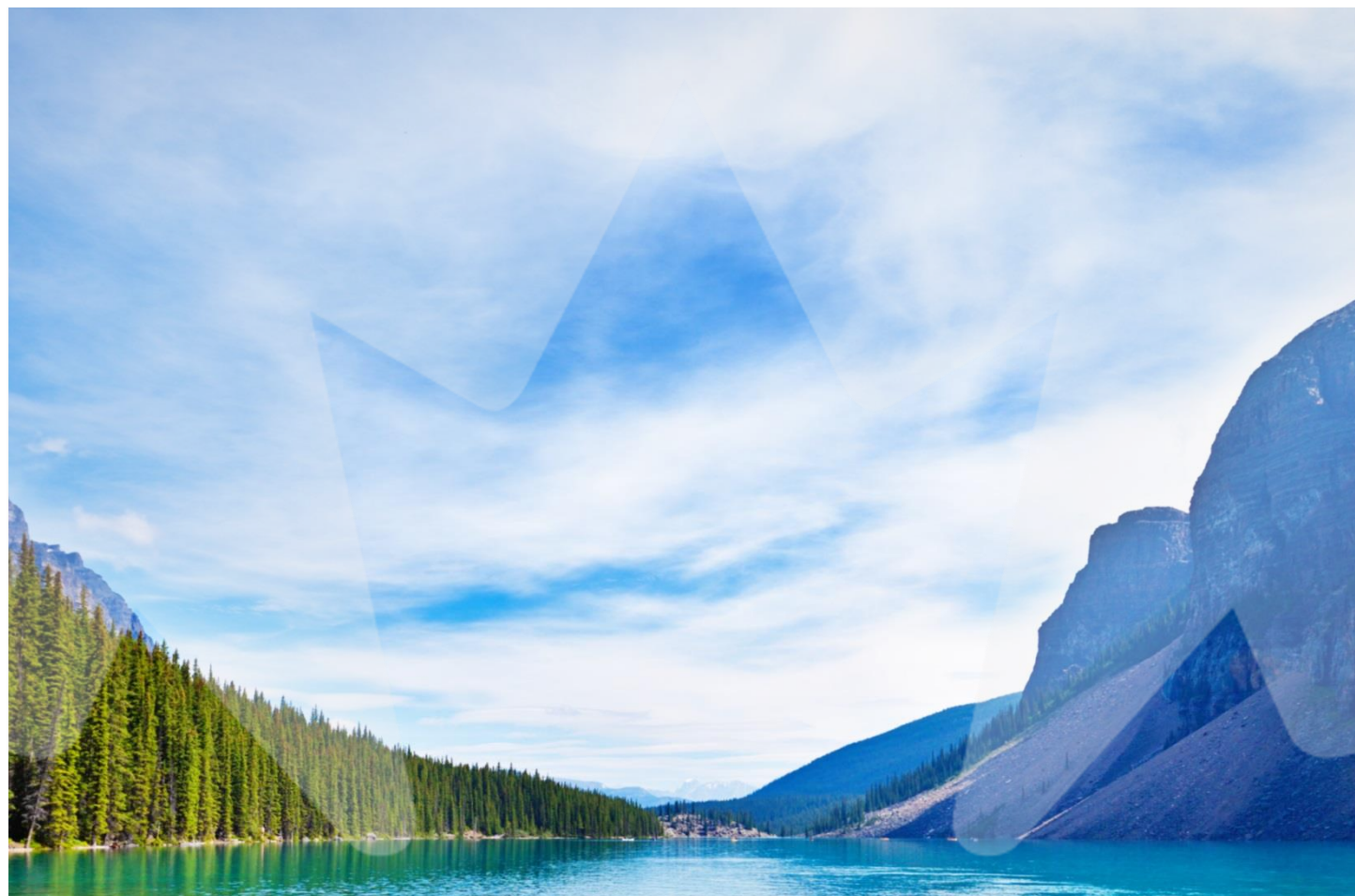




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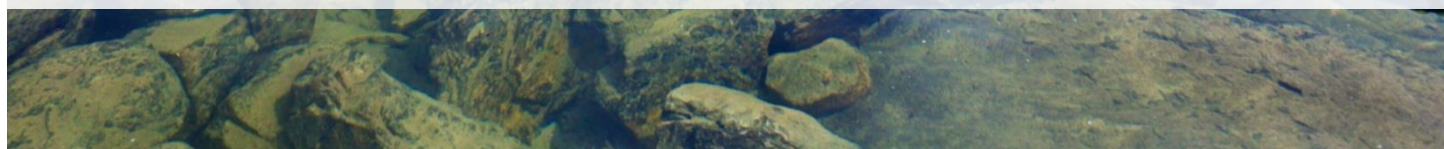
Agence canadienne
d'évaluation environnementale



Public Participation in Environmental Assessment under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012* Interim Reference Guide

March 2018

Version 1



Canada 

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Document Information

Disclaimer

Please be advised that this draft guidance piece is an interim document. The Agency is currently reviewing the Environmental Assessment process and as a result of the review, EA practice, policies and procedures may change. This draft guidance document reflects current practice under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012 (CEAA 2012).

This Reference Guide is for information purposes only. It is not a substitute for the [Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012](#) (CEAA 2012) or its regulations. In the event of an inconsistency between this Reference Guide and CEAA 2012 or its regulations, CEAA 2012 or its regulations would prevail.

For the most up-to-date versions of CEAA 2012 and regulations, please consult the [Department of Justice website](#).

Agency staff can use this document or portions of it in correspondence and share this document with external partners on an as needed basis by email, using the standard email text provided by Operational Support Directorate. For questions or further information please contact Guidance / Orientation [CEAA/ACEE] CEAA.guidance-orientation.ACEE@ceaa-acee.gc.ca

Updates

This document may be reviewed and updated periodically. To ensure that you have the most up-to-date version, please consult the [Policy and Guidance page](#) of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency's website.

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This document is also available in Adobe's Portable Document Format.

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose

This Guide describes the key public participation opportunities during an environmental assessment conducted by the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (the Agency) or by a review panel under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012* (CEAA 2012). [CEAA 2012](#) has legislated requirements to provide opportunities for public participation, providing certainty and clarity on how your voice can be heard during the environmental assessment process.

Application

Under CEAA 2012, an environmental assessment may be required for designated projects – those projects described by the [Regulations Designating Physical Activities](#) or designated by the Minister of the Environment (the Minister) because of potential adverse environmental effects or related public concern (subsection 14(2)).

The term “project” refers to designated projects under CEAA 2012 for which the Agency is the responsible authority.

Throughout the document, the term “environmental effects” refers to environmental effects as described in section 5 of CEAA 2012.

Depending on the nature of the designated project, the environmental assessment is carried out by one of three responsible authorities: the Agency, the National Energy Board or the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission. Other federal authorities may be designated as responsible authorities in the future. Projects for which the Agency is the responsible authority are described in the [Regulations Designating Physical Activities](#). This Guide focusses on how the public can participate in environmental assessment processes where the Agency is the responsible authority. Information on processes by the [National Energy Board](#) or the [Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission](#) is available on their respective websites.

Predictable opportunities for public participation enable members of the public to better plan their involvement and manage resources more efficiently. After reading this Guide, you will understand how and when to participate in an environmental assessment when the Agency is the responsible authority, as well as the general roles and responsibilities of the Agency and other participants in the environmental assessment process.

CEAA 2012 allows the federal environmental assessment process to be substituted for a provincial environmental assessment process. In this case, the public needs to follow the province’s public participation process (see Annex 1).

The Environmental Assessment Process under CEAA 2012

Environmental assessment is a planning and decision-making tool used to minimize or avoid adverse environmental effects of proposed initiatives before they are carried out.

An environmental assessment identifies possible adverse environmental effects and mitigation measures to lessen those effects and assesses whether a project is likely to cause significant adverse environmental effects after mitigation measures are implemented.

Comments received from the public throughout the environmental assessment process influence the identification and assessment of adverse environmental effects, the development of mitigation measures, the determination of significance and the development of a follow-up program.

When the Agency is the responsible authority, there are two possible types of environmental assessment:

Environmental Assessment by the Agency:

The Agency reviews all of the information submitted by participants (e.g. the project proponent, the public and Indigenous groups) to prepare an environmental assessment report. This report is advisory in nature, contains the Agency's conclusions and recommendations, and is submitted to the Minister to support the Minister's decision.

Environmental Assessment by a review panel:

A panel of independent experts appointed by the Minister reviews all of the information submitted by participants (e.g. the project proponent, the public and Indigenous groups) to prepare a panel report. This report is advisory in nature, contains the review panel's conclusions and recommendations and is submitted to the Minister to support the Minister's decision.

Both approaches allow the Agency or the review panel to conduct the environmental assessment in cooperation with another jurisdiction, such as a province, when the jurisdiction also has a responsibility to conduct an environmental assessment (see Annex 1).

For more information about the environmental assessment process and timelines under CEAA 2012, please consult the [Basics of Environmental Assessment](#).

Public Participation and Environmental Assessment

CEAA 2012 (paragraph 19(1)(c)) requires that comments from the public be considered in the environmental assessment of a designated project. Public participation is an important aspect of an open, balanced process and strengthens the quality and credibility of an environmental assessment. It encourages and supports project planning and decision-making by sharing information with, and gathering input from, members of the public who may have an interest in a proposed project.

By sharing your comments and concerns, you are giving the decision-maker the benefit of your views, experience and knowledge. As a participant, you can contribute to discussions on improving or adapting the project to avoid potential adverse environmental effects. Your input contributes to a fully informed decision.

Who can participate?

During an environmental assessment, anyone with an opinion, information or expertise relevant to a project and its potential environmental effects, can provide comments. Comments on specific documents must generally be received within the defined public comment periods to be considered by the Agency or a review panel.

CEAA 2012 states that a review panel must hold public hearings *in a manner that offers any interested party an opportunity to participate*. CEAA 2012 defines an interested party as any person that, in the opinion of the review panel, is directly affected by the carrying out of the designated project or has relevant information or expertise. The review panel determines who is an interested party.

Aboriginal groups may provide input through Aboriginal consultation activities and/or public participation opportunities. More information on the Crown's legal duty to consult Aboriginal groups is available in the [Updated Guidelines for Federal Officials to Fulfill the Duty to Consult](#) and on the Agency's [Aboriginal Consultation in Federal Environmental Assessment](#) webpage.

Support for meaningful participation

The Agency and review panels ensure that meaningful opportunities for public participation occur during an environmental assessment. This is done through notification of opportunities for public participation, reasonable timing, provision of accessible information, transparent reporting of results, financial support for

participants, and coordination with other jurisdictions. Please consult Annex 1 for more information on support for participants.

Structure of the Guide

This Guide is divided into five parts to better direct you to the most relevant public participation opportunity for a particular environmental assessment.

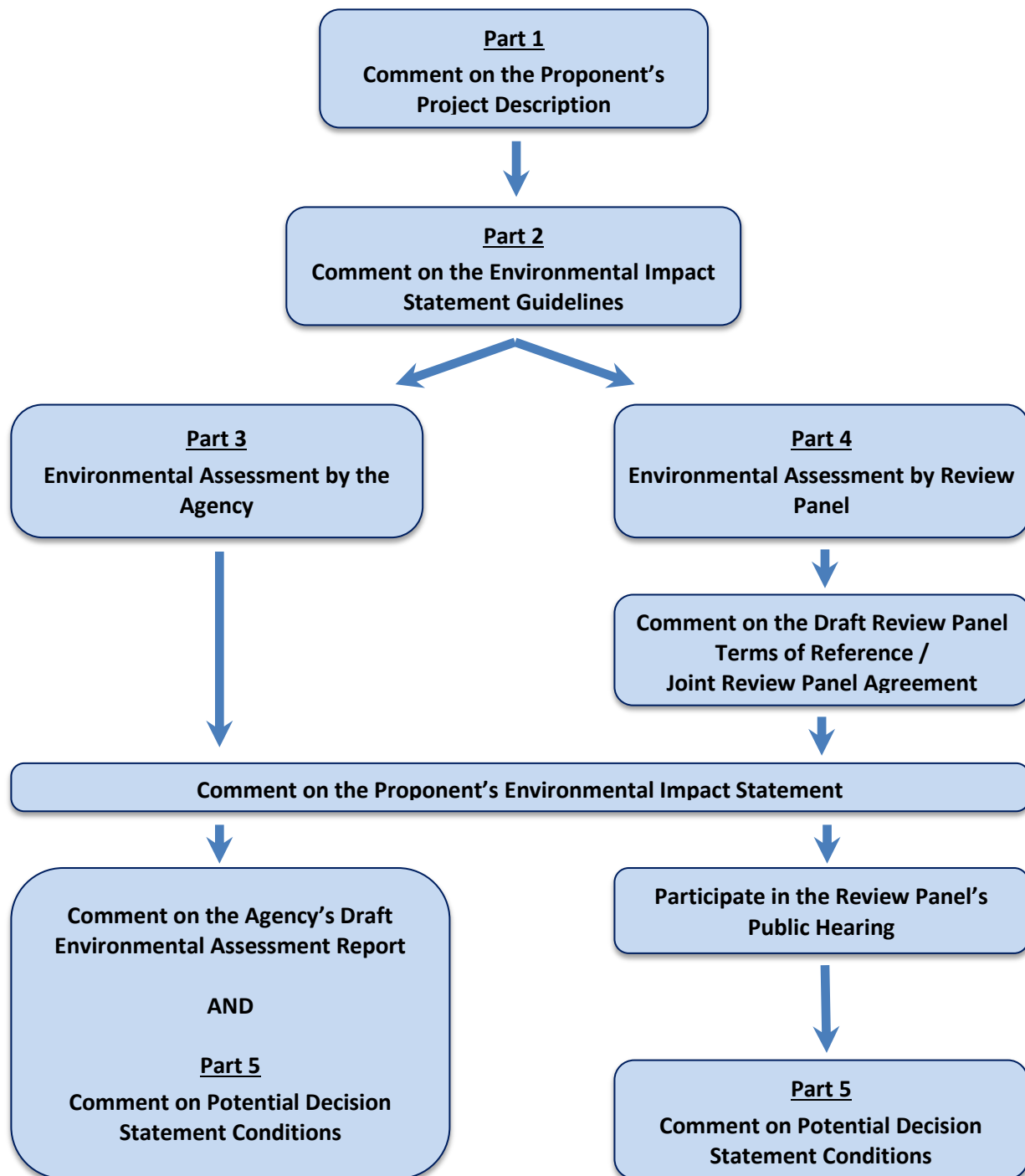
- Project Description ([Part 1](#));
- Draft Environmental Impact Statement Guidelines ([Part 2](#));
- Environmental Assessment by the Agency ([Part 3](#));
- Environmental Assessment by Review Panel ([Part 4](#)); and
- Potential Decision Statement Conditions ([Part 5](#)).

Parts [1](#), [2](#) and [5](#) outline public participation opportunities in the environmental assessment process that are common to both an environmental assessment by the Agency and an environmental assessment by review panel. [Part 3](#) focuses on the key public participation opportunities for an environmental assessment by the Agency. [Part 4](#) explains the key public participation opportunities for an environmental assessment by review panel. Both environmental assessment by the Agency and environmental assessment by review panel provide public comment opportunities on important information such as the proponent's environmental impact statement.

Figure 1 illustrates the five parts of this document relative to the environmental assessment process.

Figure 1: Key Opportunities for Public Participation in an Environmental Assessment under CEAA 2012

Note: This diagram sequentially illustrates the stages presented for public participation during an environmental assessment led by the Agency or by a review panel. There are five key possibilities during and Agency-led process, and six for a Review Panel.



PART 1: OPPORTUNITIES TO COMMENT ON A PROJECT DESCRIPTION (20 DAYS)

When a proponent proposes a project that is described in the *Regulations Designating Physical Activities*, they are required to submit a project description to the Agency that complies with the [Prescribed Information for the Description of a Designated Project Regulations](#). Generally a project description will include the following information:

- activities involved in carrying out the proposed project;
- timelines for the project life cycle, including construction, operation, decommissioning, and abandonment;
- description of any public or Indigenous engagement planned and/or carried out;
- information on any relevant environmental studies being carried out in the project area;
- maps showing the location of the project in relation to various landscape features (e.g. wetlands, water sources, sensitive areas, etc.), residential areas, and federal lands, including Indigenous communities and traditional territories;
- if there is any financial support from federal authorities and if any federal land would be used in carrying out the project;
- anticipated required permits or authorizations (federal and provincial);
- description of any changes that may be caused to the environment, should the project be carried out, specifically to fish and fish habitat, aquatic species, and migratory birds;
- effects that may occur on federal lands;
- effects that may cross provincial or international boundaries; and
- description of how potential changes to the environment could impact Aboriginal peoples in terms of health, socio-economic conditions, physical and cultural heritage, current use of lands and resources for traditional purposes, or on anything of historical, archaeological, paleontological or architectural significance (e.g., burial sites, ceremonial lands, teaching sites).

Once the Agency determines that the project description is complete, it is posted on the Registry Internet site, and a 20-day public comment period will begin.

What should your comments focus on?

The purpose of public participation at this stage is to provide input early in the environmental assessment process and gather information which may help determine if an environmental assessment is required and to define the scope of issues to be considered. As such, your comments should focus on the project and its potential environmental effects.

How are your comments used?

Your comments will help the Agency:

- determine whether an environmental assessment is required and, if so, whether the project should continue to be assessed by the Agency or be recommended for referral to a review panel;
- identify issues of importance to the public in relation to the project; and
- prepare the draft environmental impact statement guidelines.

Part 2: Opportunities to Comment on Draft Environmental Impact Statement Guidelines (30 Days)

Once it has been decided that an environmental assessment is required for the project (and before the Minister decides whether the project should be referred to a review panel), the Agency will prepare draft environmental impact statement guidelines and make them available on the Registry Internet site for a public comment period, generally for 30 days.

The environmental impact statement guidelines identify the information that must be included in the proponent's environmental impact statement and specify the nature, scope and extent of that information.

Within 60 days of the start of an environmental assessment, the Minister may refer the project to a review panel. Opportunities for public participation in an environmental assessment by a review panel are explained in [Part 4](#).

If the Minister does not refer the project to a review panel, the Agency will continue to conduct the environmental assessment. Opportunities for public participation in an environmental assessment by the Agency are explained in [Part 3](#).

What should your comments focus on?

Your comments should focus on which aspects of the environment may be affected by the project and what should be examined during the environmental assessment. If you believe that an important component of the environment is missing or may not be adequately assessed you should let the Agency know.

How are your comments used?

Your comments will be used to strengthen the draft environmental impact statement guidelines which may include the identification of additional valued components and/or studies to be undertaken in the environmental impact statement. Taking into account the comments received, the Agency will finalize the environmental impact statement guidelines, issue them to the proponent, and post them on the Registry Internet site for the public.

The public comments received at this stage may also inform whether or not the designated project is recommended for referral to environmental assessment by review panel.

PART 3: OPPORTUNITIES DURING AN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT BY THE AGENCY

This section focuses on the key opportunities for public participation once it has been decided that the environmental assessment will be conducted by the Agency, specifically:

- Opportunities to comment on the environmental impact statement; and
- Opportunities to comment on the draft environmental assessment report.

3.1 The Environmental Impact Statement (30 Days)

The Agency is responsible for a technical review of the proponent's environmental impact statement. Both the full version and a summary of the environmental impact statement are made available on the Registry Internet site and a public comment period is held, generally for 30 days.

The environmental impact statement includes detailed information, such as:

- a list of stakeholders and summaries of engagement sessions with the public and Indigenous groups;
- information on the project's activity throughout its life cycle (construction, operation, decommissioning, and abandonment);

-
- a description of the current environment;
 - an assessment of alternative ways to carry out the project;
 - an analysis of potential environmental effects;
 - proposed mitigation measures;
 - a determination of the significance of the residual adverse environmental effects remaining after mitigation;
 - response plans for accidents and malfunctions;
 - cumulative environmental effects; and
 - a follow-up program.

In some cases, the Agency may hold public meetings or open houses in areas that are likely to be affected by the project. The Agency would consider factors such as the degree of public concern, complexity of the project and coordination with a provincial environmental assessment process in making the decision to hold public meetings or open houses. These events provide the public with an opportunity to provide oral comments and are advertised through local media and in local communities, at places such as community halls or libraries.

What should your comments focus on?

Your knowledge of the project area and local environment can contribute to the evaluation of the environmental impact statement.

Your comments can assist the Agency in determining whether information provided in the environmental impact statement is sufficient and technically appropriate or whether additional information, studies, analyses or advice are required. You should provide comments on the key questions below and advise the Agency if you identify any information gaps (i.e. missing information or analysis):

- Are the methods appropriate?
- Is the environmental impact statement factually correct and is sufficient technical detail available?
- Are effects predictions correct? Should additional effects be assessed?
- Is the project likely to cause significant adverse environmental effects?
- Are the mitigation measures and follow-up program clearly stated, appropriate and likely to function as designed?

Your comments may take the form of a request for additional information. Such requests should be clear and concise, providing enough information to ensure the Agency understands exactly what part of the environmental impact statement is incomplete and what information is requested. If you have more than one request, you should number them, identify the sections of the environmental impact statement in question, and clearly reference the relevant requirements from the environmental impact statement guidelines.

How are your comments used?

Your comments can assist the Agency in determining if the environmental impact statement is sufficient and technically appropriate. They can also assist the Agency in identifying and formulating information requests to be addressed by the proponent.

3.2 The Draft Environmental Assessment Report (30 days)

After careful analysis of the environmental impact statement and all comments received, the Agency prepares

a draft environmental assessment report. This document includes the Agency's conclusions and recommendations regarding the potential environmental effects of the project, the mitigation measures that were considered, the significance of any residual adverse environmental effects, and the proposed follow-up program.

The draft environmental assessment report includes a summary of the key comments received with a description of what the proponent did to address the public's concerns. This allows you to see how public comments influence the environmental assessment process.

The draft environmental assessment report is generally subject to a public comment period of 30 days. In some cases, in addition to the written comment period, the Agency may also hold targeted public meetings or open houses in the project area. These meetings provide the public with an opportunity to provide oral comments.

What should your comments focus on?

When reviewing the environmental assessment report, your comments should focus on:

- the Agency's conclusions and recommendations regarding the project's potential environmental effects;
- proposed mitigation measures;
- the significance of any remaining adverse environmental effects; and
- the follow-up program.

How are your comments used?

The Agency will consider all comments received when finalizing the environmental assessment report. This report informs the Minister's environmental assessment decision.

PART 4: OPPORTUNITIES DURING AN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT BY REVIEW PANEL

The review panel process begins once the Minister refers the environmental assessment of a designated project to a review panel, generally following public comments on the draft environmental impact statement guidelines. The Agency notifies the public of this decision by posting a notice on the Registry Internet site.

This section focuses on the key opportunities for public participation once it has been decided that the environmental assessment will be conducted by a review panel, specifically the opportunities to:

- comment on the draft review panel terms of reference and/or joint review panel agreement;
- comment on the proponent's environmental impact statement; and
- participate in the public hearing.

Some of these opportunities are offered by the Agency prior to appointment of the review panel, and some are offered by the review panel once it is appointed. Once appointed, the review panel is responsible for the conduct of the environmental assessment process.

4.1 The Draft Review Panel Terms of Reference (Typically 30 Days)

Prior to panel appointment, the Agency will prepare, and make available on the Registry Internet site, the draft Terms of Reference for the review panel. The Terms of Reference outline the mandate of the review panel, the scope of the review and the process and timelines for the review panel to follow during the environmental

assessment.

In the case of joint review panels, the Agency will also prepare a draft Joint Review Panel Agreement, in consultation with the other jurisdiction. The Joint Review Panel Agreement is an agreement between the Agency and a partner jurisdiction that outlines how the environmental assessment by review panel will proceed, taking into consideration the requirements of both jurisdictions. The Joint Review Panel Agreement typically outlines the following:

- the process and timelines of the review;
- definitions of terminology;
- responsibility for maintenance of the Registry;
- the composition of the review panel and the secretariat;
- considerations related to the decision-making process; and,
- how contributions and considerations of Indigenous groups will be addressed by the review panel.

What should your comments focus on?

Comments on the draft Terms of Reference, or Joint Review Panel Agreement if applicable, should address the mandate, the scope of the review, processes and timelines outlined in the documents. You are encouraged to provide comments with rationale and suggestions to ensure that a sound review process is followed.

How are your comments used?

Your comments can assist the Agency in providing a comprehensive and complete document for the consideration of the Minister, who will approve the final versions. Any comments received will be posted on the Registry Internet site and made public.

4.2 The Environmental Impact Statement

Once appointed, the review panel must determine if it has sufficient information to schedule the public hearing. The panel will conduct a review of the proponent's environmental impact statement to determine whether information provided is sufficient and technically appropriate or whether additional information, studies, analyses or advice are required.

The environmental impact statement includes detailed information, such as:

- a list of stakeholders and summaries of engagement sessions with the public and Indigenous groups;
- information on the project's activity throughout its life cycle (construction, operation, decommissioning, and abandonment);
- a description of the current environment;
- an assessment of alternative ways to carry out the project;
- an analysis of potential environmental effects;
- proposed mitigation measures;
- a determination of the significance of the residual adverse environmental effects remaining after mitigation;
- response plans for accidents and malfunctions;

-
- cumulative environmental effects; and
 - a follow-up program.

The review panel typically requests public comments on the environmental impact statement and any supplemental information gathered to date, and will generally provide a minimum of 45 days for the public comment period.

There may be additional opportunities for public participation in relation to the environmental impact statement. These opportunities may include technical meetings or a site visit.

Any comments received will be posted on the Registry Internet site and made public.

What should your comments focus on?

Your knowledge of the project area and local environment can contribute to evaluation of the environmental impact statement.

Your comments can assist the review panel in assessing the technical merit and sufficiency of the information presented in the environmental impact statement and any supplementary information. You should provide comments on the key questions below and advise the review panel if you identify any information gaps (i.e., missing information or analysis):

- Are the methods appropriate?
- Is the environmental impact statement factually correct and is sufficient technical detail available?
- Are effects predictions correct? Should additional effects be assessed?

Your comments may take the form of a request for additional information. Such requests should be clear and concise, providing enough information to ensure the review panel understands exactly what part of the environmental impact statement is incomplete and what information is requested. If you have more than one request, you should number them, identify the sections of the environmental impact statement in question and clearly reference the relevant requirements from the environmental impact statement guidelines.

How are your comments used?

Your comments can assist the review panel in determining if the environmental impact statement is sufficient and technically appropriate.

4.3 The Public Hearing

The review panel conducts a public hearing to determine if the project is likely to result in significant adverse environmental effects, and to ensure that the panel has all of the information that it needs to complete its report to the Minister.

The public hearing provides opportunities for:

- the proponent to explain the designated project and respond to concerns and questions raised by participants;
- participants to provide their views and ask questions on the potential environmental effects of the designated project; and
- the review panel to receive information that would help it complete its assessment of the potential environmental effects of the designated project.

The review panel must conduct the public hearing in a manner that promotes a thorough examination of

relevant issues and encourages participation and input from interested parties and other participants. The public hearing should follow a fair and orderly process, but is generally not bound by the strict rules of procedure and evidence applicable to judicial proceedings.

The review panel's Terms of Reference may specify the timeline in which the review panel must conduct its public hearing. For instance, the review panel may be directed to use its best efforts to complete the public hearing in 30 days.

The review panel will issue a Notice of Hearing, outlining the start date and location(s) of the public hearing, the deadline to register as a presenter, and the deadline for written submissions. The review panel's Terms of Reference may outline the timelines for the public hearing, but the Notice of Hearing is usually made public at least 45 days in advance to give participants time to prepare.

Following the release of the Notice of Hearing, the review panel will issue a detailed hearing schedule with the times and locations of all hearing sessions. In determining the locations for the public hearing, the review panel will consider the communities most likely to be affected by the project, locations of interested participants, local culture and customs of potentially affected Indigenous communities, and the need to complete the review in a timely and cost-efficient manner.

Although hearing sessions are open to anyone wishing to observe the proceedings, the review panel may require you to register in advance if you wish to make a presentation during the hearing sessions. Advance registration allows the public hearing to be planned and conducted in a logical and organized manner.

Public hearing procedures, issued by the review panel, will outline any requirements with respect to the public hearing, including details regarding registration.

Typically there are three types of hearing sessions that a review panel may hold:

1. Community hearing sessions: Encourage the full and open participation of people living in, or adjacent to the project area and provide a more informal setting in which community members are able to make presentations to the review panel on any matters within the scope of the review and present community knowledge or Aboriginal traditional knowledge.
2. General hearing sessions: Provide an opportunity for interested parties and the proponent to make presentations to the review panel on both the technical and non-technical subjects that are within the scope of the review. They also provide the opportunity for participants to question the information submitted during the review process.
3. Technical hearing sessions: Allow participants who possess specialized knowledge or expertise in a specific topic to present the results of their analysis of the potential environmental effects of the designated project to the review panel. They also allow for scrutiny of the designated projects by participants who have conducted a technical review of the project. This includes participants who have hired technical experts to assist them with their review.

Transcripts of the public hearing will be produced and made public through the Registry Internet site.

At the end of the public hearing, the review panel may reserve time for closing remarks by participants or interested parties. Closing remarks are not intended for the presentation of new information. Instead, you may summarize your position on the project and the types of recommendations that the review panel should make in relation to the project.

All comments and presentations from hearing sessions are considered part of the record of the review and will be posted on the Registry Internet site and made public. The record of the review is the body of information on which the review panel will rely in writing its report.

Once the review panel has all the information it requires to write its report, it will close the record of the review

and post a notice on the Registry Internet site. New information cannot be accepted once the record is closed.

The review panel's report is advisory in nature and contains the review panel's conclusions and recommendations with respect to the project. The review panel submits its report to the Minister and any partnering jurisdictions (as appropriate). Typically, a review panel will issue a news release on the Registry Internet site when it has submitted its report. Under CEEA 2012, the Minister is responsible for making the report available to the public.

What should your comments focus on?

Your comments can assist the review panel in their consideration of key questions such as:

- Is the project likely to cause significant adverse environmental effects?
- Are mitigation measures and the follow-up program appropriate and likely to function as designed?

How are your comments used?

Your comments are used to inform the review panel's conclusions and recommendations with respect to the project. These conclusions and recommendations are contained in the panel report submitted to the Minister.

PART 5: OPPORTUNITIES TO COMMENT ON POTENTIAL DECISION STATEMENT CONDITIONS (TYPICALLY 30 DAYS)

After analysis of the environmental impact statement and consideration of comments received, the Agency prepares a document containing potential decision statement conditions for the project. These potential conditions relate to proposed mitigation measures and a follow-up program. The final conditions would become legally binding on the proponent if the Minister issues a decision statement indicating that the project may proceed. The potential decision statement conditions are posted on the Registry Internet site for public comment, generally for 30 days.

What should your comments focus on?

Your comments should focus on the adequacy and sufficiency of the potential decision statement conditions, suggestions for improvement and any additional measures you would like to see included.

How are your comments used?

The Agency will consider all written comments received when finalizing its recommendations to the Minister on potential conditions for inclusion in the environmental assessment decision statement. The Agency's recommendations will inform the Minister's decision-making.

ANNEX 1: SUPPORT FOR MEANINGFUL PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Agency and review panels ensure that meaningful opportunities for public participation occur during an environmental assessment. This is done through notification of opportunities for public participation, reasonable timing, provision of accessible information, transparent reporting of results, financial support for participants, and coordination with other jurisdictions.

Notification

The Agency or review panel will inform the public of participation opportunities, including information on any timelines, the public hearing schedule, how comments may be submitted or how to register for a hearing. This is often done through the issuance of a public notice and/or news release. You may also subscribe (by completing a short form on the Agency's [website](#)) to receive a weekly bulletin of Agency news, including updates on environmental assessments and opportunities for public participation. The Agency and review panels also maintain email distribution lists that are used to update participants on the status of an environmental assessment and opportunities for participation.

Reasonable timing

The Agency or review panel will provide the public with a fair and reasonable amount of time to engage in participation opportunities such as needed for evaluating information, providing and submitting comments on that information, planning and preparing for information sessions and public hearings.

Accessible information

The [Canadian Environmental Assessment Registry](#) (the Registry) consists of both an internet site and project files, established for the purpose of facilitating access to records related to current and potential environmental assessments of projects subject to CEAA 2012. It is operated in a manner that provides the public with convenient and timely access to information in support of public participation.

Within the Registry Internet site, there is a dedicated page specific for each project. This page includes any information regarding public comment periods, documents for public comment, and contact information specific to the environmental assessment of the project.

Transparent results

The environmental assessment report, prepared by the Agency or a review panel, documents the results of the environmental assessment and includes the rationale, conclusions and recommendations regarding:

- the potential environmental effects of the designated project;
- the mitigation measures that were taken into account;
- the significance of adverse environmental effects after mitigation measures are implemented; and
- follow-up program requirements.

For an environmental assessment by the Agency, the environmental assessment report reflects the comments received during the comment period on the environmental impact statement. Generally, the key comments received are summarized and accompanied by a description of what the proponent did to address the public's concerns. This allows you to see how public comments influenced the environmental assessment process.

For an environmental assessment by review panel, the panel's report summarizes the views of the public and Indigenous groups on key issues, as well as the views of the proponent.

The Agency also seeks public comment on any draft potential conditions with which the proponent must comply, should the Minister include these conditions in a decision statement.

Financial support

The Agency administers the Participant Funding Program that supports individuals, Indigenous groups, and non-profit organizations interested in participating in an environmental assessment, both by the Agency and review panel. Funding supports eligible expenses, such as travel costs and fees for experts.

Please visit the [Participant Funding Program webpage](#) for more information on the program, eligibility and the application process.

Coordination with other jurisdictions

For environmental assessments involving both the federal government and another jurisdiction with environmental assessment responsibilities, such as a province, opportunities to coordinate efforts are pursued to increase efficiency and reduce the potential burden on participants.

CEAA 2012 allows the federal environmental assessment process to be substituted for a provincial environmental assessment process, in the event that the province makes a request. The Agency consults the public for their views on whether substitution should occur. If a federal environmental assessment process has been substituted for a provincial environmental assessment process, the public needs to follow the province's public participation process. For more information on substitution under CEAA 2012, refer to [Substitution of the federal environmental assessment process under CEAA 2012](#).

Resources

[Practitioners Glossary for the Environmental Assessment of Designated Projects under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012*](#)

- This document defines or explains terms that are commonly used in relation to environmental assessments under CEAA 2012. It supports Agency training and guidance materials.

[Basics of Environmental Assessment](#)

- This document provides information on the purpose and steps of environmental assessments under CEAA 2012.

[Canadian Environmental Assessment Registry](#)

[Participant Funding Program Guide and Forms](#)

[Policy and Guidance Instruments for CEAA 2012](#)

[Acts and Regulations](#)

[Substitution Backgrounder](#)