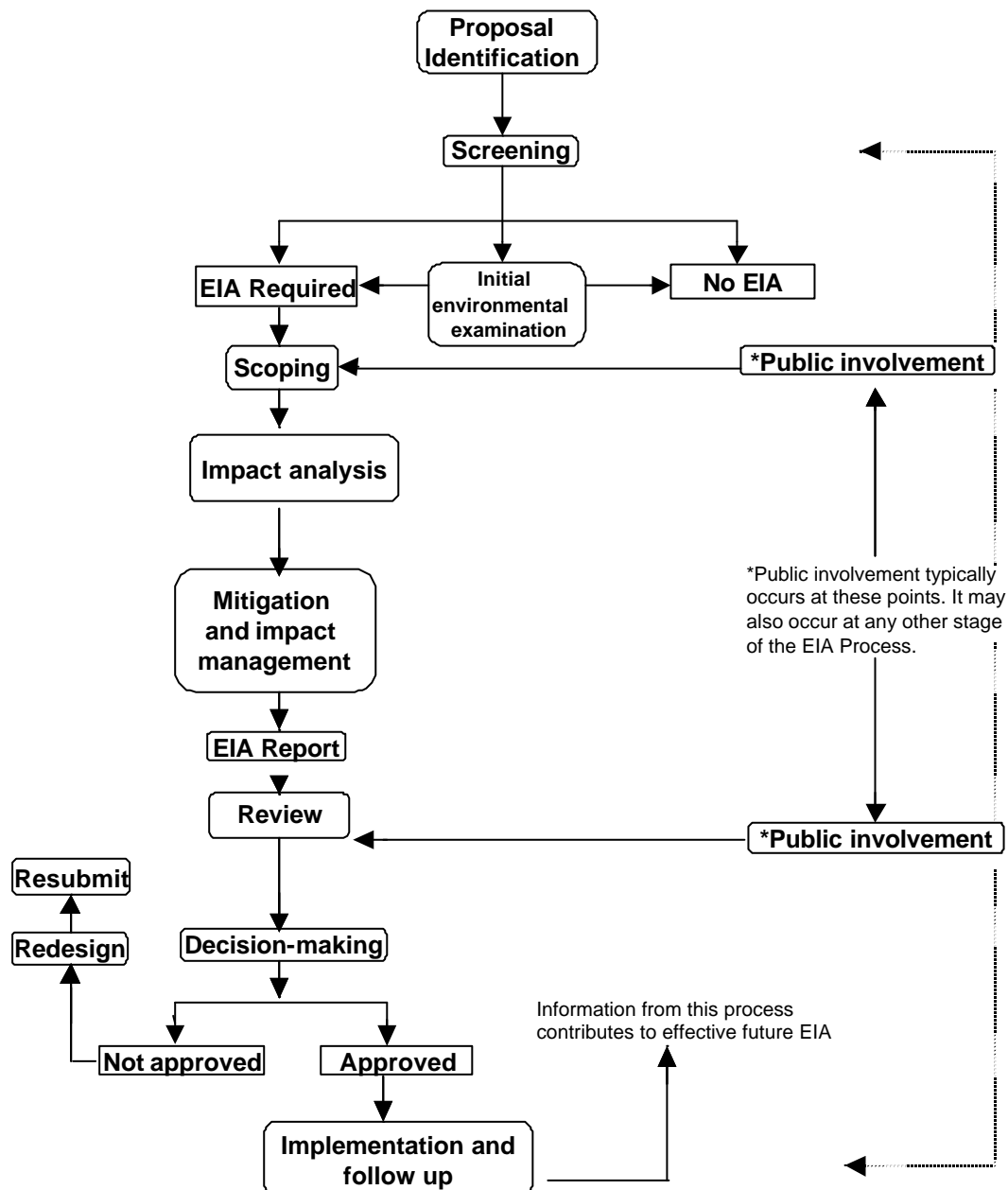# The EIA process

The EIA process comprises:

- screening - to decide if and at what level EIA should be applied

- scoping - to identify the important issues and prepare terms of reference

- impact analysis - to predict the effects of a proposal and evaluate their significance

- mitigation - to establish measures to prevent, reduce or compensate for impacts

The EIA process
(continued)

- ♦ reporting – to prepare the information necessary for decision-making

- ♦ review – to check the quality of the EIA report

- ♦ decision-making – to approve or reject) the proposal and set conditions

- ♦ follow up – to monitor, manage and audit impacts of project implementation

- ♦ public involvement – to inform and consult with stakeholders

Generalised EIA
Process Flowchart

```
                        ┌──────────────┐
                        │  Proposal    │
                        │Identification│
                        └──────┬───────┘
                               │
                        ┌──────▼───────┐                                    ◄·············┐
                        │  Screening   │                                                  ┊
                        └──────┬───────┘                                                  ┊
              ┌────────────────┼──────────────────────┐                                   ┊
              │                │                       │                                   ┊
      ┌───────▼──────┐  ┌──────▼──────┐        ┌───────▼──────┐                            ┊
      │ EIA Required │◄─┤   Initial   ├───────►│    No EIA    │                            ┊
      └───────┬──────┘  │environmental│        └──────────────┘                           ┊
              │         │ examination │                                                    ┊
      ┌───────▼──────┐  └─────────────┘         ┌──────────────────────┐                   ┊
      │   Scoping    │◄───────────────────────────│ *Public involvement  │                 ┊
      └───────┬──────┘                           └──────────────────────┘                  ┊
              │                                              ▲                              ┊
      ┌───────▼──────┐                                       │                              ┊
      │Impact analysis│          *Public involvement typically                             ┊
      └───────┬──────┘           occurs at these points. It may                            ┊
              │                  also occur at any other stage                             ┊
      ┌───────▼──────┐           of the EIA Process.                                       ┊
      │  Mitigation  │                                       │                             ┊
      │  and impact  │                                       │                             ┊
      │  management  │                                       │                             ┊
      └───────┬──────┘                                       │                             ┊
              │                                              │                             ┊
      ┌───────▼──────┐                                       │                             ┊
      │  EIA Report  │                                       │                             ┊
      └───────┬──────┘                                       │                             ┊
              │                                              ▼                             ┊
      ┌───────▼──────┐                           ┌──────────────────────┐                  ┊
      │    Review    │◄───────────────────────────│ *Public involvement  │                 ┊
      └───────┬──────┘                           └──────────────────────┘                  ┊
┌──────────┐ │                                                                            ┊
│ Resubmit │ │                                                                            ┊
└─────▲────┘ │                                                                            ┊
┌──────────┐ │                                                                            ┊
│ Redesign │ │   Information from this process                                            ┊
└─────▲────┘ │   contributes to effective future EIA                                      ┊
      │ ┌─────▼────────┐                                                                   ┊
      │ │Decision-making│                                                                  ┊
      │ └─────┬────────┘                                                                   ┊
      │  ┌────┴─────┐                                                                      ┊
      │  │          │                                                                      ┊
┌─────┴──────┐ ┌────▼─────┐                                                                ┊
│Not approved│ │ Approved │                                                                ┊
└────────────┘ └────┬─────┘         ▲                                                      ┊
                    │               │                                                      ┊
          ┌─────────▼──────────┐    │                                                      ┊
          │ Implementation and │    │                                         ◄·············┘
          │     follow up      ├────┘
          └────────────────────┘
```

*Public involvement typically occurs at these points. It may also occur at any other stage of the EIA Process.

Information from this process contributes to effective future EIA

Key EIA trends as identified by the Effectiveness Study

EIA systems have moved towards:

- more systematic procedures for EIA implementation

- greater consideration of biophysical, social, risk, health and other impacts

- extended temporal and spatial frameworks

- provision for SEA of policy, plans and/or programmes

- incorporation of sustainability perspectives and principles

- linkage to other planning, regulatory and management regimes

Milestones and points of reference for EIA arrangements

♦ Rio Declaration on Environment and Development

♦ UN Conventions on Climate Change and Biological Diversity

♦ EIA procedures of development banks and donor agencies

♦ European Directive on EIA (and proposed Directive on SEA)

Types and examples of EIA legal provision

- general environmental law (e.g. NEPA)

- comprehensive resource management and planning law (e.g. New Zealand RMA)

- enabling or framework EIA law (e.g. European Directive)

- comprehensive or prescriptive EIA law (e.g. CAEE)

Legal and institutional cornerstones of an EIA system

- based on legislation

- clear statement of purpose and requirements

- mandatory compliance and enforcement

- application to proposals with potentially significant impacts

- prescribed process of steps and activities

- provision for public consultation

- linkage to decision- making

Basic conditions supporting an EIA system:

- ◆ functional legal regime

- ◆ sound administration and flexible policy-making

- ◆ common understanding of the aims and potential benefits of the process

- ◆ political commitment

- ◆ institutional capacity

- ◆ adequate technical basis, data and information

- ◆ public involvement

- ◆ financial support

Developing EIA procedures requires:

- government support

- establishing the basic conditions

- understanding the relationship to other decision-making processes

- consideration of the effectiveness of different EIA arrangements

- identification of the ways in which they can be implemented

- taking account of key trends and directions for EIA

Steps to developing an EIA system

- establish goals

- review other EIA systems

- identify obligations under Treaties

- learn from the experience of others

- incorporate features to move towards sustainability

- identify procedures and standards

- develop trial guidelines

- produce legislation

- incorporate processes for monitoring and review

EIA Systems—Local Rules of Thumb