

Certified Environmental Practitioner Scheme

Ensuring quality in environmental and social management systems

SPREP – 13 April 2022



The problem



- Pacific Island Countries rely heavily on private sector consultants to support environmental and social management systems
- How do you ensure consultants have the necessary knowledge and experience to complete work to the required quality?
- Is certification the answer?



Options for ensuring quality

1. Require membership of a relevant professional association
2. Maintain a list of accredited companies
3. Establish a South Pacific certification scheme
4. Rely on existing certification schemes
5. Accredite existing certification schemes
6. Accredite existing schemes but with an additional requirement to show Pacific island experience



1. Membership of a relevant professional association

- Generally requires:
 - Environment related degree
 - Specified number of years of experience to be a full member
 - Commitment to a code of ethics and/or professional practice
- Does not ensure the consultant has the knowledge and experience for the proposed work
- Relevant professional organisations may not be available in some countries.


2. Maintain a list of accredited companies/individuals



- If a thorough selection process is used, ensures any consultants bidding for work are appropriately qualified and experienced
- Selection process requires government resources
- List needs to be maintained and regularly reviewed (~3 years) as:
 - staff changes in a company can result in a significant and ongoing reduction in performance
 - individuals can change jobs, move to a different area of work or retire
- Time required to complete application can be disincentive, particularly to new entrants.

MINISTRY OF WATERWAYS AND ENVIRONMENT

Department of Environment



FORM A

**ENVIRONMENT IMPACT ASSESSMENT
CONSULTANT REGISTRATION SCHEME
REGISTRATION FORM**

SECTION A-PERSONAL INFORMATION

Category of registration (please tick in box) Note if you wish to apply as EIA consultant and Subject Specialist, please tick both boxes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Principal Consultant	<input type="checkbox"/>	Technical Assistant
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Assistant Consultant	<input type="checkbox"/>	Review Consultant (optional)
Full Name				
Title (Prof, Dr.,Mr.,Mrs., Ms)				



3. Establish a South Pacific certification scheme

- Could enable individual practitioners to be recognized across all South Pacific countries.
- Could be tailored to address the particular skills and experience required in South Pacific countries.
- Considerable work involved in establishing and operating a scheme.
- CEnvP relies primarily on volunteers – would otherwise be cost prohibitive for applicants.



4. Rely on existing certification schemes

- e.g. Certified Environmental Practitioner (Australia and New Zealand), Chartered Environmentalist (Society for the Environment/IEEMA)
- Cost is borne by the certification organization, not the country
- Some schemes may not be open to practitioners based in South Pacific
- Some schemes may lack rigour
- International schemes will not require an understanding of the South Pacific context.



International Association for Impact Assessment
Research Innovation Grant 2017



Compendium of National IA Professional
Recognition Schemes:
Individual Environmental Impact
Assessment (EIA) Practitioners





Requirements of a certification scheme

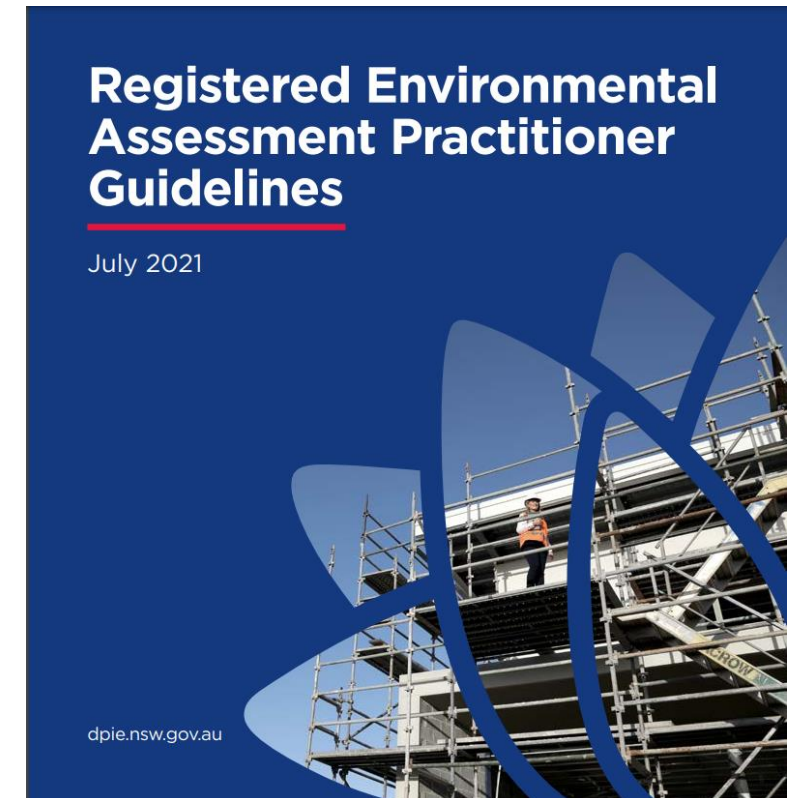
- Built on demonstrated market need - There must be perceived value in distinguishing those who have proven competency from those who have not.
- Objectivity – The certification process must be objective.
- Rigour - A certification that requires little effort or knowledge or one that everyone can earn is typically of lower value than one that demands great effort, experience, knowledge, and skill.
- Emphasis on ethics - Ethical conduct covers a broad range of topics, from protecting the certification process from fraud to ensuring the ethical practice of the profession.
- Re-certification – As industries and organisations grow and change, professionals that serve them must adapt to the changing needs of their profession.
(Institute on Credentialing Excellence)

Note also international standard: ISO 17024 “Conformity assessment – General requirements for bodies operating certification of persons.”



5. Accredit existing scheme

- Example is New South Wales State Government in Australia
- To be accredited, a scheme must:
 - Have strong corporate governance including:
 - Code of ethical and/or professional conduct
 - Clear procedures, including for handling complaints and taking disciplinary action
 - Have robust process for evaluating qualifications, experience and competencies of practitioners
 - Require continuing professional development
 - Ensure practitioners are highly skilled in the environmental assessment of projects
 - https://shared-drupal-s3fs.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/master-test/fapub_pdf/GD1258+Rapid+Assessment+Framework+REAP+final.pdf





5. Accredited existing scheme but with requirement for Pacific island experience

- Again, example is the NSW Registered Environmental Assessment Practitioner
- A NSW REAP must have completed:
 - a minimum of three (major or non-major) defined eligible environmental impact assessment projects in a project lead role, or
 - worked in the field of regulatory approvals and impact assessments as a member of a project team at direct engagement level on four or more projects with three or more NSW regulators or authorities
- <https://www.cenvp.org/guidance-notes/cenvp-ia-reap-module/#1598512587341-8605b079-43da>
- The scheme remains responsible for assessing proficiency. The country only needs to assess local experience.

Overview of the Certified Environmental Practitioner Scheme



Why The Certified Environmental Practitioner (CEnvP) Scheme was developed



- The environment profession was maturing and becoming increasingly specialised
- Community demanding a greater environmental accountability from profession
- Professional indemnity insurance was becoming more expensive and harder to get for environmental professionals
- Some incompetent and unethical behaviour undermining the credibility of the profession
- Ensure competent and ethical practitioners are given due recognition in line with other professions
- Improve standard of environmental practice.

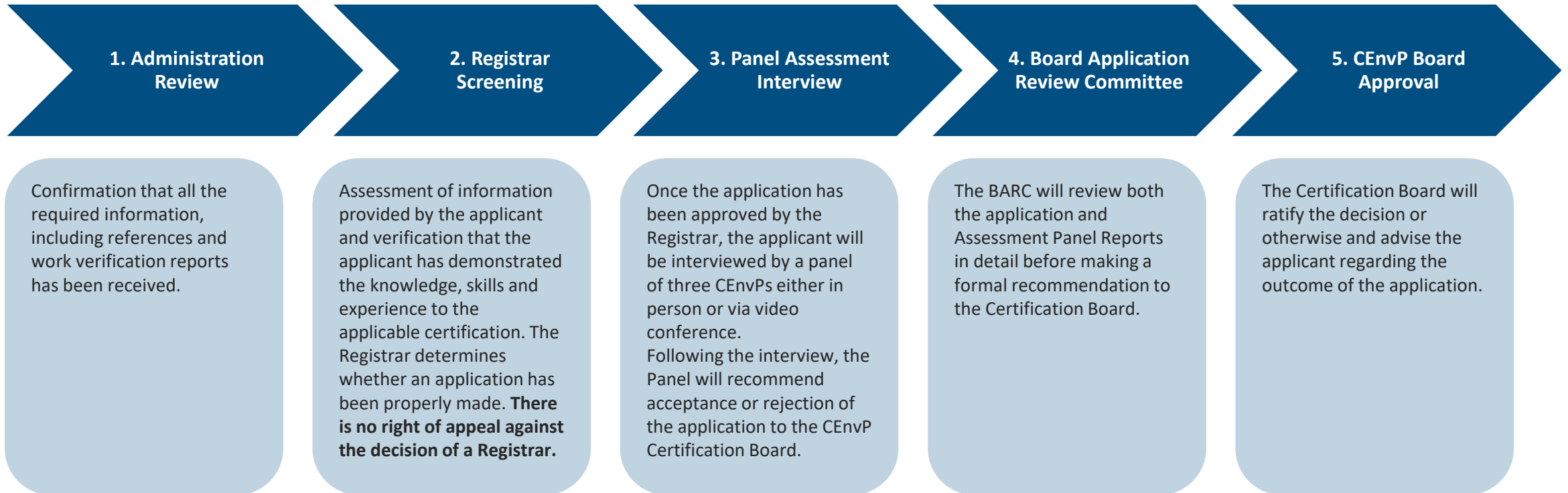


How the CEnvP Scheme operates

- Established under EIANZ By-law in 2004
- Practitioner-led scheme
- Provides for a general certification and specialist certifications: Impact Assessment, Site Contamination, Ecology, Heritage, Climate Change, Geomorphology, Land Rehabilitation (Social Impact Assessment coming soon)
- Has its own Board, appeals process and a third party complaint process, as per compliance with ISO 17024 “Conformity assessment – General requirements for bodies operating certification of persons.”
- Relies on assessment by three person practitioner panel
- Final decision made by CEnvP Board
- Open to any environmental professional (discount for EIANZ members)
- Small (paid) administrative staff




CEnvP certification process



Complaints



- Process for handling complaints which may result in cancellation of certification
- Anyone can submit a complaint via an online form.



CEEnvP Scheme Complaints Form

Who and/or what is the subject of the complaint?
(Complainant's details next page)

Name * Job Title *

First Name Last Name

Organisation Name *



General certification requirements

- Relevant environment-related degree
- Five years of full time experience in environmental practice during the last 10 years.
- Statement of ethical conduct
- Nomination by three respected environmental professionals
- Evidence through referee statements, publications, citations, curriculum vitae, reports etc. that the candidate is a respected, competent, ethical and active member of the profession
- Ongoing commitment to professional development (100 points of training, professional improvement, service to professional practice over a two year period)



Specialist certification requirements

- Generally, require at least 10 years of experience in environmental practice and at least 8 years in specialist area
- Need to demonstrate proficiency against specialist criteria
- Demonstrated through project examples, essay, CV and referee reports
- Specialist Environmental Advisory Committee established for each certification



Impact Assessment Specialist criteria

(1) IA methods

Understanding of:

- The role and limitations of IA in environmental planning and decision making
- The various stages in the IA process and their purposes
- The use of strategic and cumulative assessment
- Risk assessment and management principles and application
- The use of other environmental management tools, such as environmental management systems; environmental auditing and life cycle assessment
- Emerging issues and trends in IA nationally and internationally.



Criteria (2) – Analytical skills

Understanding of:

- IA legislation, regulatory framework, guidelines, methodologies and reporting requirements for specialist inputs to the IA process
- IA scoping and role of baseline information
- Determination of significance of impacts at multiple scales
- Avoid, mitigate, manage and/or offset hierarchy
- Reviewing technical quality of IA documents
- Limitations in IA methodologies (e.g. modelling)
- Importance of monitoring, evaluation and adaptive management.



Criteria (3) – Interpersonal skills

- Communication skills required for effective public engagement, collaboration and consultation
- Clearly express complex concepts and ideas, orally and in writing
- Develop effective working relationships with stakeholders, including proponents, consultants, community groups and government regulators
- Understand and address conflicting viewpoints of different stakeholders
- Exercise perception and judgment in dealing with complex and sensitive issues.



Experience with certification

- Over 1,000 certified practitioners including:
 - 288 site contamination specialists
 - 41 impact assessment specialists
 - 34 ecology specialists
- Increasing requirement in legislation and contracting for certification:
 - E.g. contaminated sites
 - NSW REAP
- Governments relying on CEnvP Scheme rather than establishing their own schemes
- Requires considerable contribution by voluntary assessment panels
- Will remain practitioner led scheme.



Is certification the answer?

- Using certified practitioners does reduce the risk of receiving poor quality work
- Certification schemes do require significant resources to establish and maintain
 - CEnvP scheme is only viable because of volunteer support
- Needs to be a driver for practitioners to get certified (e.g. government requirement)
- There are many existing schemes around the world
- CEnvP staff would be happy to discuss their experience with SPREP (and others).



Further Information

- Application forms, guidance notes and further information available at www.cenvp.org
- Email: info@cenvp.org
- My contact details: lwilkinson@jbsg.com.au

