

Accessible Public Information on Federal Environmental Assessments

Environmental assessment is about making better decisions; decisions that take into account environmental factors as well as economic and social ones; decisions that promote human activities compatible with sustaining a healthy environment.

Environmental assessment processes have become an integral part of decision-making at all levels of government in recent years. As a means of achieving sustainable development, the Government of Canada has made a strong commitment to environmental assessment with the passage in January 1995 of the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* (the Act).

The Act establishes a new process for conducting environmental assessments of **projects** involving the federal government. It also establishes the **Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency** (CEAA) to administer the process and ensure opportunities for public participation. Public access to information and public involvement are important elements of an open and balanced environmental assessment process.

The Act establishes a **Public Registry** of all records produced, collected or submitted for the environmental assessment of projects involving the federal government. The registry for an assessment is maintained by the project's responsible authority – the federal department or agency whose funding, land, permit, licence, or other approval is needed to enable the project to proceed. The CEAA also maintains a registry whenever a project is referred for review by a mediator or a panel.



To facilitate convenient public access to the registry documents, the CEAA has developed an electronic database, the **Federal Environmental Assessment Index** (FEAI). It is the master index of all federal environmental assessments carried out under the Act. The Index contains “tombstone” information (the who, what, when, where and why) about environmental assessments and lists contacts for further information or to request copies of documents.



The FEAI will be available through public libraries in both printed and CD-ROM formats. The CD-ROM will be fully searchable using Folio VIEWS software. It will include an on-line Quick Search Guide and a User Guide, and will be released in IBM compatible (Windows and DOS) and Mac versions. The **FEAI** will also be available on the Internet and the WEB (Canada's on-line non-profit communications network).

For more information please contact the

Public Registry Coordinator
Canadian Environmental
Assessment Agency
2 00 Sacré-Coeur Boulevard
Hull, Quebec, K1A 0H3

Tel: (819) 997-1000
Fax: (819) 994-1469

