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Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Meteorology

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Acronyms

ACT Environment Act 1998

CA Consent Authority (ECD)

EAC Environment Advisory Committee

ECD Environment and Conservation division

EIA Environmental Impact Assessment

EIS Environment Impact Statement

EMP Environmental Management Plan

MECM Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Meteorology

PER Public Environment Report

REG Environment Regulations 2008

Glossary

Terms Explanation

Developer Any person who undertakes or proposes to

undertake development.

Development ConsentConsent or Approval to carry out any

prescribed development issued by the CA.

Director Refers to the Director of Environment and

Conservation, representing CA.

Environment All natural and social systems and their

constituent parts, and the interactions of their

constituent parts, including people,

communities and economic, aesthetic, culture

and social factors.

Environment Advisory Committee A group compromising of a chairman, vice

chairman and not more than 10 members established for the purpose of the ACT.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Environmental Impacts Assessment (EIA) is a

tool used to identify, predict, assess and mitigate environmental, social and other relevant effects of proposed developments

prior to major decision makings and

commitments.

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) A detailed report presenting the results of an

environmental impact assessment.

Public Environmental Report (PER) A brief report presenting the results of a

preliminary environmental assessment of an

existing or proposed development.

Scoping The process undertaken to identify the main

issues to be addressed by an EIA, the

information to be collected, the baseline

studies that should be carried out and the methodology that should be used to evaluate their significance.

Screening The initial stage in the process, when a

decision is made on whether or not EIA is

required for a particular proposed

development.

Prescribed Development Development prescribed under Part III of the

Act (See Appendix A). Prescribed

development is intended to refer to

developments which are considered to have

potential for significant environmental

impacts.

Introduction

Most of the development activities that generate foreign earnings for the economy of Solomon Islands are heavily dependent upon the exploitation and utilization of natural resources. For many years, economic development activities in Solomon Islands have not integrated environmental considerations. As a result of its accelerated pace of development and level of exploitation of its natural resources, the country witnesses significant natural resources depletion resulting in environmental pollution, degradation and damage. Thus, it is crucial that there is proper legal mechanism in place that governs the proper and responsible management of the natural resources and the environment in general by means of controlling and regulating development activities.

The Environment Act 1998which is administered by Environment and Conservation Division introduces an integrated system of development control, environmental Impact assessment and pollution control. The thrust of the ACT is on the procedures of environmental impact assessments (EIA). It is a requirement of the ACT that all prescribed developments are mandatory to undergo EIA for which development consent is required. EIA is a management and planning tool used for examination, analysis and assessment of proposed developments with a view to ensure environmentally sound and sustainable development. It is envisage that enforcement of EIA in controlling and regulating developments will improve the management of natural resources, prevent and protect the environment from pollution, degradation and damage.

The aim of EIA can be divided into two categories. The immediate aim of EIA is to inform the process of decision-making by identifying the potentially significant environmental effects and risks of development proposals. The long term aim of EIA is to promote sustainable development by ensuring that development proposals do not undermine critical resource and ecological functions or the well being, lifestyle and livelihood of the communities and peoples who depend on them.

This guideline has been prepared by the Environment and Conservation Division with the aim of simplifying the procedures of EIA outlined in the ACT and accompanying Environment Regulations 2008 to provide basic advice and guidance to government officers, planners, developers, resource owners and those involved in processing development proposals, on the environmental impact assessment process.

Purpose of EIA

Promote environmentally sound and sustainable development through the identification of appropriate mitigation measures.

Protect the quality and productivity of the natural environment.

Predict and avoid, minimize or offset the adverse significant environmental, social and other relevant effects of development proposals.

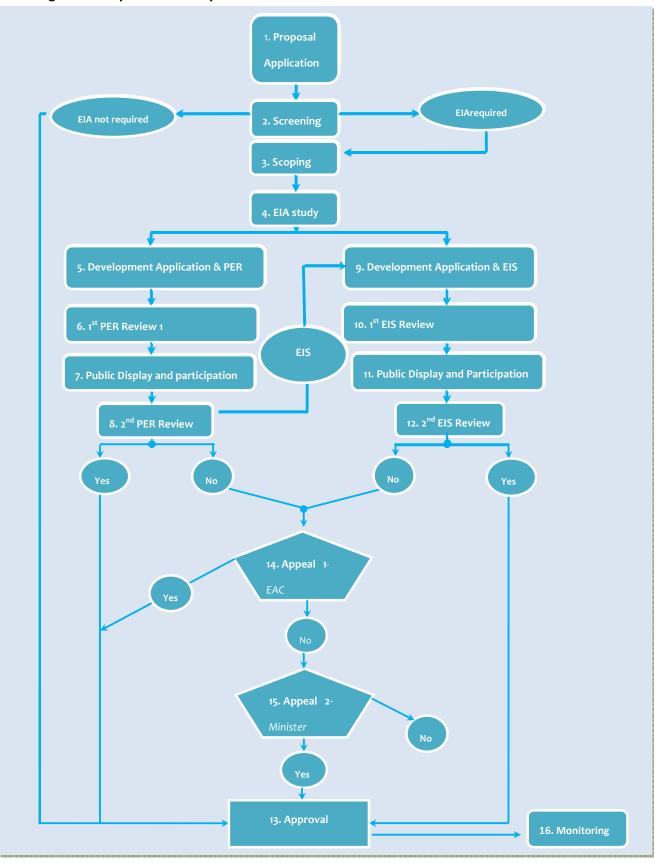
Provide information for decision-making on the environmental consequences of any proposed developments

EIA Procedures

The Environment Act stipulates the general procedures for EIA in Solomon Islands. This section elaborates on those procedural guidelines making it easier to understand.

The procedural steps as required under the ACT and regulations are illustrated in Figure 1 below. The subsequent table (table 1) depicts the brief explanations of each step including those key players and the time frame for each action.

Figure 1: EIA procedural steps



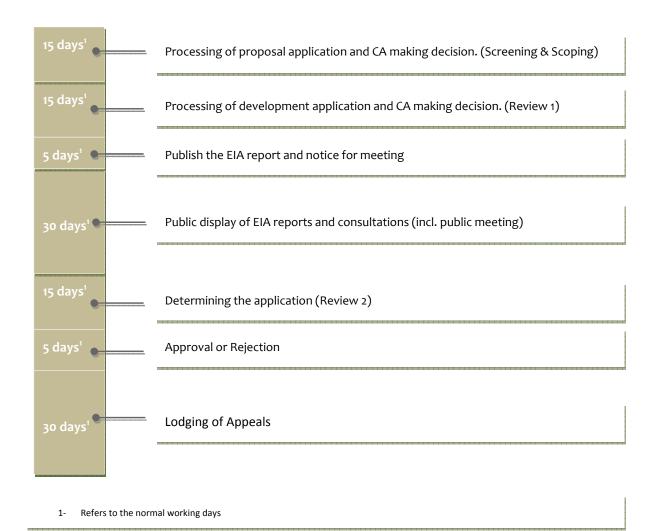
Step	Title	Details of Actions	Time frame (days)	Stakeholders involved in each action
1.	Proposal Application	The developer lodges a proposal application to the ECD with an application fee of \$200. The proposal application should be a formal letter outlining detail description of the proposed development.	na	Developer
		Act 17(1) & Reg 6 ECD decides whether or not EIA is required by		ECD & Developer
2.	Screening	screening the proposal applications. In the case where EIA is not required, go to step 13.Conversely once an EIA is required, then go step 3		
3.	Scoping	ECD after considering the application within 15 days requires the developer to carry out an EIA study. Scoping is where major impacts of the proposed development are identified and highlighted. ECD will then advise the developer of the type of information required and will decide whether PER or EIS is required of the developer. Act 17(2) and Reg 7	15	ECD & Developer
4.	EIA study	The developer carries out studies to collect and prepare the environmental information (report) required by ECD. If the developer is preparing a PER go to step5 or EIS go to step 9.	na	Developer
5	Submission of PER and Development application	The developer prepares and submits PER and the development application (Form 2 in Environment Regulations 2008) with a development application fee . Act 17(2a),30	na	Developer
6	1 st Review of PER	ECD reviews the application to determine the nature of the proposal and whether the PER complies with the ACT. If the PER does not fulfill the requirements of the Act, ECD may advice the developer to submit further information or details. If the PER meets the Act requirements, go to Step 7. Act 21,29and Reg 8 (a)(b)(c)	10-review 5- decision	ECD

7.	PER: Public Display/partici pation	ECD will publish the PER document such that it is made available to the public and convene a meeting that ensures public participation. The notice of the meeting (form4 in Environment Regulation 2008) will be published in the newspaper and posted in public places in the communities, which will be likely affected. Any cost associated with the publication of the Notice or PER will be borne by the developer. Act 22(1,2),30 and Reg 11& 12	30	ECD, relevant organization, provincial government, developer, resource owners/users, public.
8.	2 nd PER Review	The PER will be reviewed again by ECD taking into consideration any objections and information received during the Public display meeting or after the meeting. ECD may after the review: 1. Approve (step 13) 2. Reject- developer may appeal to advisory committee(step 14) 3. Deferred for approval- ECD may require an EIS from developer (step 9) Act 22(3),Reg 8(e),13	15	ECD
9	Submission of EIS and Development Application	Developer prepares and lodges the EIS and development application with development application fee. If the EIS meets the requirements of the Act, go to Step10 . Act 17(2b) and 30	na	Developer
10	1 st EIS Review	ECD reviews the application to determine the nature of the proposal and whether the EIS complies with the ACT. If the EIS does not fulfill the requirements of the Act, ECD may advice the developer to submit further information. If the EIS meets the Act requirements, go to Step 11. Reg 8 (a)(c)	10-reiview 5- decision	ECD
11	EIS Public Display and Participation	The ECD will publish the EIS document such that it is made available to the public and convene a meeting that ensures public participation. The notice of the meeting shall be published in the newspaper and posted in public places in the communities, which will be likely affected. Any cost associated with the publication of the Notice or EIS will be borne by the developer. Act 24(1)(2),30 and Reg 11 & 12	30	ECD, Any person, relevant organization, provincial government, developer

12	2 nd EIS Review	The EIS will be reviewed again by ECD taking into consideration any objections and information received during the Public display meeting or after the meeting. ECD may after the review: 1. Approve (step 13) 2. Reject- developer may appeal to advisory committee(step 14) Act 24(3), Reg 8e	15	ECD
13	Approval	The development consent is issued to the developer with conditions (form 5 of Environment Regulation 2008). The fees for development consent vary depending on the type of prescribed development. The decision of ECD shall be published in the newspaper having wide circulation in the Solomon Islands or in any other forms of public notices as approved by ECD. Act 24(3a) and Reg 14,16	5	ECD
14	Appeal 1.	The developer or any person(s) who disagrees with any decision of the Director may within 30 days of publication of the decision appeal to the Environment Advisory committee (EAC) in writing, stating clearly the grounds of appeal. The appellant shall pay an appeal fee. Act 32(1)(2)(3)(4)(5) and Reg 18	30	Developer/Any person
15	Appeal 2.	If again any person disagrees with the EAC's decision, he or she may within 30 days from such decision appeal to the Minister who will make the final decision. Act 32(7)	30	Developer/Any person
16	Monitoring	ECD or any relevant public authority may at any time, whether before or after a development activity has been completed, monitor or cause to be monitored, all or any of the environmental aspects of the implemented development activity. Ref: Act 31	na	ECD /Other relevant public authority
		Ref: Act 31		

Summary of the Timeframe for EIA

Below is a summary of the time frame in the 4th column of the table 1 above.



EIA Procedural Descriptions

Proposal Application

Prior to submission of the proposal application by the developer to the Consent Authority, it is advisable that the developer should first seek written advice from the Consent Authority. It will take about 10 working days for the CA to respond to the developer. The Proposal application should be in the form approved by the Minister of Environment.

At present, the Environment Regulations 2008 has no prescribed forms available for proposal application. Therefore, the CA accepts formal letters/documents outlining the details of the proposed development. A good written proposal application should include the:

- 1. Name and description of the proposed development
- Describe the type, size or nature of the development.
- It may include the plan or design of the development. (E.g. a building plan)
- Proposed location(s)
- It should provide map/site plan is essential.
- It should indicate the geographic location of the site, elevation and slope, any nearby area of environmental significance such as proposed or declared reserves, protected areas, world heritage sites, watercourses, wetlands (etc.) and adjacent land uses, including the nearest villages/communities.
- 3. Objectives of the proposed development

Box 1: Checklist for Application package

- ✓ Official letter of application (must include current address/phone contacts)
- **✓** Relevant documents (maps, plans etc.)
- **✓** Receipt of Application fee

Screening

Screening is the first step in the EIA process in which the CA makes a decision on whether or not EIA is required for a development proposal. The main purpose of screening is to verify if the proposed development type has potential environmental impact or not. Screening is undertaken using the information provided in the proposal application. At this scoping stage, the following decisions will be made by the CA:-

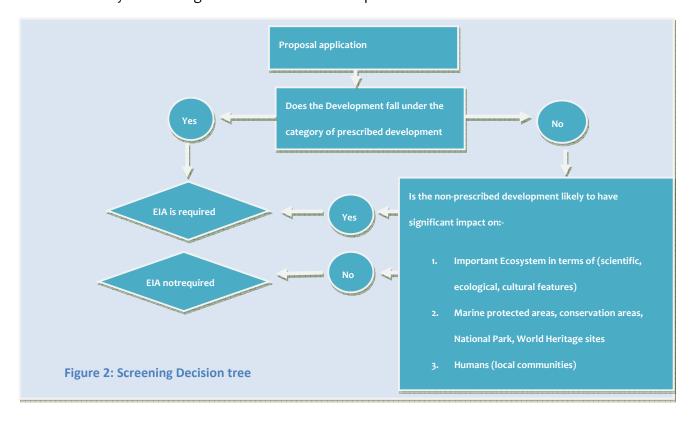
Major Decisions

- 1. Proposal is required to undertake EIA
- 2. Proposal is not required to undertake EIA

Screening of all 'prescribed developments' must lead to a "yes" decision that EIA is required. The CA is responsible for screening of development proposal application. To carryout screening, figure 2, outlines the procedure which shall lead to the following decisions:-

- 1. Environment Impact Assessment is required where the proposed development is likely to have significant adverse environmental impacts.
- 2. Environmental Impact Assessment is not required where the proposed development

is unlikely to cause significant environmental impacts.



Scoping

Scoping is the procedure carried out by the CA after the screening procedure. In some instances, in the case of large projects, the developer may execute the scoping process and then submits its scoping report to the CA for consideration. In terms of local resource owners who do not have technical expertise, the CA may assist them in undertaking scoping.

Scoping applies to the development proposal which is identified in the previous stage to undergo EIA. It is principally to identify the main issues to be addressed by an EIA, the information to be collected, the baseline studies that should be carried out and the methodology that should be used to evaluate their significance. It is the stage whereby the CA identifies and highlights the major impacts of the proposed development.

Assessment of the development site by the CA may be carried out in this stage as to:-

- allow an on the ground check and verify the proposed development site
- be familiarized with the site and its environment
- be able to identify the issues that require detailed study
- identify the likely impacts of the development.

At this scoping stage, one of the following decisions will be made by the CA:-



- Advise the developer to submit development application and PER
- Advise the developer to submit development application and EIS
- 3. Dispense the requirements of (1) or (2)....Act17(2)

The CA may dispense a development from further requirements of EIA if:

- The short and long term impact of the prescribed development will be trivial or negligible.
- There is already in existence an EIS produced in respect of the same prescribed development.
- If the anticipated impact of the prescribed development will not affect forested

areas and services.

- If the anticipated impact of the prescribed development will not adversely coastal zones or the marine environment.
- The prescribed development does not fall into the category of construction, infrastructure, agriculture or mining.

(Source: Section 9 (1) of the Environment Regulation 2008)

The decision on the type of Environmental Report (PER or EIS)required by the CA in submission with the development consent depends on:-

- The type and magnitude of the proposed development.
- The significant impacts of the proposed development.
- The type of environments within or surrounding the proposed development site.

BOX 2. PER or EIS

Most prescribed developments will need a Public Environmental Report (PER). However, many major developments like mining, extensive logging, large scale tourism resorts, re-settlements, agriculture schemes, and large scale infrastructure developments will need a thorough technical assessment of impacts that will result in the need for Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

EIS may be required of prescribed developments that may induce significant adverse impacts that may be sensitive, irreversible, and diverse, with attributes such as direct pollutant discharges large enough to cause degradation of air, water or soil. This includes developments that may involve large-scale physical disturbance of the site/surroundings, extraction, consumption, or conversion of substantial amounts of forest and other natural resources and involuntary displacement of people and other significant social disturbances.

EIA study

The EIA study subsequently follows the scoping where a study is conducted to assess the significant environmental issues and develop adequate mitigation measures and alternatives. The developer is responsible to carry out the EIA study following the requirements made by the CA in the scoping process. This study should address the issues highlighted by the CA. The outcome of the study is the production of an environmental report (EIS or PER). The developer should engage qualified and experience

Person(s) to carry out the study especially for the technical parameters. It is important to note that to be able to prepare a PER or EIS, it is required in section 4 of the Environment regulations 2008 that initial approval has to be obtained from the CA. Approval may be obtained by written application to the CA. The CA may issue approval for any person to undertake or prepare PER or EIS base on the following criteria:-

- If he/she has the necessary qualification and experience to undertake, prepare and produce any PER or EIS
- 2. If he/she has written accreditation or approval in another country to undertake, prepare and produce any PER or EIS(source REG 4)

A list of approved person(s) and their contacts that are liable to undertake EIA study can be obtained from CA.

In the EIA study the developer or its consultant carries out studies to collect and prepare the environmental report required by CA. The study should focus and provide information on:-

- 1. The Background of the Prescribed development,
- 2. The Description of the Prescribed development,
- 3. The Environment likely to be affected by the proposed prescribed development,
- 4. The Relevant Impacts of the proposed prescribed development,
- 5. The proposed safeguards and Mitigation measures,
- 6. Any other approvals and Conditions, and
- 7. The Sources whereby the information is obtained.

The prescribed Forms 1 and 3 in the Environment Regulations should be used in preparing the Environmental Reports.

Submission of Development Application and EIA Reports

When the EIA study is completed, the developer must submit the development application (Form 2 of the Environment Regulations) together with an EIA report as determined in the scoping stage. There are two forms of EIA reports that are required in the EIA procedure: Public Environment Report (PER) and Environmental Impact Statement. The developer is required to send only one type of EIA report with the development application as advised by CA. Development application and processing fees will be paid at this stage and receipts attached to the development application and submitted to the consent authority.

First Review of PER or EIS

Upon the receipt of the PER or EIS with its corresponding development application form, the CA will then conduct an internal review on the contents of the Report. The CA will use a set of guidelines in reviewing the content of the PER or EIS. The main purpose of reviewing the reports is to ensure that it:-

- 1. Is presented in a manner that is easier to understand and conforms to the required prescribed format.
- 2. Contains all the required information as required by the prescribed forms (1 & 3)
- 3. Conforms to the requirements of the ACT and Environment Regulations.
- 4. Address all the significant environmental issues.
- 5. Is prepared by an approved or authorized person(s).

EIS or PER Public Display and Participation

Subsequent to the first review and acceptance of the PER or EIS, it is a requirement under section 22 and 24 of the Environment Act 1998 that the report will be subject to public display. The CA will publish a notice to allow the public to be aware of the proposed development application. The notice will be in Form 4 of the Environment Regulations and it will be published in a newspaper that is published regularly in the Solomon Islands. The notice should also be posted in public places in the communities that will be likely affected.

The notice includes the date and venue for a meeting that will be organized by the CA. This meeting shall purposely to:-

- 1. Explain contents, recommendations and findings of PER or EIS,
- 2. Receive/record any written or oral representations from any person.
- 3. Receive and consider any objections (Regulations 12)

Who should attend the Meeting?

- 1. The communities within or close to the area of the proposed development.
- 2. The provincial government of the province in which the proposed development will undertaken.
- 3. Any relevant organization that would provide useful contribution to proposed prescribed development.
- 4. Any persons who may be affected by the proposed development.

The venue of the meeting will depend on the location of the proposed development. If the proposed development is in a rural area, the meeting should be held in a community within the area. Conversely, if it's in an urban center, the venue shall be determined by the director.

Consideration of Objections and Submissions

There are certain criterion whereby the CA will consider any objections following the publication of the PER/EIS. The criteria as in Regulation 13 are as follows:-

- 1. The objection is in writing
- It states the interest that the person making the objection claims to have in relation to the proposed prescribed development; such interest are not being limited to economic or property interest
- 3. It clearly states the nature of objection that is being made to the development
- 4. It provides sufficient details of the grounds upon which the objection is based.

Public Display of PER or EIS

The CA will also be responsible for making copies of PER/ EIS documents to be made publicly available. Copies of the PER/EIS should be displayed in communities, villages, residents, settlements, provincial headquarters/station for persons whose interests are likely to be affected by the proposed development prior to meeting. The purpose of such activity is to allow any concerned person(s) to view the report and get first hand information on the proposed development and its effects, and be able to effectively participate in the meeting.

Who will meet the cost for publication?

The developer will be responsible for any costs associated with the publication of the Notice, Public Environmental Report or Environmental impact assessment. (Regulation 11 (1))

Second PER or EIS Review

Following the Display and Publication of the PER or EIS, a second review will be executed internally within the Consent Authority. This review will consider the public submissions, comments and objections taken during the event of the public display and participation (meeting). The review of either PER or EIS will provide adequate information and allows the CA to make a rational decision on whether to approve or reject the proposed development application.

Approval

The whole EIA process is aimed to improve decision-making, from screening stage to approval.

Granting of development consent by the CA will use the following criteria:-

- a. The finding or recommendation of the PER or EIS supports the proposed development
- b. That the proposed prescribed development will be carried out in a manner which is consistent with all relevant environmental policies and regulations
- c. Has reasonable steps in place to minimize any risk of environmental harm, as a result of the prescribed development
- d. The proposed prescribed development will not contravene any relevant environmental obligation under any international treaty, convention or instrument to which Solomon Islands is a party.
- e. The applicant will abide by the conditions of the development consent.
- f. No approval will be given to an applicant if all the criteria specified in above are not met.

(Regulation 14 (1) (2))

The issuance of consent shall be in Form 5 of the Environment Regulations and the decision of the CA shall be published in newspaper having wide circulation in Solomon Islands. (Regulation 14 and 15)

It is important to note that in granting of the Development consent the CA will impose conditions. These conditions are necessary to ensure that developer safeguards the life supporting capacity of the environment and steps are taken to mitigate any adverse environmental impacts. Additionally, it is important to note that a development consent is non transferable. (ACT 33(1))

Appeal System

The appeal system is in place to make sure that the decision made is unbiased and conforms to the Environment Act 1998 and Regulation 2008.

There are two forms of appeal that may be carried out during the EIA process, specifically, Appeal 1 and 2.

Appeal 1: an appeal made to the Environment Advisory Committee (EAC)

The developer or any person(s) who disagrees with any decision of the CA may appeal to the Environment Advisory Committee (EAC) in writing stating clearly the grounds of appeal within thirty days (30) of the publication of the decision. (Act 32)

As defined in Regulation 18, an appeal may be made against the CA's decision on the following grounds:-

- a. Inconsistent with any provisions of the Environment Act 1998
- b. Inconsistent with the finding or recommendation of PER or EIS
- c. Inconsistent with any international treaty, conventions or regional arrangements to which Solomon Islands is a party.
- d. The prescribed development is to be undertaken on customary land, the said development is not supported by majority of the legitimate customary landowners, as determined by chiefs in accordance with local Court.

The person who lodges an appeal shall pay to the CA, an appeal fee as set out in Part 5 of this guideline. (Act 32(3)

The EAC in hearing the appeal shall give the appellant, CA (director) and any relevant authority a reasonable opportunity of being heard. The EAC may by a majority decision either confirms the CA decisions or substitute its own decision for that of the CA. (Act 32(5)

Appeal 2: An appeal made to the Minister of Environment

If again the developer or any person(s) aggrieved by the EAC's decision, an appeal may be made to the Minister of Environment who will make such order as he considers just.

(Act 31(7)

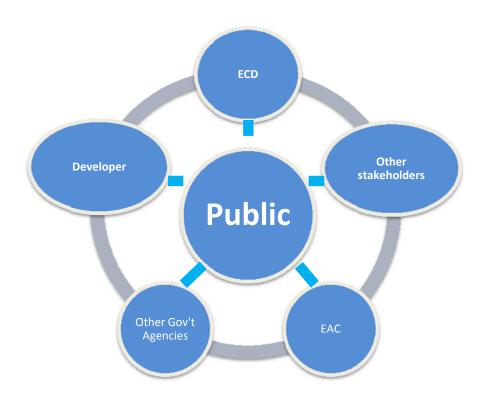
Monitoring

The final step in the procedure is to conduct monitoring on the various prescribed developments that have been granted development. Monitoring will carried out by the CA according to its monitoring programme and will concentrate on the developer's Environmental Management Plan (EMP). This monitoring should focus on the environmental impacts, effectiveness of the mitigation measures, safeguards and standards adopted by the developer for the protection of the environment. The developer may also execute its internal monitoring based on its monitoring plan.

Power of Inspectors

It is important to note that the CA or any relevant public authority may at any time, whether before or after a development activity has been completed, monitor or cause to be monitored, all or any of the environmental aspects of the implemented development activity. (Act 31(1)). In addition, under the Environment Act in section 11, an inspector (Environment officer) may enter any land, building or house however with prior notice given to the owner(s). (Act 11)

Stakeholders in the EIA process



Environment and Conservation Division (ECD)

The core responsibilities of ECD include:

- Receives development proposal applications
- Screening of applications
- Scoping
- Review of PER or EIS
- Issuance of Development consent
- Conduct Monitoring of EMP and enforce any conditions
- Assist the developer in the EIA process

Developer

The developer's responsibilities are to:-

- Lodge the application for proposed development
- Meet application and processing fees/cost
- Produce/meet PER or EIS consideration fee/public displays
- Mitigating costs for any adverse environmental impacts

Public/Other Stakeholders

Their responsibilities are mainly to submit views, comments and objections regarding the proposed development. They may involve in the scoping process, the meeting (Publication/Display of reports) and in the Appeal stages.

Other Government agencies

The government ministries or provincial governments, relevant environmental related agencies with jurisdiction over the aspects of the proposed development. Their responsibilities depend very much by their relevant statue.

Environment Advisory Committee

Its function is to advise the ECD or Minister on any matters connected with Environment and Conservation and to conduct or perform any task assigned to it under the provisions of the ACT. The EAC shall receive any written appeals submitted by any appellant(s) who disagrees with the decision of ECD and shall make a majority decision.

Fees and Cost

As stipulated in the Environment Regulations 2008 schedule 1, the following prescribed fees are applicable.

No.	Subject -matter	Amount (SBD)
1	Proposal application	200.00
2	Development application	200.00
3	Application for license (section 39)	200.00
4	Notice of appeal	200.00
5	Processing of PER	200.00
6	Processing of EIS	200.00
7	Search fee (section 28)	200.00
8	Amendment of License (section 41(2)	150.00
9	Development consent for food industries	8,000.00
10	Development consent for iron and meal industries	10,000.00
11	Development consent for logging operations	10,000.00
12	Development consent for mining	10,000.00
13	Development consent for Agriculture	10,000.00
14	Development consent for estate development	5,000.00
15	Development consent for residential	2,000.00
16	Development consent for fishing and marine products	10,000.00
17	Development consent for leather, paper, textile	10,000.00
18	Development consent for chemical industry	10,000.00
19	Development consent for tourism industry	10,000.00
20	Development consent for public works	10,000.00
21	Development consent for industrial estate	8,000.00
22	Development consent for petroleum products storage/works	8,000.00
23	Development consent for ports/harbours	10,000.00
24	Development consent for infrastructure	5,000.00
25	Development consent for airport/aerodrome development	8,000.00
26	Development consent for waste disposal	8,000.00

Payment of Fees

Payment of the fees will be made to the government at Treasury, Ministry of Finance; however, a receipt(s) will be presented to ECD as evidence of payment. Prior to this, the developer should consult the ECD to obtain details of the payment procedure.

Costs

Though the exact cost of an EIA are difficult to determine, it is important to note that it is the responsibility of the developer to meet all expenses incurred in the preparation and publication of PER or EIS. More so, the developer is responsible for costs involved in mitigating any environmental impact.(Reg 17).

In terms of monitoring that is done by the CA (environment inspector), the developer shall pay the inspector at a rate of \$100 an hour, or where the CA (director) determines that the monitoring is to be done by an independent person or body, at actual cost charged by that person or body. (Reg 27 (6)).

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