Environmental, Health, and Safety Guidelines for Thermal Power Plants

Introduction

The Environmental, Health, and Safety (EHS) Guidelines are technical reference documents with general and industry-specific examples of Good International Industry Practice (GIIP)[1]. When one or more members of the World Bank Group are involved in a project, these EHS Guidelines are applied as required by their respective policies and standards. These industry sector EHS guidelines are designed to be used together with the **General EHS Guidelines** document, which provides guidance to users on common EHS issues potentially applicable to all industry sectors. For complex projects, use of multiple industry-sector guidelines may be necessary. A complete list of industry-sector guidelines can be found at: www.ifc.org/ifcext/sustainability.nsf/Content/EnvironmentalGuidelines

The EHS Guidelines contain the performance levels and measures that are generally considered to be achievable in new facilities by existing technology at reasonable costs. Application of the EHS Guidelines to existing facilities may involve the establishment of site-specific targets, based on environmental assessments and/or environmental audits as appropriate, with an appropriate timetable for achieving them. The applicability of the EHS Guidelines should be tailored to the hazards and risks established for each project on the basis of the results of an environmental assessment in which site-specific variables, such as host country context, assimilative capacity of the environment, and other project factors, are taken into account. The applicability of specific technical recommendations should be based on the professional opinion of qualified and experienced persons. When host country regulations differ from the levels and measures presented in the EHS Guidelines, projects are expected to achieve whichever is more stringent. If less stringent levels or measures than those provided in these EHS Guidelines are appropriate, in view of specific project circumstances, a full and detailed justification for any proposed alternatives is needed as part of the site-specific environmental assessment. This justification should demonstrate that the choice for any alternate performance levels is protective of human health and the environment.

Applicability

This document includes information relevant to combustion processes fueled by gaseous, liquid and solid fossil fuels and biomass and designed to deliver electrical or mechanical power, steam, heat, or any combination of these, regardless of the fuel type (except for solid waste which is covered under a separate Guideline for Waste Management Facilities), with a total rated heat input capacity above 50 Megawatt thermal input (MWth) on Higher Heating Value (HHV) basis.[2] It applies to boilers, reciprocating engines, and combustion turbines in new and existing facilities. Annex A contains a detailed description of industry activities for this sector, and Annex B contains guidance for Environmental Assessment (EA) of thermal power projects. Emissions guidelines applicable to facilities with a total heat input capacity of less than 50 MWth are presented in Section 1.1 of the **General EHS Guidelines.** Depending on the characteristics of the project and its associated activities (i.e., fuel sourcing and evacuation of generated electricity), readers should also consult

[1] Defined as the exercise of professional skill, diligence, prudence and foresight that would be reasonably expected from skilled and experienced professionals engaged in the same type of undertaking under the same or similar circumstances globally. The circumstances that skilled and experienced professionals may find when evaluating the range of pollution prevention and control techniques available to a project may include, but are not limited to, varying levels of environmental degradation and environmental assimilative capacity as well as varying levels of financial and technical feasibility.

[2] Total capacity applicable to a facility with multiple units.

- Use of fuels with a lower content of sulfur where economically feasible;
- Use of lime (CaO) or limestone ($CaCO_3$) in coal-fired fluidized bed combustion boilers to have integrated desulfurization which can achieve a removal efficiency of up to 80-90 % through use of Fluidized Bed Combustion[7, 8];
- Depending on the plant size, fuel quality, and potential for significant emissions of SO_2 , use of flue gas desulfurization (FGD) for large boilers using coal or oil and for large reciprocating engines . The optimal type of FGD system (e.g., wet FGD using limestone with 85 to 98% removal efficiency, dry FGD using lime with 70 to 94% removal efficiency, seawater FGD with up to 90% removal efficiency) depends on the capacity of the plant, fuel properties, site conditions, and the cost and availability of reagent as well as by-product disposal and utilization.[9]

Table 1 - Performance / Characteristics of FGDs

Type of FGD	Characteristics	Plant Capital Cost Increase
Wet FGD	• Flue gas is saturated with water • Limestone ($CaCO_3$) as reagent • Removal efficiency up to 98% • Use 1-1.5% of electricity generated • Most widely used • Distance to limestone source and the limestone reactivity to be considered • High water consumption • Need to treat wastewater • Gypsum as a saleable by-product or waste	11-14%
Semi-Dry FGD	• Also called "Dry Scrubbing" – under controlled humidification. • Lime (CaO) as reagent • Removal efficiency up to 94% • Can remove SO_3 as well at higher removal rate than Wet FGD • Use 0.5-1.0% of electricity generated, less than Wet FGD • Lime is more expensive than limestone • No wastewater • Waste – mixture of fly ash, unreacted additive and $CaSO_3$	
Seawater FGD	• Removal efficiency up to 90% • Not practical for high S coal (>1%S) • Impacts on marine environment need to be carefully examined (e.g., reduction of pH, inputs of remaining heavy metals, fly ash, temperature, sulfate, dissolved oxygen, and chemical oxygen demand) • Use 0.8-1.6% of electricity generated • Simple process, no wastewater or solid waste,	7-10%

Sources: EC (2006) and World Bank Group.

Nitrogen Oxides

Formation of nitrogen oxides can be controlled by modifying operational and design parameters of the combustion process (primary measures). Additional treatment of NO_X from the flue gas (secondary measures; see Table 2) may be required in some cases depending on the ambient air quality objectives. Recommended measures to prevent, minimize, and control NO_X emissions include:

- Use of low NO_X burners with other combustion modifications, such as low excess air (LEA) firing, for boiler plants. Installation of additional NO_X controls for boilers may be necessary to meet emissions limits; a selective catalytic reduction (SCR) system can be used for pulverized coal-fired, oil-fired, and gas-fired boilers or a selective non-catalytic reduction (SNCR) system for a fluidized-bed boiler;
- Use of dry low-NO_X combustors for combustion turbines burning natural gas;
- Use of water injection or SCR for combustion turbines and

[6] Regenerative Flue Gas Desulfurization (FGD) options (either wet or semi-dray) may be considered under these conditions.

[7] EC (2006).

[8] The SO2 removal efficiency of FBC technologies depends on the sulfur and lime content of fuel, sorbent quantity, ratio, and quality.

[9] The use of wet scrubbers, in addition to dust control equipment (e.g. ESP or Fabric Filter), has the advantage of also reducing emissions of HCl, HF, heavy metals, and further dust remaining after ESP or Fabric Filter. Because of higher costs, the wet scrubbing process is generally not used at plants with a capacity of less than 100 MWth (EC 2006).

Table 6 (C) - Emissions Guidelines (in mg/Nm³ or as indicated) for Boiler

Note:

- Guidelines are applicable for new facilities.
- EA may justify more stringent or less stringent limits due to ambient environment, technical and economic considerations provided there is compliance with applicable ambient air quality standards and incremental impacts are minimized.
- For projects to rehabilitate existing facilities, case-by-case emission requirements should be established by the EA considering (i) the existing emission levels and impacts on the environment and community health, and (ii) cost and technical feasibility of bringing the existing emission levels to meet these new facilities limits.
- EA should demonstrate that emissions do not contribute a significant portion to the attainment of relevant ambient air quality guidelines or standards, and more stringent limits may be required.

Combustion Technology / Fuel	Particulate Matter (PM)		Sulfur Dioxide (SO_2)		Nitrogen Oxides (NOx)		Dry Gas, Excess O_2 Content (%)
Boiler	NDA	DA	NDA	DA	NDA	DA	
Natural Gas	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	240	240	3%
Other Gaseous Fuels	50	30	400	400	240	240	3%
Liquid Fuels (Plant >50 MWth to <600 MWth)	50	30	900 – 1,500[a]	400	400	200	3%
Liquid Fuels (Plant >/=600 MWth)	50	30	200 – 850[b]	200	400	200	3%
Solid Fuels (Plant >50 MWth to <600 MWth)	50	30	900 – 1,500[a]	400	510[c] Or up to 1,100 if volatile matter of fuel < 10%	200	6%
Solid Fuels (Plant >/=600 MWth)	50	30	200 – 850[b]	200			6%

General notes:

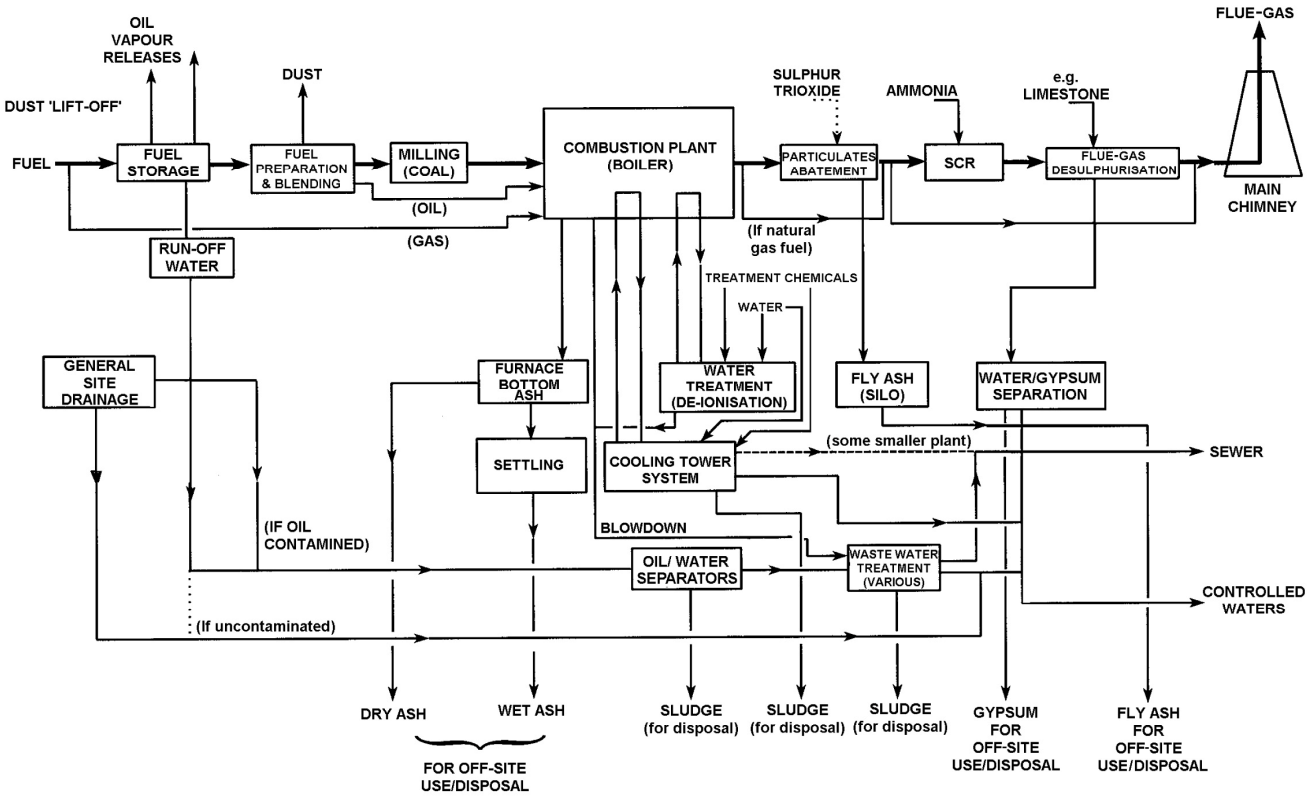
- MWth = Megawatt thermal input on HHV basis; N/A = not applicable; NDA = Non-degraded airshed; DA = Degraded airshed (poor air quality); Airshed should be considered as being degraded if nationally legislated air quality standards are exceeded or, in their absence, if WHO Air Quality Guidelines are exceeded significantly; CFB = circulating fluidized bed coal-fired; PC = pulverized coal-fired; Nm^3 is at one atmospheric pressure, 0 degree Celsius; MWth category is to apply to the entire facility consisting of multiple units that are reasonably considered to be emitted from a common stack. Guideline limits apply to facilities operating more than 500 hours per year. Emission levels should be evaluated on a one hour average basis and be achieved 95% of annual operating hours.
- a. Targeting the lower guidelines values and recognizing issues related to quality of available fuel, cost effectiveness of controls on smaller units, and the potential for higher energy conversion efficiencies (FGD may consume between 0.5% and 1.6% of electricity generated by the plant). b. Targeting the lower guidelines values and recognizing variability in approaches to the management of SO_2 emissions (fuel quality vs. use of secondary controls) and the potential for higher energy conversion efficiencies (FGD may consume between 0.5% and 1.6% of electricity generated by the plant). Larger plants are expected to have additional emission control measures. Selection of the emission level in the range is to be determined by EA considering the project's sustainability, development impact, and cost-benefit of the pollution control performance. c. Stoker boilers may require different emissions values which should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis through the EA process.

Comparison of the Guideline limits with standards of selected countries / region (as of August 2008):

- Natural Gas-fired Boiler – NOx
  - Guideline limits: 240
  - EU: 150 (50 to 300 MWth), 200 (> 300 MWth)
- Solid Fuels-fired Boiler - PM
  - Guideline limits: 50
  - EU: 50 (50 to 100 MWth), 30 (> 100 MWth), China: 50, India: 100 - 150
- Solid Fuels-fired Boiler – SO_2
  - Guideline limits: 900 – 1,500 (Plant > 50 MWth to < 600 MWth), 200 – 850 (Plant ≥ 600 MWth)
  - EU: 850 (50 – 100 MWth), 200 (> 100 MWth)
  - US: 180 ng/J gross energy output OR 95% reduction (≈ 200 mg/Nm3 at 6%O_2 assuming 38% HHV efficiency)
  - China: 400 (general), 800 (if using coal < 12,550 kJ/kg), 1,200 (if mine-mouth plant located in non-double control area of western region and burning low S coal (<0.5%))

Source: EU (LCP Directive 2001/80/EC October 23 2001), US (NSPS for Electric Utility Steam Generating Units (Subpart Da), Final Rule – June 13, 2007), China (GB 13223-2003)

Figure A-1
Generalized Flow Diagram of a Thermal power plant[45] and Associated Operations



Source: EC 2006

[45] Applicable to boiler plant with cooling tower only. Diagram does not apply to engines and turbines which have completely different configurations.