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CONSTRAINTS TO ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT PRACTICE: A CASE STUDY OF CAMEROON

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Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) practice in Cameroon has been plagued with many constraints especially from the infrastructure and EIA resource perspective. The present legal and procedural disposition vis-à-vis EIA in Cameroon is monumental and manifest some clarity of exposition with regards to the practical and fundamental steps for EIA practice in the country. However, a number of impediments still prevail that deter the full efficiency of this legislation. In search for explanations to this trend, this study was conducted to examine the current framework governing EIA in Cameroon implemented in February 2005. Content analysis and interviews with stakeholders in the EIA process were undertaken to identify key barriers associated with EIA practice in Cameroon. The paper maintains that inadequate baseline data, procedural flaws in scoping, exorbitant administrative fees, absence of an appeal procedure, unclear proviso, incompetent personnel and over centralisation of EIA powers are key barriers that appear to impede a healthy EIA practice in Cameroon. In conclusion, it is submitted that for a robust EIA practice to prevail in Cameroon, there is an urgent need for a great deal of focus on the recommendations prescribed within the context of the paper.

Keywords: Environmental Impact Assessment; legal and procedural framework; Cameroon; evaluation

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