



Canadian Environmental Assessment Research Council

The formation of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Research Council (CEARC) was announced in January, 1984 by the federal Minister of the Environment with support of the Federal Environmental Assessment Review Office (FEARO). The Council advises governments, industry and universities on ways to improve the scientific, technical and procedural basis for environmental impact assessment, a planning tool that is becoming increasingly important for decision-makers.

MEMBERSHIP AND THE SECRETARIAT

The 12-member Council is drawn from federal and provincial governments, the private sector, and the university community. Individuals are appointed by the Executive Chairman of FEARO for a three-year term.

CEARC is an independent source of advice and conducts its activities accordingly. The Council develops its own activity schedule and sets its own priorities. It is administratively supported by a Secretariat drawn from the staff of FEARO and Environment Canada. CEARC makes specific recommendations to the Executive Chairman of FEARO for consideration of action or support as required.

OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of CEARC is to contribute to the quality of the natural and social environment in Canada. To do so it:

- (a) advises on the need for and adequacy of research related to environmental impact assessment;
- (b) reviews and comments on the use of scientific information and the place of environmental impact assessment in planning and development; and
- (c) encourages new ideas and research directed towards improving the concept, practice and effectiveness of the assessment of social and environmental impacts.

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Environmental assessment is a multi-dimensional approach to problem solving characterized by the application of knowledge from bio-physical and social sciences. It can include a broad range of topics as indicated by the following general areas of research interest identified by CEARC:

- 1. Monitoring protocols and prediction of changes.
- 2. Risk analysis and management of uncertainty.
- 3. EIA management and decision making.
- 4. Improvements in administrative procedures.
- 5. Mitigation and compensation.
- 6. Post-development evaluation.

MODE OF OPERATION

The Council holds at least three meetings a year at which time ongoing activities are reviewed and new initiatives are considered. Between meetings individual council members work with the Secretariat on specific projects. Either separately or in cooperation with other agencies, the Council

facilitates research relevant to environmental impact assessment through undertaking comprehensive state of the art reviews, sponsoring technical workshops, supporting graduate students, and providing a focal point for information on current impact assessment research and experts in Canada.

COOPERATIVE APPROACH

The main objective of CEARC is to promote impact assessment research in priority areas of interest. To do this the Council has established communication with other agencies having similar or related interests for encouraging and initiating cooperative efforts. With time, this network is expected to expand so that CEARC will have an opportunity to influence a broad range of research activities.

FUNDING

CEARC does not directly administer a research budget, however, the federal government provides funds to support CEARC activities. These are administered by FEARO according to priorities recommended by CEARC. More importantly, through linkages with other research agencies, CEARC will be able to offer advice with respect to the expenditure of large research budgets and promote cooperative intersectoral programmes.

INFORMATION

Information is the main product of CEARC activities and it is produced in different forms. For example, the Council publishes, either directly or in cooperation with other agencies, proceedings of workshops, technical reviews, state of the art reports and directories of current impact assessment research programmes and experts in Canada. All CEARC reports are made available both within the country and abroad.

CONTACT

If you would like more information on CEARC, please contact:

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