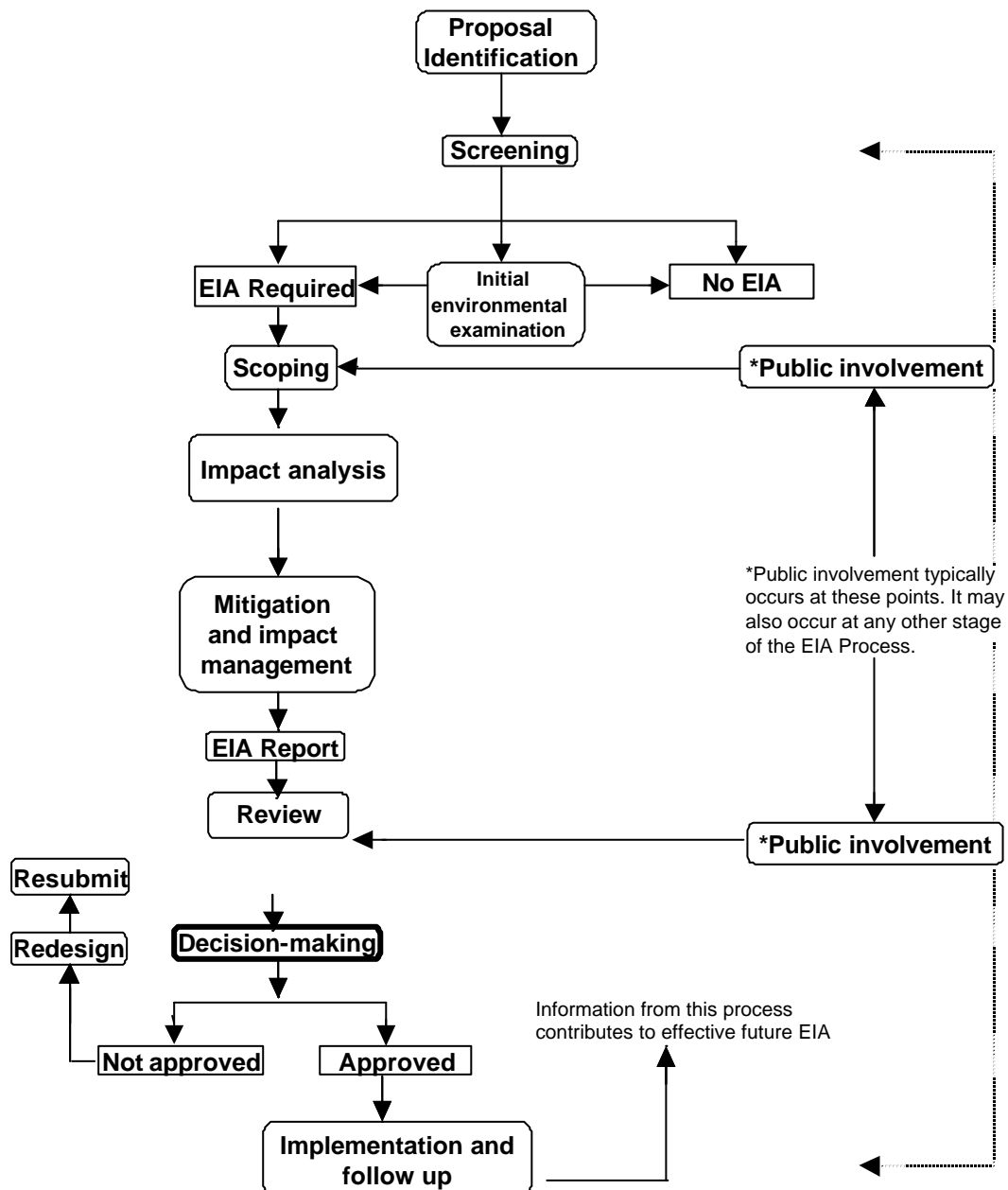

Decision-making in the EIA process



EIA is a process to:

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

Decision-making is a process of:

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

Decision-makers need to understand:

- 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**

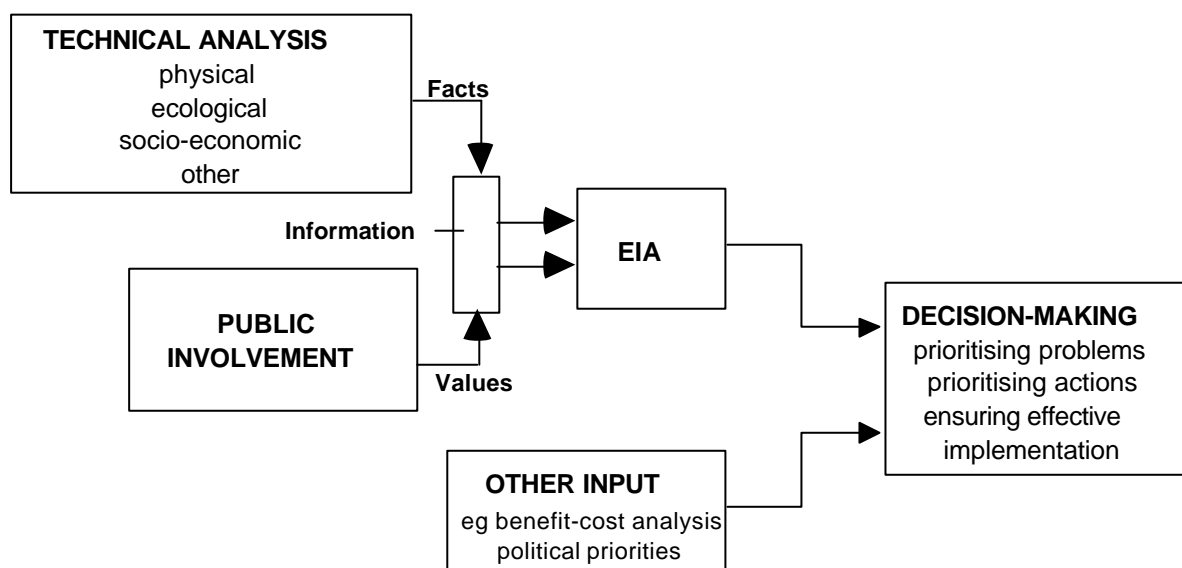
Decision-makers should be encouraged to:

- **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**

Decision-making is a continuing process, comprising:

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

EIA as part of the decision-making process



Information for decision-makers should include:

- 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**

EIA responsibilities imposed on decision makers

- 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**

Outcomes from EIA decision-making

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

Checks and balances on decision-making

- 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

Means of implementing the decision include:

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