

What is Registration of EIA Consultants?

Pacific Island Countries rely heavily on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) consultants to support environmental impact assessment studies for developments. As such, these environmental consultants and practitioners must possess competency in their selected field to be able to perform detailed assessments and develop effective management plans. How can we therefore ensure consultants have the requisite knowledge and experience to conduct such assessments and studies to the required quality?

Registration of EIA consultants is a scheme which ensures that EIA consultants are registered and certified by the relevant national environmental agency or department in order to practice. The registration process is designed to screen and ensure that environmental impact assessments consultants have the necessary qualifications and experience to provide quality reporting. The objective of registration is to set a better standard for EIA consultancy, bringing uniformity and consistency and improving EIA consultants administration and governance.

What are the Benefits of Registering EIA Consultants?



1. Quality assurance: Consultants must meet the minimum level of qualifications, experience and/or training, ensuring that only qualified professionals are able to practice.



2. Transparency: A registration scheme would provide an efficient and effective means for the public and other stakeholders to select professional, adequately qualified, and well skilled EIA consultants.



3. Credibility: Registration would enhance the credibility and recognition of EIA practice by providing an assurance that registered consultants are competent and authorised to practice in the field.



4. Continuous Professional Development (CPD): Consultants may be required to undertake regular training and development to stay updated with the new knowledge, best practice, as well as the legal and regulatory framework within which they operate.



5. Reduces Unscrupulous Practices: Registration scheme can also provide a mechanism to deter and detect unscrupulous practices, such as plagiarism or ghost-writing, making it easier for government to monitor and regulate the performance of EIA consultants.



6. Cost Savings: Government could reduce costs by streamlining the EIA process and reducing the need for repetitive or unnecessary reviews. In addition, consultant registration fees can serve as additional funding to support EIA process management.

Pacific Island Countries with Register of EIA Consultants



FIJI

Fiji is among the first countries in the Pacific region to establish a register of accredited consultants approved to conduct EIAs. Under Section 28(4) of the *Environmental Management Act 2000 and the Environment Management (EIA process) Regulations 2007* only accredited consultants and companies registered with the Department of Environment (DoE) can prepare an EIA report in Fiji. Consultants must be highly competent in their selected field and comply with the Code of Practice.



VANUATU

In Vanuatu, an EIA report must be prepared by a registered consultant under the *Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations Order No 114 of 2019*. The Department of Environmental Protection and Conservation (DEPC) has a formal register of consultants and a register of qualified persons that can be referred to whenever external expertise is required. Proponents also have the option of finding another consultant; however, this must be formally approved by, and registered with the Department before any work can commence.



TONGA

With assistance from SPREP, Tonga became the latest country to also adopt the registration of EIA consultants under the *Registration of EIA Consultant Regulation 2021*. Any person who conducts an EIA under the *Environment Management Act 2010* and EIA Regulations shall hold a valid EIA Consultant Certificate. To apply for a certificate, interested candidates must fill an application form with a prescribed fee of up to TOP1300 for local Principal consultants with a TOP800.00 renewal fee. There are also prescribed fees for senior and assistant consultants' categories.

How does SPREP Support Member Countries in Establishing a Register of EIA Consultants?

SPREP, as a regional organisation, is mandated to support Pacific Island countries in the implementation of sustainable planning tools such as Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA), Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA) and spatial planning. SPREP provides training, technical assistance, and capacity building to assist member countries establish effective EIA consultant registration systems. This includes assisting members with the development of national EIA legislation and training government officials and EIA practitioners on the principles and procedures for EIA in line with international best practices.

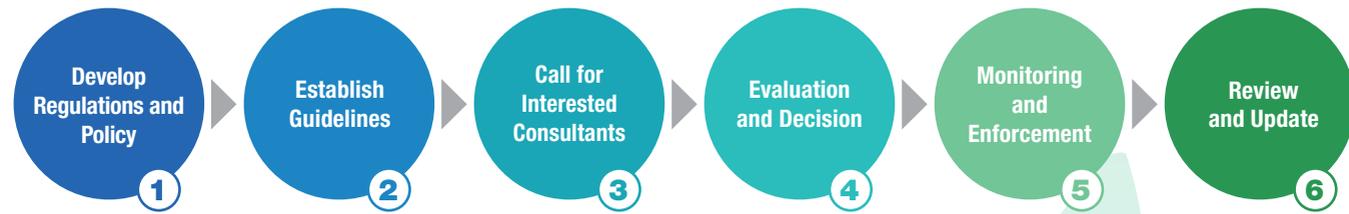
This initiative is supported by the EU funded capacity building related to multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries - phase III Programme, widely known as the ACP MEAs 3 Programme.

Join the Pacific EIA Network and Community of Practice!

EIA can be highly technical in nature and demand expertise, knowledge, tools, and ongoing capacity building to improve its management and application. The Pacific Network for Environmental Assessments (PNEA) portal is an online community of practice created and managed by SPREP to support EIA and safeguard practitioners from member countries.

The portal provides information and resources for EIA practitioners and allows registered members to directly request assistance for EIA technical advice, receive news and updates on impact assessment, as well as network with peers and practitioners across the region. Join the PNEA by simply registering on the official website at pnea.sprep.org





How is a Typical EIA Registration Scheme Established?

1. **Develop Regulations and Policy:** Develop comprehensive regulations and policy for EIA consultant registration under relevant principal legislation. This includes outlining the roles and responsibilities of the National Environmental Agency, the registration panel, and the consultants.
2. **Establish Guidelines:** The National Environmental Agency develops guidelines for EIA consultant registration through a consultative process with stakeholders. The guidelines should be clear, comprehensive, and aligned with the regulations. The guidelines can provide details on:
 - a. The terms of reference for the registration panel, which may comprise of representatives from tertiary institutions, relevant government sectors and private sector/industry.
 - b. The application forms.
 - c. The prescribed fees.
 - d. The categories of EIA consultants.
 - e. Code of conducts for consultants.
 - f. Registration criteria, conditions and validity.
 - g. Appeal process etc
3. **Call for Interested Consultants:** The National Environmental Agency invites consultants to apply for registration:
4. **Evaluation and Decision:** The Registration Panel evaluates applications and makes decision. The panel should have clear criteria for evaluating applications and the decision-making process should be transparent and impartial. Successful applicants are advised/required to pay the prescribed fees according to the consultant category.
5. **Monitoring and Enforcement:** The National Environmental Agency ensures compliance with the registration scheme and implements penalties, fines, and deregistration for non-compliance.
6. **Review and Update:** Regularly review and update registration scheme.

CONTRIBUTORS

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For more information, on the EIA process please contact your national EIA authority or email us at SPREP: sprep@sprep.org

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EIA Good Practice: Registration and Certification of EIA Consultants

SPREP'S VISION:

A RESILIENT PACIFIC ENVIRONMENT SUSTAINING OUR LIVELIHOODS AND NATURAL HERITAGE IN HARMONY WITH OUR CULTURES.



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