



## **Environmental Assessment Basics**

### **◆ What is an Environmental Assessment?**

An Environmental Assessment (EA) is a process used to identify and mitigate the environmental effects a project may have on the environment before the project is carried out. It can also be referred to as Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

The official EA process begins well into the development of a project concept and the community, including Aboriginal women, might want to seek involvement as early as possible. This involvement may include aspects mentioned earlier on in the Community Visioning section of this toolkit.

The information on the EA or EIA process can be accessed through the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) which is a publicly available document published and distributed by the company funding the project (proponent).

Environmental Site Assessment is a different concept. Environmental site assessment is the process of identifying contaminants on a site.

### **◆ What are the Benefits of an Environmental Assessment?**

- With the necessity to include TEK in an EA, there is an opportunity to be involved
- Public awareness of area projects
- Public participation
- Improvements in the project design
- Reduce environmental impact by identifying impacts and finding ways to minimize the impact(s)
- Increased accountability for decision-making

### **◆ What are the Limitations of an Environmental Assessment?**

Some of the limitations of an EA are:

- There is uncertainty related to predicting, forecasting and mitigating impacts
- Everyone has a different definition of significant environmental impacts
- TEK not understood or weighted accordingly
- It is impossible to have all the information. Therefore, decisions may have to be made with best available information at the time.



## ◆ Overview of the Environmental Assessment Process

The Environmental Assessment process can be a very long and complicated process. It is important to be aware that the federal government has its own EA process and every province also has its own EA process. The federal and provincial EA processes are different. Many projects may only require a federal EA or just a provincial EA. However, it is also possible that a project will require both a federal and a provincial EA. In the event that both a federal and provincial EA may be needed for a proposed project they will be assessed together.

## ◆ Provincial/Territorial

Information on individual provincial processes and their respective legislation are not provided in this document. However, links to each provincial EA website is as follows:

### Provincial Environmental Assessment Offices

- |                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| • Alberta                 | <a href="http://www.environment.alberta.ca/1274.html">www.environment.alberta.ca/1274.html</a>  |
| • British Columbia        | <a href="http://www.eao.gov.bc.ca/">www.eao.gov.bc.ca/</a>  |
| • Manitoba                | <a href="http://www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/">www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/</a>  |
| • New Brunswick           | English – <a href="http://www.gnb.ca/0009/0377/0002/index-e.asp">www.gnb.ca/0009/0377/0002/index-e.asp</a><br>French – <a href="http://www.gnb.ca/0009/0377/0002/index-f.asp">www.gnb.ca/0009/0377/0002/index-f.asp</a>                           |
| • Newfoundland & Labrador | <a href="http://www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/Env/EA%202001/pages/index.htm">www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/Env/EA%202001/pages/index.htm</a>  |
| • Northwest Territories   | <a href="http://www.ceaa.gc.ca">www.ceaa.gc.ca</a>  |
| • Nova Scotia             | <a href="http://www.gov.ns.ca/nse/ea/">www.gov.ns.ca/nse/ea/</a>  |
| • Nunavut                 | <a href="http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/nu/nuv/eap_e.html">www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/nu/nuv/eap_e.html</a><br><a href="http://www.ceaa.gc.ca/">www.ceaa.gc.ca/</a>  |
| • Ontario                 | <a href="http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/env_reg/ea/English/">www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/env_reg/ea/English/</a>  |
| • Prince Edward Island    | <a href="http://www.peigov.ca/enveng/pp-info/index.php3">www.peigov.ca/enveng/pp-info/index.php3</a>  |
| • Québec                  | English – <a href="http://www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/evaluations/inter_en.htm">www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/evaluations/inter_en.htm</a><br>French – <a href="http://www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/evaluations/inter.htm">www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/evaluations/inter.htm</a> |
| • Saskatchewan            | <a href="http://www.environment.gov.sk.ca/Default.aspx?DN=dd506e76-4819-4493-a22b-6411133ca469">www.environment.gov.sk.ca/Default.aspx?DN=dd506e76-4819-4493-a22b-6411133ca469</a>  |
| • Yukon                   | <a href="http://www.yesab.ca/assessments/">www.yesab.ca/assessments/</a>  |



### ◆ Federal

#### What is the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act?

The *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* (CEAA) is a piece of legislation that outlines the responsibilities and procedures involved in a Federal EA. The CEAA has four essential regulations attached to it:

- Law List Regulations
- Inclusion List Regulations
- Exclusion List Regulations
- Comprehensive Study List

The regulations provide more detail on when a federal EA may be needed (Law List Regulations), what projects may require a Federal EA (Inclusion List) and what projects do not require a Federal EA (Exclusion List). The comprehensive study list details which projects are required to undergo a comprehensive study.

Find more information on the federal process by visiting this website: [www.ceaa.gc.ca](http://www.ceaa.gc.ca).

#### What is the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency?

The Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (the Agency) is an independent federal government agency. The role of the Agency is to provide Canadians with high-quality Environmental Assessments that contribute to informed decision making, in the support of sustainable development. The Agency is accountable to the Minister of the Environment.

The Agency does not conduct the actual EA, however, the Agency does:

- Advise the developer (proponent) on interpretation and application of the CEAA
- Coordinates federal government involvement
- Harmonizes EA processes and coordinates with provincial governments when there is a joint EA
- Provides training to practitioners and others
- Provides administrative support to Panel Reviews

#### When does the CEAA apply?

A federal EA can be triggered by four (4) events:

- If a federal authority proposes a project. Example: Department of Fisheries and Oceans wants to build a wharf.
- If there is federal money involved in developing the project.
- If a federal authority transfers control of federal land for a project.
- If a federal authority provides a license or permit that allows the project to be carried out.

For more information on CEAA visit: [www.ceaa.gc.ca/010/basics\\_e.htm#9](http://www.ceaa.gc.ca/010/basics_e.htm#9).



### Types of Assessments

Under the CEAA there are four (4) types of Environmental Assessments:

- Screenings – 90-95% of EAs completed
- Comprehensive Studies – 5-10% of EAs completed
- Mediation
- Review Panel

The majority of EAs are assessed through screenings (90-95%) while only a small percentage (5-10%) is assessed through a comprehensive study. Screenings are smaller scale projects. Comprehensive studies tend to be larger scale projects that may cause significant environmental effects. Examples of larger projects may be nuclear power developments, large oil and gas operations or industrial facilities. Some projects are automatically required to go through a comprehensive study, based on the nature and scale of the project; these projects are listed in the comprehensive study list regulations.

Additionally, near the beginning of the EA process the Minister of Environment will decide if the project will:

- Continue to be assessed as a comprehensive study, with the Minister of Environment making the final decision about the future of the project or if it should be referred to any of the following:
  - A mediator or
  - Panel review – If a panel review is chosen, the government will form a panel. The panel is responsible for reviewing all the EA information and listening to stakeholder concerns. The panel will make its own recommendations to the Minister of Environment about the future of the project. In the end the Minister of Environment makes the final decision on the project.

For additional information on the basics of Environmental Assessment visit this website:

[www.ceaa.gc.ca/010/basics\\_e.htm](http://www.ceaa.gc.ca/010/basics_e.htm).

### ◆ Joint Review Processes

#### What is a Joint Review Process?

A joint review process occurs when a project involves two levels of government (provincial/territorial and federal). In these circumstances, a review (board or) panel of experts is put together collectively by the federal and provincial/territorial Ministers of Environment. The panel's job is to objectively assess the likely impacts of a project. The board will submit their views and recommendations on the future of the project to both Ministers of Environment. There is an agreement in place for how final decisions are made.

### ◆ Self Government and Comprehensive Land Claim Agreements

If your community is part of a negotiated self-government agreement or if your territory is under a comprehensive land claim agreement, there should be specific clauses dealing with how environmental issues will be resolved. If your community is part of a process that is negotiating a self-government agreement or comprehensive land claim agreement, you need to know what your options are under those negotiations.



Where to look to find a self-government agreement:

[www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/agr/index\\_e.html#FinalAgreements1](http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/agr/index_e.html#FinalAgreements1)

Where to look to find a comprehensive land claim agreement:

[www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/agr/index\\_e.html#FinalAgreements2](http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/agr/index_e.html#FinalAgreements2)

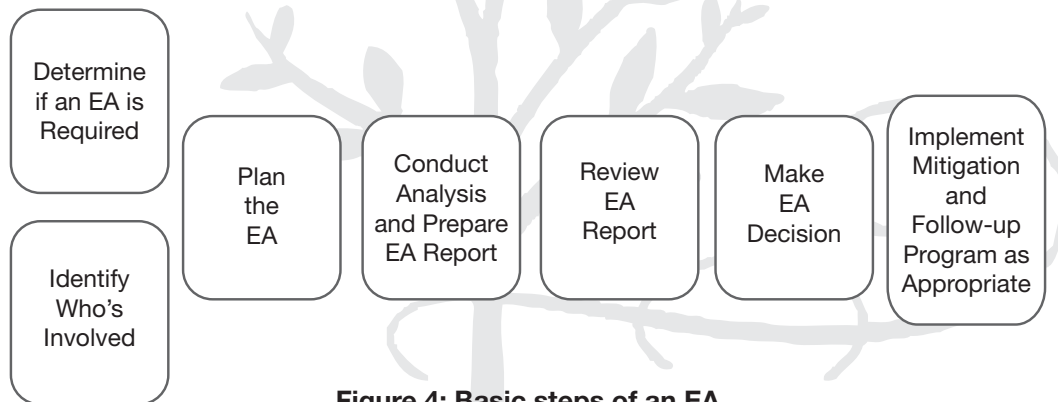


**Suggestion:** It is important that you understand the legal terminology that applies to your rights that could be affected in environmental decision-making.

**Tool: PowerPoint** – *“Jurisdictional Issues - What do you need to know in terms of environmental issues?”*

Slides #1 to 12

### ◆ Basic Steps of an Environmental Assessment



**Figure 4: Basic steps of an EA**

Source: Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency ([www.ceaa.gc.ca/index\\_e.htm](http://www.ceaa.gc.ca/index_e.htm))

#### 1. Determine if an EA is Required (Federally, Provincially/Territorial, or both)

The first step to any EA is to determine if an EA is required. To determine if an EA is required the company who owns the project (the proponent) will need to contact the appropriate agency (federal or provincial or both). If an EA is required by either the federal or provincial/territorial government appropriate paper work must be filed.

The federal and all provincial/territorial governments have EA legislation. Details on the federal EA legislation and process can be found above. Specific provincial process and legislation is not provided in this document. However, links to each provincial Environmental Assessment process can be found in the additional information section.

#### 2. Scoping

Scoping is a process that focuses assessment of a project on those issues and concerns that are most important to you and other interested parties. The process looks at the natural and human environment, and determines how widespread the effects may be and how far into the past and future you need your information to cover in order to make an informed decision. An open scoping process should allow the



public to gain a full understanding of the proposed project, looks at alternatives to the project, establishes those baselines against which you will measure change, establishes the boundaries of the impacts (in space and time), and identifies those issues and concerns that are key and should be subject to further study. Participation in the scoping exercise can increase the likelihood that you will see your issues and concerns reflected in the Environmental Impact Statement which the project owner has to get past the approval process.

**Tool: PowerPoint** – “*Scoping in Environmental Assessment*”

Slides #1-9

### 3. Conduct the EA

#### Project Description

The project description is critical to the EA and it should give you a basic understanding of the project. The project description should include the following (however it is not limited to):

- The name of the project
- Information on the owner of the project
- The exact location of the project (usually maps are included)
- The type of facility or description of work completed
- The projected time length of the project

#### Project Purpose

All projects have a purpose and it is the responsibility of the owner to ensure the public knows the reason of the project.



**Suggestion:** If you do not understand the project description or the purpose of the project is not clearly defined contact the proponent or government for more information.

#### Alternatives to the Project

Has the proponent considered and clearly presented alternatives to the project? Have you considered alternative approaches to carrying out the project?



**Suggestion:** If alternatives have not been considered, you might want to hold a community brainstorming session to inform yourself about alternatives.

#### Baseline Data

Baseline data is information on the condition of an environment before project development. This information is usually used to compare changes in the environment that occur as a result of a project after it has been developed. This data is meant to give a perspective on what the current state of the environment is and what the likely future state of the environment will be without the proposed project



or activity. It is often useful to think of baseline data as a measuring stick to compare the changes in the environment in the future to the state in the past.

Baselines may also be referred to as background data or information. If a project does not specifically use the word “baseline” it might still be represented, but under a different name, like background, elementary, historical or other phrases.

**Tool: PowerPoint** “*Baselines and Monitoring – What are they and how they help*”

Slide #2

Caution should be taken with baselines because change in environments and ecosystems naturally occur. Therefore, changes to the environment are not necessarily always bad, nor can they always be attributed to a project. Attention should be paid to the size of the changes and what the effects of these changes are to the environment and to the community.

**Tool: PowerPoint** “*Baselines and Monitoring – What are they and how they help*”

Slide #3

Some things to consider in the baseline studies which should be presented in an environmental assessment document are the spatial (space) and temporal (time) scales of the project. Have these been clearly defined? Spatially, does the project look at the environment at a local, regional, or national scale? Do you understand these scales and how will they affect your community?

Temporally, or in terms of timelines, how long will the project persist? Is there a lifespan for the project (example: is it proposed to last for decades or longer?). How will the timeline and lifespan of the project affect your community?

The definition of large scale and small scale will be relative to what your community defines as long term and short term, which may or may not contrast with how the project is described in the EA document. Some examples of projects at different scales include the following:

Large spatial scale: Construction of a highway may cross many boundaries, go through many towns or across a region.

Small spatial scale: Construction of a wharf would be local and specific to one area.

Long term temporal scale: Construction and operation of a nuclear power plant (example: 50 years of operation)

Short term temporal scale: Operation of a gold mine (example: operation of 5 years).

**Tool: PowerPoint** “*Baselines and Monitoring – What are they and how they help*”

Slide #4

You may see the term VEC or Valued Ecosystem Component in relation to baseline studies. These are considered aspects of the environment, both physical and human which are important to the public or from an ecological perspective.

Examples of VECs identified in the Voisey’s Bay EIS: Water, Caribou, Plant Communities, Family Community and Aboriginal land use.



**Tool: PowerPoint** “Baselines and Monitoring – What they are and how they help”

Slide #5

### **Forecasting and Determining Impact Significance**

Forecasting is used to predict the future state of the environment. Forecasting requires three crucial steps:

- Determining the baseline (as discussed above)
- Determining the future conditions of the area with the project development
- Determining the future condition of the area without the project development

It is inaccurate to compare the future conditions of the area with the project development to the current condition of the area. The environment is constantly changing and the future of the area with or without the project will not be the same as it is today.

A few things to consider when forecasting are:

- The nature of the predicted impact (adverse, additive, antagonistic, beneficial)
- The temporal characteristics (duration, rate of change slow vs. fast)
- The magnitude (size, direction, and spatial extent)
- The degree of reversibility
- The likelihood that the predicted impact will actually occur

There are numerous methods and techniques to assist in impact prediction. One of the most common techniques used is modelling. Additionally, if there are similar projects to the one being assessed then forecasting knowledge from those previous projects may be useful. Keep in mind that there may be direct, secondary, and even cumulative impacts to consider.

Forecasting may help to determine the impact the project may have on the environment. Once the impact has been determined mitigation measure can be put in place to minimize the impact.

Things to consider when determining the significance of impacts are:

- The irreversibility of the impact
- The adverse effects of the impact
- The frequency and duration of the impact
- The cumulative effects of the impact
- The existing regulations associated with the impact
- The geographical extent of the adverse effect





**Suggestion:** Do you want to see how impacts have been predicted and minimized for similar projects that have been completed in your area, province or country? To find information on similar projects contact your provincial environmental assessment office. To find information on federal projects contact the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency or check the Canadian Environmental Assessment Registry at: [www.ceaa.gc.ca/050/index\\_e.cfm](http://www.ceaa.gc.ca/050/index_e.cfm)

#### **Tool: PowerPoint** “Forecasting”

Slides #1-13

#### **Addressing Socio-economic and Cultural Effects**

An EA that has been well done will address the social, economic and cultural impacts of the project. A social impact can be described as an action (such as a new facility) that will change the way people live, work, play, or relate to one another in the area. A cultural impact may include changes to beliefs, norms, and values.

A social impact assessment should be completed as part of the EA. The social impact assessment will try to quantify the social change that may result from the project. Examples of social impacts may be changes to your way of life, your culture, your community, your health and well-being, and your fears and aspirations.

Social Impact Assessments are done to help individuals, communities, government and private sector understand how a project could have social consequence (positive or negative). Indicators of social impacts include:

- Population Characteristics – changes in number, density, and distribution
- Community Composition – changes in image, power structures, conflicts with outsiders, and alterations in present institutions
- Community Attitudes and Identity – changes in attitudes, values, local government and employment
- Individuals and families – change in family structure, social relations, and perceptions of change in daily life
- Community infrastructure – roads, bridges, plumbing, public buildings, etc.
- Social justice – effect on equality, human rights, and public participation in decision-making

Social, economic and cultural effects can be viewed positively and negatively. The goal of an EA is to maximize the positive impacts or changes while minimizing the negative impacts or changes that could occur as a result of the project.

Social impact assessments are where community has an opportunity to share their local knowledge and wisdom. This process of addressing Social Impact Assessments and cultural effects could be connected back to the community vision for itself.



**Tool: PowerPoint** ☒ “Social Impact Assessment”

Slides #1-12

### Addressing Cumulative Effects

Cumulative effects assessment is the consideration of the environmental effects that a specific project will have along with the environmental effects from surrounding projects or activities. Essentially, this view takes a holistic look at the environment and how the project will affect various aspects. Consider carbon dioxide emissions as an example. The EA document will mostly consider the effects that carbon dioxide released from a specific project will have on certain aspects of the environment. However, in cumulative effects, the emissions of carbon dioxide from the particular project as well as other sources of CO<sup>2</sup> must be considered together. Additionally, future sources of CO<sup>2</sup> would have to be considered. Specifically, think about the effects on the environment from three operational natural gas plants. Or the effects on a water source if it is being used for municipal, industrial and irrigation purposes.

It is important to note that although consideration of cumulative effects is required under a federal EA process, not all provinces require that it be done. For more information on whether your province requires cumulative effects assessment in a provincial EA, please refer to the provincial websites listing in this Toolkit.

Think about what other projects or activities exist in and around your community and how they might contribute to environmental effects. Remember that cumulative effects are supposed to consider larger areas and longer lengths of time, so there might be existing projects outside your community that would still be relevant for consideration.



**Suggestion:** You might want to have a meeting with members of surrounding communities to find out what existing projects are there. Or do some additional research to find out what other projects are surrounding your area.

### Have these projects been considered in a project report?



**Suggestion:** If cumulative effects are not being considered, you might want to bring this up in a community meeting or with the proponent of a project during public participation portions of the process.

### Managing Impacts and Addressing Mitigation Options

Once the impacts and their significance have been determined, the next step to consider is how to manage these impacts. Plans or strategies are designed to avoid or alleviate the expected impact. Examples of avoiding an impact could be moving an access road to a different location to avoid destroying the habitat of birds. Examples of alleviating the impact of noise caused by construction could be specifying and limiting the hours of construction.

Four strategies to managing impacts are:

- Avoidance – if the impact can be avoided step should be taken to ensure it is
- Mitigation – if the impact cannot be avoided then plans or strategies to be put in place to minimize the impact?



## Finding Your Voice:

## Section 6

### Environmental Toolkit for Aboriginal Women

- Rectification – if mitigation measure have been put in place and there is still an impact then is there any way to remedy the impact?
- Compensation – if no other options are available and impacts still remain then compensation for the damage done could be negotiated

### Monitoring

Monitoring programs are meant to measure expected changes as a result of a project. This is usually done by collecting data to provide information on the characteristics and functioning of environmental and social variables. What monitoring methods are proposed for the project? How frequently will they occur and who collects and analyses the data? Are there monitoring methods to detect early warnings to changes in the environment? How long are monitoring programs proposed to take place? Do you have any other suggestions for how monitoring might be done, or what techniques can be applied to monitor a project?

**Tool: PowerPoint** “Baselines and Monitoring – What they are and how they help”

Slides # 6-9

### 4. Review EA Report

The results and findings of the EA will be found in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), the written report. Once the report has been completed it will be submitted to the appropriate government body.

The public will have the opportunity to submit comments on the written report. This is the final opportunity for any stakeholder to have their voice heard. Be aware there is a time limit to submit comments.



### Suggestion:

**Has your voice been heard?** Is there any part of the EA you do not agree with? If the project does proceed is there an opportunity for you to be involved in follow up or monitoring programs? Take this opportunity to submit your comments on the EA report.

### 5. Making an EA Decision

Once the EA report has been filed with the appropriate government agency the government will review the EA before making a final decision on the project. Depending on the type of project, the government agency or the minister(s) of the reviewing department(s) will make the decision on the future of the project. If the project is approved there are usually terms and conditions attached to the project.

### 6. Follow-up Program (as appropriate)



If the project is approved for development follow-up programs may be required.

**Suggestion:** Is there a chance for your community to become involved in the follow-up program? Talk to owner of the project to see if you can get involved.



### ◆ Funding Sources

#### **Aboriginal Species at Risk Program**

The Aboriginal Species at Risk Program has created two separate funds for Aboriginal peoples to access; The Aboriginal Capacity Building Fund and the Aboriginal Critical Habitat Protection Fund.

These two (2) funds exist to allow Aboriginal people to actively participate in the conservation of species at risk. For more information on the specifics of each program and how to get involved, visit the following website: [www.sararegistry.gc.ca/involved/funding/asrp\\_e.cfm](http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca/involved/funding/asrp_e.cfm).

#### **Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency Participant Funding Program**

This program provides support to Individuals, Aboriginal organizations and incorporated not-for-profit organizations that may have a direct interest in the project, such as living or owning property in the project area or have traditional knowledge relevant to the Environmental Assessment.

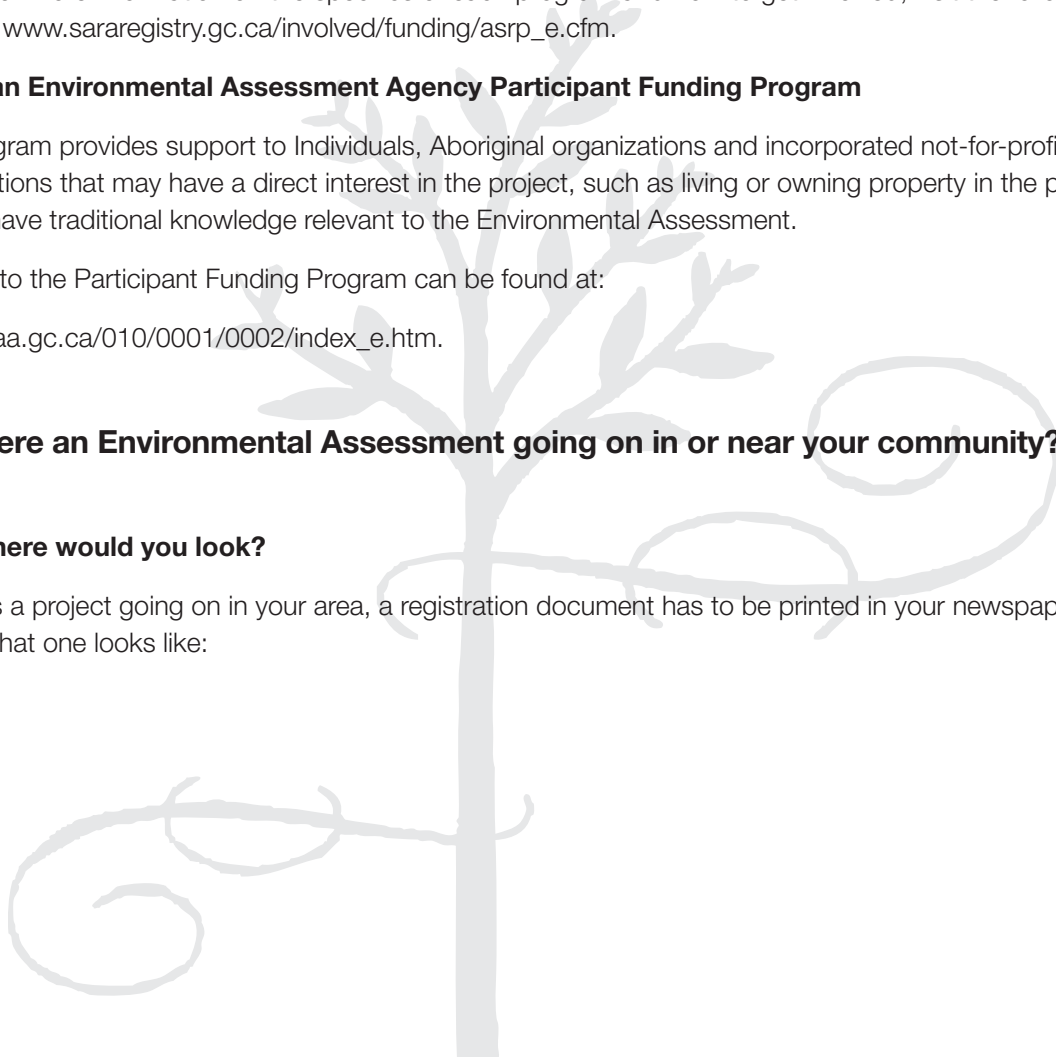
A Guide to the Participant Funding Program can be found at:

[www.ceaa.gc.ca/010/0001/0002/index\\_e.htm](http://www.ceaa.gc.ca/010/0001/0002/index_e.htm).

### ◆ Is there an Environmental Assessment going on in or near your community?

#### **If so, where would you look?**

If there is a project going on in your area, a registration document has to be printed in your newspaper. This is what one looks like:





**NOTICE**

**Registration of Undertaking  
for Environmental Assessment  
ENVIRONMENT ACT**

This is to advise that on *(DATE of REGISTRATION)*, *(COMPANY)* registered a *(PROJECT NAME)* for environmental assessment, in accordance with Part IV of the Environment Act.

The purpose of the proposed undertaking is to *(BRIEF 2 - 3 SENTENCE DESCRIPTION, INCLUDING PROPOSED LOCATION, PROPOSED COMMENCEMENT DATE AND PROJECT SCHEDULE WHERE APPLICABLE)*

Copies of the environmental assessment registration information may be examined at the following locations:

- **1<sup>st</sup> Public viewing location provided by the Proponent (e.g. local town office)**
- **2<sup>nd</sup> Public viewing location provided by the Proponent (e.g. local library, corner store or other public location)**
- Clean Nova Scotia, 126 Portland Street Dartmouth, NS
- Ecology Action Centre, Suite 31, 1568 Argyle St., Halifax, NS
- Nova Scotia Department of Environment & Labour, **Regional Office**
- Nova Scotia Department of Environment & Labour, 5<sup>th</sup> floor Library, 5151 Terminal Road, Halifax, NS
- EA website (when available) at [www.gov.ns.ca/enla/ess/ea](http://www.gov.ns.ca/enla/ess/ea)

The public is invited to submit written comments to:  
Environmental Assessment Branch  
Nova Scotia Department of Environment & Labour  
P.O. Box 697, Halifax, NS, B3J 2T8  
on or before ***(deadline date for public comments provided by NSDEL)*** or contact the department by phone at (902) 424-3230, by fax at (902) 424-0503, or by e-mail at [EA@gov.ns.ca](mailto:EA@gov.ns.ca).

All comments received will be placed in the public file located in the library on the fifth floor of the Nova Scotia Department of Environment & Labour, Halifax Office, 5151 Terminal Road.

Published by: *(COMPANY NAME AND ADDRESS)*

**Figure 5: Sample of a Public Notice**

Source: Nova Scotia Department of Environment and Labour.

Website: <http://www.gov.ns.ca/nse/ea/docs/EA.Guide-Proponents.pdf>

◆ **Additional Information**

Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency  
International Association of Impact Assessment

[www.ceaa.gc.ca](http://www.ceaa.gc.ca)  
[www.iaia.org](http://www.iaia.org)



## Provincial Environmental Assessment Offices

- Alberta [www.environment.alberta.ca/1274.html](http://www.environment.alberta.ca/1274.html)
- British Columbia [www.eao.gov.bc.ca/](http://www.eao.gov.bc.ca/)
- Manitoba [www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/](http://www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/)
- New Brunswick  
English – [www.gnb.ca/0009/0377/0002/index-e.asp](http://www.gnb.ca/0009/0377/0002/index-e.asp)  
French – [www.gnb.ca/0009/0377/0002/index-f.asp](http://www.gnb.ca/0009/0377/0002/index-f.asp)
- Newfoundland & Labrador [www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/Env/EA%202001/pages/index.htm](http://www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/Env/EA%202001/pages/index.htm)
- Northwest Territories [www.ceaa.gc.ca](http://www.ceaa.gc.ca)
- Nova Scotia [www.gov.ns.ca/nse/ea/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/nse/ea/)
- Nunavut  
[www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/nu/nuv/eap\\_e.html](http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/nu/nuv/eap_e.html)  
[www.ceaa.gc.ca/](http://www.ceaa.gc.ca/)
- Ontario [www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/env\\_reg/ea/English/](http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/env_reg/ea/English/)
- Prince Edward Island [www.peigov.ca/enveng/pp-info/index.php3](http://www.peigov.ca/enveng/pp-info/index.php3)
- Québec  
English – [www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/evaluations/inter\\_en.htm](http://www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/evaluations/inter_en.htm)  
French – [www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/evaluations/inter.htm](http://www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/evaluations/inter.htm)
- Saskatchewan [www.environment.gov.sk.ca/Default.aspx?DN=dd506e76-4819-4493-a22b-6411133ca469](http://www.environment.gov.sk.ca/Default.aspx?DN=dd506e76-4819-4493-a22b-6411133ca469)
- Yukon [www.yesab.ca/assessments/](http://www.yesab.ca/assessments/)

## ◆ Checklists

### EA Checklist

- Do you have a general understanding of the project?  
For example:
  - Do you know who the proponent (owner of the project) is?
  - Project design
  - Construction activities and timing
  - The benefits and cost of doing and not doing the project
  - Biophysical and socio-economic interactions the project will have on your community
- Has the current state (baseline) of the environment, economy and social state been addressed?
- Has the future state of your community or site of the project been addressed with the project? And without the project?



## Environmental Toolkit for Aboriginal Women

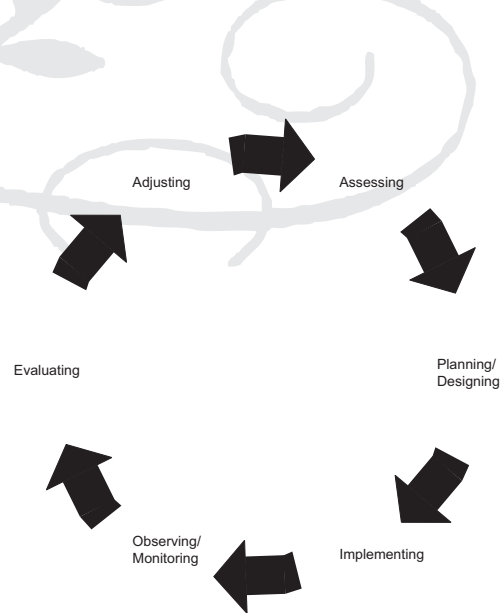
- Determining impacts should consider the following:
  - The nature of the predicted impact (adverse, additive, antagonistic, beneficial)
  - Temporal characteristics (duration, rate of change slow vs. fast)
  - Magnitude (size, direction, and spatial extent)
  - Degree of reversibility
  - The likelihood that the predicted impact will actually occur
- Are there other similar projects you could use as references or compare with?
- Is there anyone you could contact to get more information?
- Have your concerns been addressed?
- Is the project going to affect your traditional territory, reserve, or local community?

### ◆ Common Environmental Concepts

The following section provides information on common environmental terms. Depending on the environmental issues you are dealing with you may or may not come across these terms.

#### Adaptive Management

Adaptive management promotes action through an experimental approach; making adjustments to management practices and policies as knowledge is gained. Catch phrases used to describe adaptive management are; “learning by doing” or “expect the unexpected, and learn from it”. Incorporating the knowledge gained from past learning experiences into future management plans is an essential component of adaptive management and ultimately the ecosystems approach. Adaptive management follows an iterative process of planning, implementing, observing, evaluating, adjusting, and assessing (Figure 6). Feedback is continuously being evaluated and adjustments are being made to incorporate new information that is gained, this cycle is critical to dealing with uncertainty. Ultimately, the lessons learned and experiences gained through the practice of the adaptive management process needs to be integrated into management strategies and procedures.



**Figure 6:**

#### Adaptive Management

Source: Adapted from ESSA Technologies Ltd.  
Website: <http://www.essa.com/services/am/index.htm>

Many conventional practices attempt to control the environment however; the environment is a complex dynamic system. As a result, uncertainty is unavoidable when dealing with environmental issues. Adaptive Management (AM) an alternative approach (to conventional practices) that incorporates uncertainty.



### Additional Information on Adaptive Management:

- Collaborative Adaptive Management Network  
[www.adaptivemanagement.net/index.php](http://www.adaptivemanagement.net/index.php)
- B.C. Government – Adaptive Management Initiatives in the BC Forest Service  
[www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfp/amhome/index.htm](http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfp/amhome/index.htm)

### Strategic Environmental Assessment

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is different than an environmental (impact) assessment (EIA or EA). An environment assessment evaluates the impacts of a specific project while an SEA evaluates the impacts of a policy, plan or program. Ideally, a SEA should evaluate the environmental, social and economic considerations of the policy, plan or program.

SEA's are proactive assessments that provide people with a great opportunity to be heard. Early involvement can identify the best options and can influence desirable outcome for all parties.

### Basic SEA Framework

- Scoping and baseline determination
- Identify alternatives
- Evaluate and compare alternatives
- Determine the best option

### Additional Website Information:

- Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency  
[www.ceaa.gc.ca](http://www.ceaa.gc.ca)
- Canadian International Development Agency  
[www.acdi-cida.gc.ca](http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca)

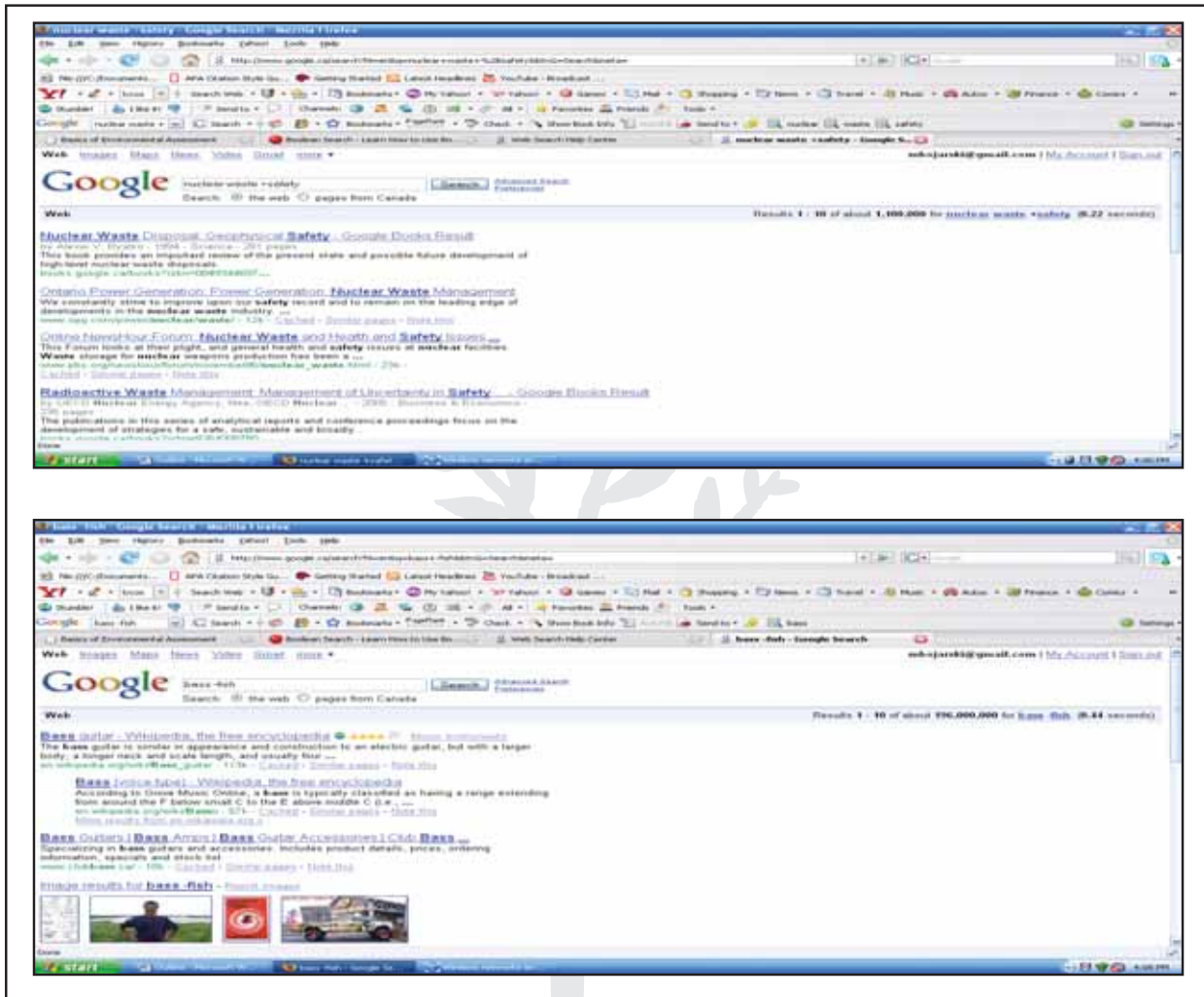
## ◆ Appendix A – Internet Researching

### Internet Search Tips

Google ([www.google.ca](http://www.google.ca)) is a common internet search engine that can provide you with information on a particular environmental issue. Using key words and search terms can help to narrow your search and yield relevant information to your topic.

For example: Capital letters do not make a difference in Google searches. To narrow your search, try putting a “+” sign between terms. Like “nuclear waste + safety”. If you want to cut out certain terms or words, put a “-” and a space before the word. For example: “bass – fish” to get results on bass the musical instrument, not “bass the fish”.





Google also has an application called “Google Scholar” which gives academic journal articles on any particular topic. This can be helpful to see what current research is being done in that area of interest, and it will give you credible results.

As a graduate (or alumni) of a college or university, many schools offer access to their academic databases and journals which can also be used to search for information on a particular environmental issue.

Remember that though Google is currently the most popular search engine, it is not the only one. Try searching for some others, or try looking up Yahoo, Lycos, or Webcrawler. For a listing of different internet search engines visit: [www.internettutorials.net/engines.html](http://www.internettutorials.net/engines.html).

Internet cafés are common in many areas, so if you do not have access personally to a computer, you may have the opportunity to access the internet in other places. The internet is not your only tool to gather information or research. Visit your local library and make use of your librarians, they are there to help. Tell them what you are looking for and see what information is available on the topic. Do not be afraid to ask for help. Most public libraries will also have computers with internet access.



◆ **Appendix B – Sample Letter**

**Example of Specific Letter**

Name

Mailing Address

Date

Suzanne Beaver, Councillor  
555 Hill Drive  
First Nation, AB  
T5A 4R7

Attention: Betty Blackfoot

Dear Mrs. Blackfoot,

I am writing about the pending development of the two parcels, totalling 6.15 hectares at 22255 Mulholland Highway, which also fronts Mulholland Drive and Main Street.

I am representing myself, along with many of my neighbours, regarding this property.

Let me make this very clear. We are strongly opposed to any and all of the zoning variances, and/or exceptions to the specific plans that have been filed on this property.

As a community we are very concerned with any zoning changes. We want to see our open spaces and old oak trees preserved, along with the specific plans and general plans of low density housing for this area.

I am specifically asking if Councillor Suzanne Beaver is supporting or opposing the zoning and specific plans exceptions applied for on this property.

I am also specifically asking is if Councillor Suzanne Beaver is supporting or opposing high density development in our neighbourhood.



Many adverse effects that my neighbours and I feel this proposed development presents include the following points:

- The proposed development is high density and does not fit in with the surrounding low density single family and residential estate housing.
- Zoning changes would open the door to apartment development.
- Permanent and negative alteration of the view shed of the surrounding properties.
- The specific and general City plans would be rendered meaningless by this spot zoning.
- Significant increase in already heavy traffic on Mulholland Highway, Mulholland Drive and Main Street.
- Mulholland Scenic Corridor permanent open-space loss.
- Jeopardizes old oak trees on the parcels, some of which have already been chopped down in violation of the law.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please reply promptly.

Sincerely,

(Sign your name)

Name

This letter has been also sent to the following:

- Chief Stan Peters

