

**Table 3.3 Descriptions of Effects**

<p><b>Quality of Effects</b></p> <p>It is important to inform the non-specialist reader whether an effect is positive, negative or neutral</p>	<p><b>Positive Effects</b></p> <p>A change which improves the quality of the environment (for example, by increasing species diversity; or the improving reproductive capacity of an ecosystem; or by removing nuisances or improving amenities).</p>
	<p><b>Neutral Effects</b></p> <p>No effects or effects that are imperceptible, within normal bounds of variation or within the margin of forecasting error.</p>
	<p><b>Negative/adverse Effects</b></p> <p>A change which reduces the quality of the environment (for example, lessening species diversity or diminishing the reproductive capacity of an ecosystem; or damaging health or property or by causing nuisance).</p>
<p><b>Describing the Significance of Effects</b></p> <p>“Significance’ is a concept that can have different meanings for different topics – in the absence of specific definitions for different topics the following definitions may be useful (also see <i>Determining Significance</i> below.).</p>	<p><b>Imperceptible</b></p> <p>An effect capable of measurement but without significant consequences.</p>
	<p><b>Not significant</b></p> <p>An effect which causes noticeable<sup>2</sup> changes in the character of the environment but without significant consequences.</p>
	<p><b>Slight Effects</b></p> <p>An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities.</p>
	<p><b>Moderate Effects</b></p> <p>An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner that is consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends.</p>
	<p><b>Significant Effects</b></p> <p>An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity alters a sensitive aspect of the environment.</p>
	<p><b>Very Significant</b></p> <p>An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity significantly alters most of a sensitive aspect of the environment.</p>
	<p><b>Profound Effects</b></p> <p>An effect which obliterates sensitive characteristics</p>
<p><b>Describing the Extent and Context of Effects</b></p> <p>Context can affect the perception of significance. It is important to establish if the effect is unique or, perhaps, commonly or increasingly experienced.</p>	<p><b>Extent</b></p> <p>Describe the size of the area, the number of sites, and the proportion of a population affected by an effect.</p>
	<p><b>Context</b></p> <p>Describe whether the extent, duration, or frequency will conform or contrast with established (baseline) conditions (is it the biggest, longest effect ever?)</p>

<p><b>Describing the Probability of Effects</b></p> <p>Descriptions of effects should establish how likely it is that the predicted effects will occur – so that the CA can take a view of the balance of risk over advantage when making a decision.</p>	<p><b>Likely Effects</b></p> <p>The effects that can reasonably be expected to occur because of the planned project if all mitigation measures are properly implemented.</p>
<p><b>Describing the Duration and Frequency of Effects</b></p> <p>‘Duration’ is a concept that can have different meanings for different topics – in the absence of specific definitions for different topics the following definitions may be useful.</p>	<p><b>Unlikely Effects</b></p> <p>The effects that can reasonably be expected not to occur because of the planned project if all mitigation measures are properly implemented.</p>
	<p><b>Momentary Effects</b></p> <p>Effects lasting from seconds to minutes</p>
	<p><b>Brief Effects</b></p> <p>Effects lasting less than a day</p>
	<p><b>Temporary Effects</b></p> <p>Effects lasting less than a year</p>
	<p><b>Short-term Effects</b></p> <p>Effects lasting one to seven years.</p>
	<p><b>Medium-term Effects</b></p> <p>Effects lasting seven to fifteen years.</p>
	<p><b>Long-term Effects</b></p> <p>Effects lasting fifteen to sixty years.</p>
	<p><b>Permanent Effects</b></p> <p>Effects lasting over sixty years</p>
	<p><b>Reversible Effects</b></p> <p>Effects that can be undone, for example through remediation or restoration</p>
<p><b>Frequency of Effects</b></p> <p>Describe how often the effect will occur. (once, rarely, occasionally, frequently, constantly – or hourly, daily, weekly, monthly, annually)</p>	

<b>Describing the Types of Effects</b>	<p><b>Indirect Effects (a.k.a. Secondary Effects)</b></p> <p>Impacts on the environment, which are not a direct result of the project, often produced away from the project site or because of a complex pathway.</p>
	<p><b>Cumulative Effects</b></p> <p>The addition of many minor or significant effects, including effects of other projects, to create larger, more significant effects.</p>
	<p><b>‘Do-Nothing Effects’</b></p> <p>The environment as it would be in the future should the subject project not be carried out.</p>
	<p><b>‘Worst case’ Effects</b></p> <p>The effects arising from a project in the case where mitigation measures substantially fail.</p>
	<p><b>Indeterminable Effects</b></p> <p>When the full consequences of a change in the environment cannot be described.</p>
	<p><b>Irreversible Effects</b></p> <p>When the character, distinctiveness, diversity or reproductive capacity of an environment is permanently lost.</p>
	<p><b>Residual Effects</b></p> <p>The degree of environmental change that will occur after the proposed mitigation measures have taken effect.</p>
	<p><b>Synergistic Effects</b></p> <p>Where the resultant effect is of greater significance than the sum of its constituents, (e.g. combination of SO<sub>x</sub> and NO<sub>x</sub> to produce smog).</p>