



AFN ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

RESPECTING AND PROTECTING MOTHER EARTH

Environmental Assessment

Introduction

An environmental assessment (EA) is a process used to assess and predict the environmental effects of a proposed project or activity. An EA may consider direct or indirect impacts on environmental, health, social, economic, or cultural factors. The benefit of undertaking an EA is that environmental effects may be identified, minimized, mitigated or avoided. Each federal and provincial governing body has its own requirements and process when undertaking an environmental assessment (EA). There are some cases when federal and provincial or territorial governments work together to conduct environmental assessments.

The Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA) sets out the responsibilities for the EA of projects where federal government decision-making is involved. An EA is generally triggered by the application of a particular piece of federal or provincial legislation. The Minister of the Environment is responsible for the implementation of the *Act* and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency is responsible for administering the federal environmental assessment process.

Challenges and Considerations

First Nations have an important role to play in the environmental assessment process. Determining the level of participation in an EA is important as is considering the potential impacts that a proposed project or activity will have on Aboriginal rights and title, and treaty rights. First Nations must determine the level of involvement required in order to represent their interests. Early involvement in the EA process will provide the opportunity to express concerns and interests, and to assert any Aboriginal or treaty rights. Getting involved at the earliest stages can also influence the EA process in terms of the design and scope of the EA.

It is recommended that First Nations seek out information about the proposed project or activity either directly from the proponent or from the responsible government or agency.

First Nations participation in the EA process can be costly depending on the size and scope of the project as well as on the level of the community's participation. Potential funding can be sought from the proponent, or the federal or provincial government. Forming partnerships with other non-profit or non-governmental organizations may also improve funding opportunities.

For More Information

The First Nations Environmental Assessment Technical Working Group (FNEATWG) has developed a First Nations Environmental Assessment Toolkit. This toolkit provides information and practical advice that will assist First Nations in the EA process. To obtain a copy of this toolkit, you can contact the FNEATWG administration at (250) 417-3474 / (250) 651-2188 or by email at ccrife@cyberlink.bc / scarlick@trtfn.com

More information on the CEAA process can be found on the [Federal Environmental Assessment Process](#) fact sheet.

Federal and provincial environmental assessment agencies may be contacted at the following websites:

- Federal Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency Registry (CEAR) <http://www.ceaa-acee.gc.ca/050/index-eng.cfm>
- New Brunswick <http://www.gnb.ca/0009/0377/0002/EIA.pdf>
- Prince Edward Island <http://www.gov.pe.ca/envengfor/index.php3?number=1005874>
- Nova Scotia <http://www.gov.ns.ca/nse/ea/projects.asp>
- Newfoundland and Labrador <http://www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/Env/EA%202001/pages/active%20projects.htm>
- Quebec <http://www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/evaluations/index.htm>
- Ontario http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/en/eaab/general_info/search.php
- Manitoba <http://www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/eal/registries/index.html>
- Saskatchewan <http://www.environment.gov.sk.ca/Default.aspx?DN=41b56f8e-b563-4457-91ae-02a984317ee6>
- Alberta <http://environment.alberta.ca/1283.html>
- British Columbia http://a100.gov.bc.ca/appsdata/epic/html/deploy/epic_home.html
- Northwest Territories <http://www.mveirb.nt.ca/registry/> & <http://www.mvlwb.com/html/introduction.htm>
- Yukon <http://www.yesab.tzo.com/wfm/launch/YESAB>

For further information, please contact the Assembly of First Nations at 613-241-6789 or toll-free 1-866-869-6789 or send an email to environment@afn.ca