

Consultation

The Environmental Statement or Basic Environmental Report will be available for the public to read. The applicant is free to consult with the public or others at any time. Consultation allows the applicant to get opinions on their proposal prior to or during the preparation of the EIA. This information can be used to help identify important environmental issues and collect information about the site and the surrounding area.

Frequently Asked Questions

Where can I get more information on EIA?

An **EIA Manual** has been prepared which includes more information about the EIA process. It can be read at the Jamestown Public Library or downloaded from www.sainthelena.gov.sh The Planning Officer and Environmental Co-ordinator will also be able to assist.

Can a request for a Screening Opinion and Scoping Opinion be submitted at the same time?

Yes, this approach would be advantageous as it saves time. The information that needs to be provided is the same for both. If a combined Screening and Scoping Opinion is requested by the applicant, the Planning Officer will have five weeks from the date of receipt of your request to issue an Opinion.

I just want to submit my application without an EIA or a Screening Opinion. How will this application progress?

The Planning Officer will decide if the development needs an EIA. If no EIA is required the application will be dealt with as normal. If the Planning Office has enough information he will inform the applicant whether it needs an EIA. If not enough information has been supplied the applicant will be asked to submit a request for a Screening Opinion. This could lead to delays and it is recommended that the Applicant discuss their proposals with the Planning Officer at the earliest opportunity.

Can I volunteer to undertake an EIA if I know my development falls into the Type A Development category (my development is a large/complex project which will have a number of significant effects)?

Yes. The advantage is that it avoids the need to seek a Screening Opinion. You have the choice of asking for a Scoping Opinion. Note that you can't volunteer to submit a Basic Environmental Report instead of an Environmental Statement – it is the Planning Officer who makes that decision.

What is the difference between an Environmental Statement and a Basic Environmental Report?

As said above, most developments will not need an EIA. Of those that do many will be small in scale and will have only a few environmental issues that will need to be considered. However, there will also be large development proposals which will have numerous environmental issues that need to be addressed. Two levels of assessment were therefore created to ensure that the amount of information requested from applicants matches the scale of their proposals. An Environmental Statement will cover a larger number of environmental issues and is likely to require a more detailed assessment. A Basic Environmental Report will be more succinct and address fewer environmental issues.

What environmental topics need to be included in the Basic Environmental Report or Environmental Statement?

The Scoping Opinion will identify the topics to be covered. The Land Planning and Development Ordinance states that an EIA may need to consider the following topics if they are relevant to the development being proposed: population (including effects on people), fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets (including property), architectural and archaeological heritage and the landscape.

Further Information

For further information and guidance on the St Helena EIA process please contact:
The Planning Officer, Essex House, Jamestown, Tel: 2270, Email: planning.officer@legaland lands.gov.sh

Environmental Impact Assessment – Guidelines for Applicants

If you are seeking development permission you may need to carry out an **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)**. EIA is a legal requirement under the Land Planning and Development Control Ordinance for developments likely to have significant effects on the environment. This leaflet tells you about EIA and what information you may need to provide with your application for development permission.

What is EIA?

An EIA is a way of identifying and describing the environmental effects of a proposed development. This information is then set out in a report and submitted with the application for development permission. The information helps to inform the decision on whether to grant permission.

In summary, EIA aims to:

- Improve the way developments are planned and designed. EIA does this by identifying ways in which negative environmental effects can be prevented, reduced or offset. EIA also identifies ways of creating and enhancing positive effects.
- Inform those making decisions on applications for Development Permission on the environmental effects before deciding whether the development should go ahead.
- Provide the public with information about the environmental effects of the project. This allows them to comment on these environmental effects before a decision is made on the application.

What types of development require an EIA?

Most developments will not require an EIA. Only developments likely to have significant effects on the environment will require an EIA. There are two types of developments which require EIA.

Type A Developments are larger more complex developments which are likely to have wide ranging significant impacts by virtue of their scale, location and physical and operational characteristics. For these developments an **Environmental Statement** is required.

Type B Developments are developments from which significant impacts may result, but where the associated impacts are likely to be few and limited in severity and extent. These developments require a basic EIA which will be reported in a **Basic Environmental Report**.

How a decision is made on the need for and type of EIA is summarised overleaf.

Who is responsible for the EIA?

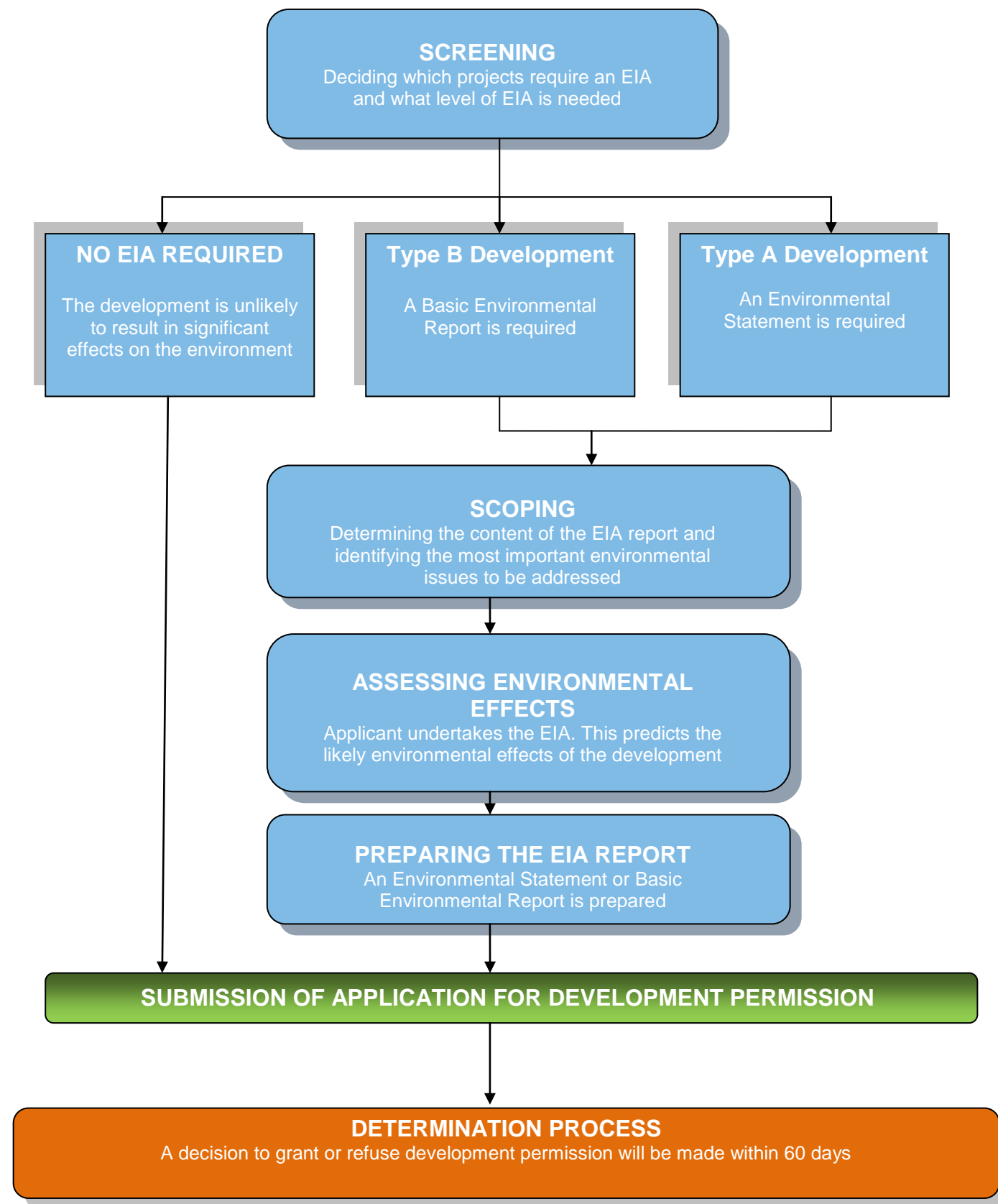
The person or organisation submitting the application for Development Permission is responsible for the EIA. It could be a member of the public, a private business or the Government. They can, if they wish, employ someone to undertake the EIA on their behalf.

What do you need to know and do?

There are a number of stages as shown on the diagram overleaf.

- Firstly, you can ask whether an EIA is needed. This is called **Screening**. The decision is made by the Planning Officer. The Planning Officer will decide whether your development is Type A or Type B. If it is Type A you will need to submit an Environmental Statement (ES) with your application. If it is Type B you will need to submit a Basic Environmental Report (Basic ER).
- If you wish, you can ask for advice on what information the ES or Basic ER should include and get agreement on the environmental topics of most importance. This is called **Scoping**. The Planning Officer will give you a Scoping Opinion.
- You then need to undertake the EIA and submit the Basic ER or ES with your application for development permission.

EIA – A Summary of the Main Stages



Screening – Is an EIA required?

Screening is used to decide which projects require an EIA. As an applicant you have the option to request a Screening Opinion to determine the need for and level of EIA. In order to obtain a **Screening Opinion** you will need to submit the following information:

- A brief description of the nature and purpose of the development and its possible impacts on the environment
- A plan identifying the land to be developed; and
- Any other information or representations you wish to provide.

A Form B – Application for Screening and or Scoping Opinion, available from the Planning Office, should be completed and submitted. The Planning Officer will determine if they have enough information to form an opinion. If not, he will request more information from the applicant. It takes three weeks from the date of receipt of your Screening request (or additional information) for the Planning Officer to issue a Screening Opinion. The Screening Opinion will categorise the project making a decision on the need for and type of EIA report required and giving reasons for the decision.

Scoping – what are the key issues that need to be considered?

The reason for Scoping is to seek an opinion from the Planning Officer on the most important issues that need to be addressed in the EIA. Agreeing the content of the EIA in advance will give the applicant greater confidence that the EIA will be to the correct standard and will reduce the risk of objections to the proposed development. In order to obtain a **Scoping Opinion** you will need to submit the following information:

- A brief description of the nature and purpose of the development and its possible impacts on the environment
- A plan identifying the land to be developed; and
- Any other information or representations you wish to provide.

A Form B – Application for Screening and or Scoping Opinion, available from the Planning Office, should be completed and submitted. It takes five weeks from the date of receipt of your Scoping request for the Planning Officer to issue a Scoping Opinion. The Scoping Opinion will provide a list of the environmental topics that need to be considered in the EIA and will identify the issues that are of particular concern. The Scoping Opinion will also give guidance on the environmental surveys that should be carried out.

What Information should the Environmental Statement or Report Contain?

The Scoping Opinion will provide guidance on the information that should be provided. Type A Developments will cover a larger number of topics than Type B Developments. There is no standard structure for the Environmental Statement or Report. As a minimum they should both contain the following:

- **A description of the development** (including the site, design, material use, size and potential emissions during construction and once the development is completed / working)
- An outline of the main **alternatives** considered and reasons for choosing the final design taking into account the environmental impacts. If there are no alternatives it should be explained why this is the case.
- **A description of the current environment.** For each environmental topic a description should be provided of its current condition e.g. is it in an area of high landscape quality, what is the wildlife value of the site and surrounding area, are homes nearby that would suffer from noise?
- **Assessment of the environmental impacts** – for each environmental topic a statement should be provided on whether significant effects will occur.
- **A description of mitigation measures** – the applicant should explain how they will avoid, reduce or offset negative effects.
 - Avoid – this is the best way to reduce the effects of a development. This can best be done by choosing a location for the development that will avoid areas that are valuable e.g. people's homes, protected areas, wildlife habitat etc
 - Reduce – if you can't avoid a sensitive or valuable site then you will need to reduce the impact e.g. noise barriers will reduce effects on neighbouring residents.
 - Offset – in some cases it may be necessary to replace something which is lost e.g. Wirebird habitat
- **A Non-Technical Summary** must be provided. This is a short, easy to read summary of the Environmental Statement or Report.