <p><i>E.g. Emissions of all sources of air pollution will be significantly reduced, especially in AQMAs.</i></p>	<p>An action very likely to lead to a significant decrease, or a series of long-term decreases in sources of nuisance, leading to large-scale and permanent reduction.</p> <p><i>E.g. Odour/ dust sources are very likely to be reduced significantly, in particular in urban areas (i.e. more densely populated areas). Haze and/ or smoke causing nuisance are very likely to be significantly reduced due to the action, having a positive impact on sensitive groups (e.g. urban areas, arterial routes/ motorways, designated landscapes).</i></p>	<p>A major positive effect is also likely to have cumulative and indirect beneficial effects and is also likely to have positive effects outside the specific scheme area.</p> <p>Effects may be: short, medium, or long-term; or small, medium or large-scale; or a combination of the above.</p>

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<b>Minor Positive (+)</b>	<p>An action likely to lead to moderate improvement in both short and long-term, leading to large-scale temporary, or medium-scale permanent benefits to air quality.</p> <p><i>E.g. Air quality, especially in the AQMAs, might improve. The action might have a positive impact on vulnerable groups (e.g. asthmatics, people with respiratory diseases). It is highly likely that the number of days where air quality at monitoring stations is considered as moderate or low may decrease –especially in relation to key pollutants (PM<sub>10</sub>, oxides of nitrogen, etc.).</i></p>	<p>An action likely to lead to moderate decrease in airborne emissions in both short and long-term, leading to large-scale temporary, or medium-scale permanent reduction of air pollution.</p> <p><i>E.g. Emissions of key sources of air pollution will be moderately reduced, especially in AQMAs.</i></p>	<p>An action likely to lead to moderate decrease in sources of nuisance in both short and long-term, leading to large-scale temporary, or medium-scale permanent reduction.</p> <p><i>E.g. Odour/ dust sources might be reduced permanently or temporarily. Haze and/ or smoke causing nuisance might be reduced due to the action.</i></p>	<p>Even where beneficial effects are felt to be temporary, they should not be easily reversible in the long-term.</p> <p>Effects may be: short, medium, or long-term; or small, medium or large-scale; or a combination of the above.</p>
<b>Neutral (0)</b>	<p>An action which is unlikely to have any beneficial or negative effects on air quality being assessed in either the short, or long-term.</p> <p><i>E.g. Effects of the policy or option on current trends in air quality are likely to be neutral.</i></p>	<p>An action which is unlikely to have any beneficial or negative effects on air pollution being assessed in either the short, or long-term.</p> <p><i>E.g. Effects of the policy or option on current trends in air pollution are likely to be neutral.</i></p>	<p>An action which is unlikely to have any beneficial or negative effects on nuisance being assessed in either the short, or long-term.</p> <p><i>E.g. Effects of the policy or option on current trends in nuisance are likely to be neutral.</i></p>	<p>Neutral scoring should only be used where it is very likely that the effect will be neither positive, nor negative.</p>

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<b>Minor Negative (-)</b>	<p>An action likely to lead to moderate damage or loss in both short and long-term, leading to large-scale temporary, or medium-scale permanent negative effect on air quality.</p> <p><i>E.g. Air quality, especially in the AQMAs, is unlikely to improve and may in fact decline, meaning that AQMA objectives are unlikely to be met.</i></p> <p><i>The action may have an impact on vulnerable groups (e.g. asthmatics, people with respiratory diseases).</i></p> <p><i>The number of days where air quality at monitoring stations is considered as moderate or low may increase over and above existing trends.</i></p>	<p>An action likely to lead to moderate increase in airborne emissions in both short and long-term, leading to large-scale temporary, or medium-scale permanent negative effect on air pollution.</p> <p><i>E.g. The action is likely to cause a moderate increase in airborne emissions from key sources.</i></p>	<p>An action likely to lead to moderate increase in nuisance sources in short and long-term, leading to large-scale temporary, or medium-scale permanent negative effect.</p> <p><i>E.g. Odour/ dust sources might increase permanently or temporarily. Haze and/ or smoke causing nuisance might increase due to the action</i></p>	<p>An action which may also have limited cumulative and indirect detrimental effects and/ or limited degradation of conditions outside the specific Plan area. It is also likely that it will be possible to mitigate or reverse a minor negative effect through policy or project intervention.</p> <p>Effects may be: short, medium, or long-term; or small, medium or large-scale; or a combination of the above.</p>

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<b>Major Negative (--)</b>	<p>An action likely to lead to a significant or severe damage or loss, or series of long-term negative effects, leading to large-scale and permanent negative effects on air quality, especially in AQMAs. These negative effects could require a new AQMA to be declared.</p> <p><i>E.g. It is likely that the AQMA objectives will not be met. It is highly likely that number of days where air quality at monitoring stations is considered as moderate or low may increase significantly – especially in relation to key pollutants (PM<sub>10</sub>, oxides of nitrogen, etc.).</i></p> <p><i>E.g. It is likely that the action will have a significant impact on vulnerable groups (e.g. asthmatics, people with respiratory diseases).</i></p> <p><i>It is likely the action exposes new people to harm (e.g. new developments can introduce receptors where there were none previously; such as a new block of flats on a roundabout).</i></p>	<p>An action likely to lead to a significant increase, or series of long-term increases, leading to large-scale and permanent negative effects on air pollution; <i>e.g. especially in AQMAs. The action is likely to increase significantly airborne emissions of all sources.</i></p>	<p>An action likely to lead to a significant increase, or series of long-term increases, leading to large-scale and permanent increase in nuisance sources.</p> <p><i>E.g. Odour/ dust sources are very likely to be increased significantly, in particular in urban areas (i.e. more densely populated areas). Haze and/ or smoke causing nuisance are very likely to increase significantly due to the action, having a negative impact on sensitive groups (e.g. urban areas, arterial routes/ motorways, designated landscapes).</i></p>	<p>An action which may also have significant cumulative and indirect detrimental effect and/ or degrade conditions outside the specific scheme area.</p> <p>Includes the detrimental effects of an action which will be hard to reverse and are unlikely to be easily mitigated through policy or project intervention.</p> <p>Effects may be: short, medium, or long-term; or small, medium or large-scale; or a combination of the above.</p>

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<b>Mixed</b> (e.g. ++/-, +/- etc.)	The effect on air quality/ air pollution/ nuisance is likely to be a combination of positive and negative effects, particularly where effects are considered on sub-issues, areas or criterion.			Such mixed effects will be hard to predict, but could be significant in the long-term, or when taken with other effects e.g. cumulative.
<b>Uncertain</b> (?)	The effect of an action on air quality is not known, or is too unpredictable to assign a conclusive score.			Uncertainty may arise where an action covers a range of issues, or where the manner in which the action is implemented is a material factor in the nature of the effects it may have.

**Note:** This table provides a framework to illustrate how this guidance could be used.