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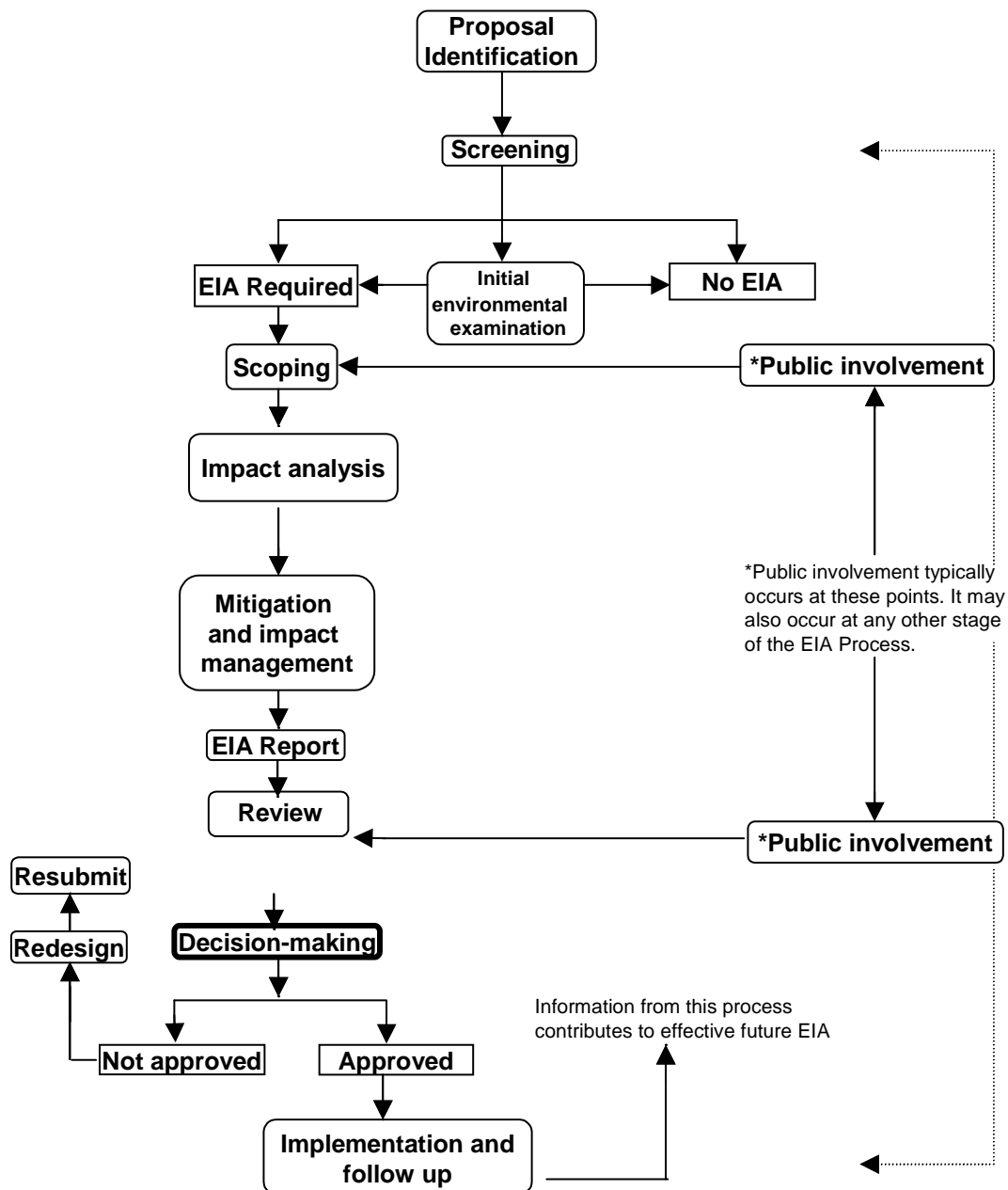
# **Topic 10**

## **Decision-making**

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# Decision-making in the EIA process



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## EIA is a process to:

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- gather information necessary for decision-making
- inform approval and condition setting
- help determine if a proposal is acceptable

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## Decision-making is a process of:

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- political choice between alternative directions
- weighing the benefits and costs
- negotiation, bargaining and trade-offs
- balancing economic, social and environmental factors

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## Decision-makers need to understand:

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- EIA aims and concepts
- EIA legislation, procedure and guidelines
- the effectiveness of EIA practice
- the limitations on EIA information
- how EIA process and practice measure up internationally
- issues of public consultation and third party challenges

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## Decision-makers should be encouraged to:

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- ♦ implement sustainability mandates and commitments
- ♦ broaden their perspectives on the environment
- ♦ critically review information and advice
- ♦ better communicate information and decisions
- ♦ apply the precautionary principle
- ♦ improve the process of making trade-offs
- ♦ adopt more open and participatory approaches
- ♦ use strategic tools including SEA and environmental accounting

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## Decision-making is a continuing process, comprising:

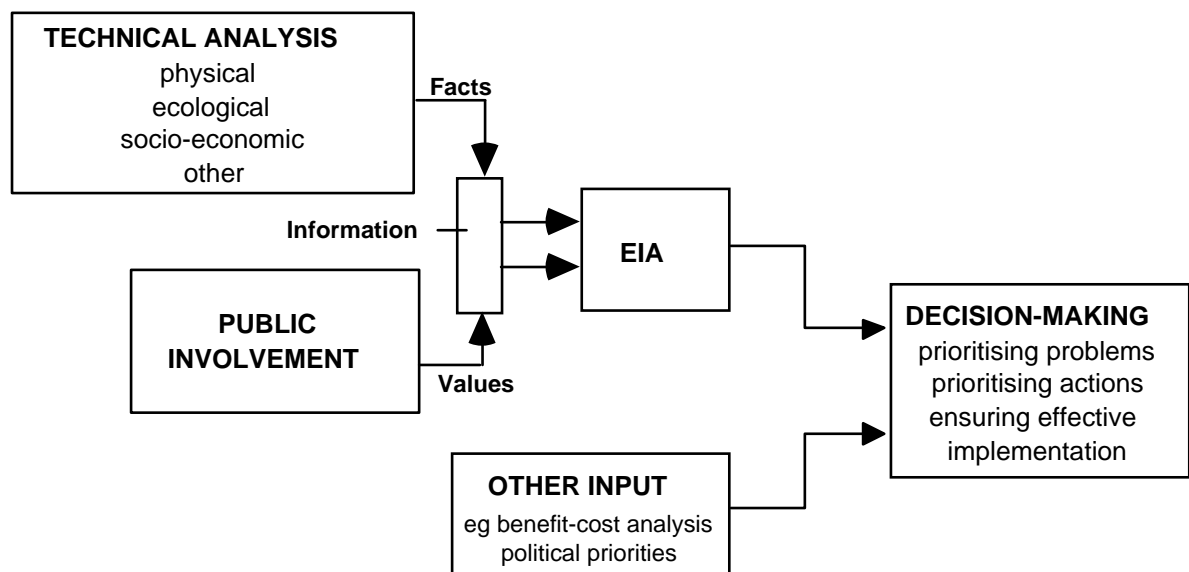
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- interim decisions made at each stage of EIA
- final approval of a proposal
- enforcement of conditions attached to approvals

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# EIA as part of the decision-making process

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## Information for decision-makers should include:

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- background of the proposal
- policy context
- alternatives considered
- public inputs and balance of opinion
- significant impacts
- proposed mitigation and monitoring
- extent that the proposal conforms to sustainability principles

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## EIA responsibilities imposed on decision makers

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- meet no further requirements
- take account of information in the EIA report
- provide reasons for the decision
- act in accordance with recommendations of a review body

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## Outcomes from EIA decision-making

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- proposal approved
- proposal approved with conditions
- proposal on hold pending further study
- proposal returned for revision and resubmission
- proposal rejected

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## Checks and balances on decision-making

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- no decision taken until EIA report considered
- findings help determine approval and condition setting
- public comment taken into account
- approvals can be refused or withheld
- conditions can be imposed/ modifications demanded
- written reasons for the decision
- right of appeal against the decision

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## Means of implementing the decision include:

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- establishing performance conditions
- incorporating them into legal contracts
- requiring preparation of environmental management plans
- incorporating ISO 14001 standards
- overseeing and monitoring compliance with conditions