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Environment Programme

# Role of EIA Consultants

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- EIA process involves many parties, grouped by their role definition within the process. The following section outlines the basic responsibilities of various bodies:
- The Project Proponent (Private or Government Developer)
- **The Environmental Consultants (independent technical advisers)**
- EDNRE, General Fono, Taupulega (reviewing and approving agencies)
- The Public and Effected Parties (Stakeholders)



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**Development proposal (DP) submitted**  
by approval agency or proponent to EIA  
administrator

**DP screened (preliminary EIA)**  
by EIA administrator, govt agencies &  
stakeholders

**Full EIA required**  
Approval agency & proponent informed

**DP scoped**  
by EIA administrator, govt agencies & stakeholders

**TOR developed & finalised**  
by EIA administrator for EIA report

**EIA report prepared**  
by proponent based on TOR

**EIA report submitted**  
to EIA administrator for review

**EIA report accepted**  
by administrator & DP rejected

**Approval agency & proponent**  
informed of EIA administrator's decision

**DP approved**  
by approval agency & proponent informed of approval  
conditions

**Development (with conditions) actioned**  
by the proponent

**Development monitored and  
conditions enforced** by EIA  
administrator & approval agency

**EIA not required,**  
Approval agency &  
proponent informed

**Development permit issued**  
by approval authority and  
proponent informed of permit  
conditions

**Development actioned  
(with conditions)**  
by proponent

**EIA report not accepted**  
by EIA administrator

**Proponent informed**  
of decision by EIA administrator

**EIA report revised &  
resubmitted**  
to EIA administrator for review

**DP rejected**  
by approval  
agency

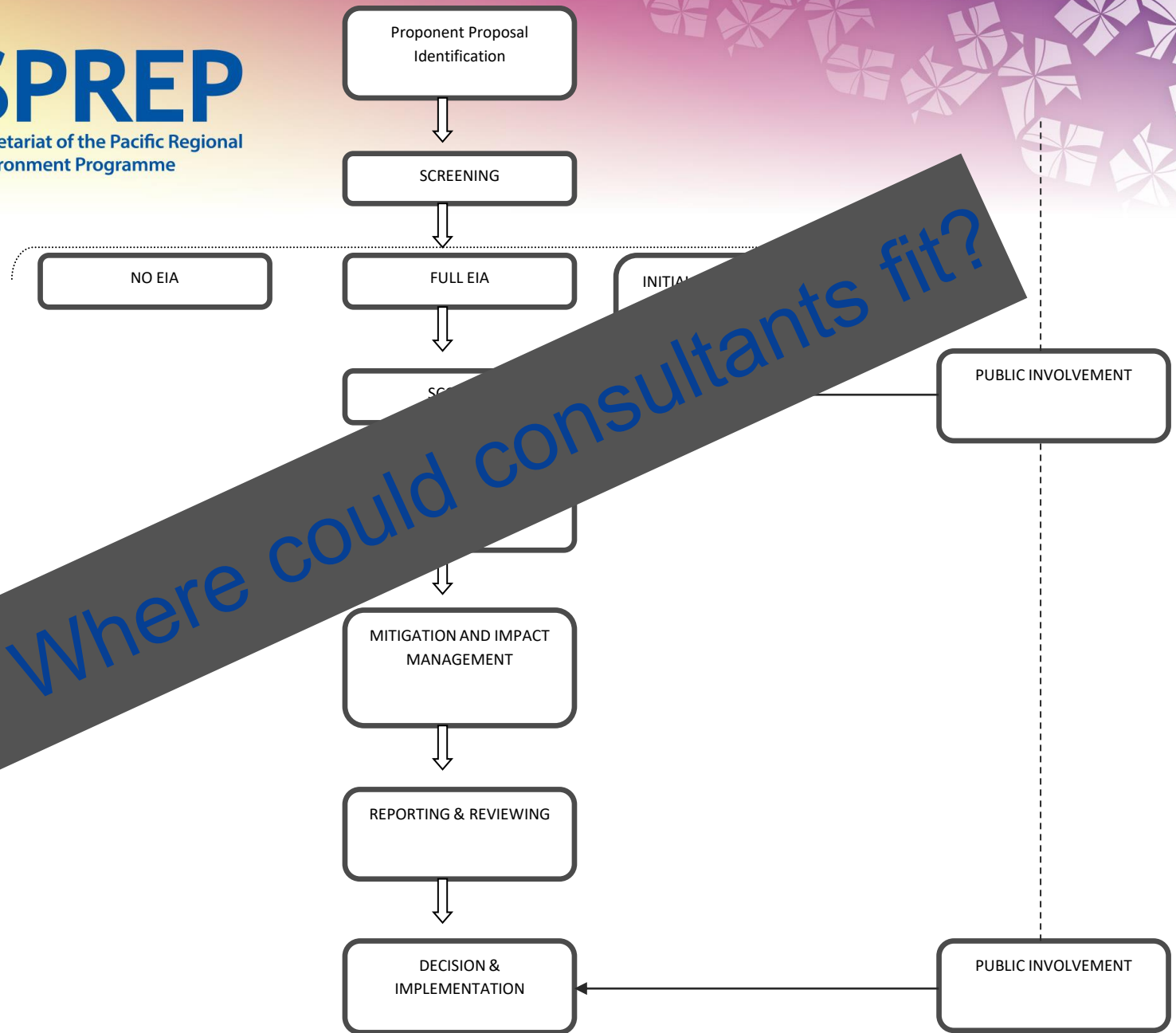
Where do consultants fit?

Adapted from Regional EIA guidelines



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# Consultant Roles

- Write up EIA Reports – **Neutrality** (legally required)
- Assist in development of TOR.
- Assist Consent Authority through the whole process of EIA (except granting approval)
- EIA Capacity building.
- Review of EIS Reports.
- Provide **technical advice**.
- Provide inputs for permit conditions
- Prepare Environment Management Plan – Construction and Operation
- Monitoring Plan – construction and operation.



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Proponent Proposal  
Identification

SCREENING

NO EIA

FULL EIA

INITIAL ENVIRONMENTAL  
ASSESSMENT

SCOPING

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

IMPACT ANALYSIS

MITIGATION AND IMPACT  
MANAGEMENT

REPORTING & REVIEWING

DECISION &  
IMPLEMENTATION

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Taken from the 2012 Nukunonu Airstrip EIA framework



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## How they can help

- Consultants can work as an integrated part of the proponents team





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- Or as technical independent advisors/reviewers

I hear what you  
are saying... I'm  
not sure I agree



## They must be

- **Independent specialists** with a technical skill base
- They need not be local but **MUST** be able to provide **understanding** of **local legislation** and knowledge of existing information
- They also need the specific skill sets to under the EIA studies for that project





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- The consultant should guide the proponent through initial screening of the project and guidance (but not decide) on what studies may be required for an EIA report and,
- Once the scope is issued by EIA Board (EDNRE) the consultant can finalise the methodology for such studies.
- If done correctly this has major benefits to the EIA process



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## Benefits of Consultants

- Can create a project strategy which identifies the range of issues critical to project risk, value and ultimately success.
- Define a suitable project scope, proportionate to the nature and scale of the development, by initiating an early and effective consultation process. I.e. **Prepare a draft ToR**
- Design-in solutions, embedding sustainable mitigation measures in the design, to add value and reduce the likelihood of issues later on, saving time, money and wasted effort.



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- Consultants should be fully equipped with required instruments and infrastructure to conduct EIA studies.
- As not all projects are the same not all EIA are the same and therefore **no one consultant can undertake every type of EIA** or EIA studies, you usually need a team of people
- This could be stakeholder engagement plans and/or mediators
- Environmental Planners
- Technical specialists such as hydrogeologists for groundwater, Air Quality scientists for dust, Ecologists for biological surveys, Environmental Chemists for contaminated land or Oceanographers for hydrodynamic modelling for coastal developments etc.

- The consultant is also required to justify the findings in the EIA and EMP during the meeting with the expert groups.







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- If approved; consultants can also **implement independent monitoring and reporting of the approval conditions**



- Or represent the developer at the site at the time of the Department inspections



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# What they **cannot** do

- Propose works that provide no benefit to the EIA process
- Proceed with any study without written approval
- Provide technical advice on areas outside of their recognised skill set
- **Be both** the technical lead for proponent and independent reviewer of an EIA for Government
- Be the proponent
- Be biased – They **MUST** be independent
- **They cannot Approve an EIA**