



Saskatchewan Environmental Assessment Process

What is Environmental Assessment?

- Proposed developments with the potential for significant environmental impacts are assessed in accordance with The Environmental Assessment Act (the Act) to determine whether an environmental impact assessment (EIA) and Minister of Environment's Approval is required prior to the project proceeding.
- The process is designed to systematically evaluate the ecological, socio-economic and cultural aspects of a development within a single framework, so that the real costs and trade-offs of a proposed project can be fully understood.
- The environmental assessment process incorporates technical review, public input and consultation opportunities to ensure developments proceed in a manner that safeguards the environment and the public.
- The ministry has developed a suite of general and sector-specific guidance documents related to environmental assessment to ensure a clear, transparent and easily understood process. These guidelines are available on the ministry's website: saskatchewan.ca/environmentalassessment.



Legislative Authority

- The Environmental Assessment Act defines development to mean any project, operation or activity, or any alteration or expansion of any project, operation or activity, which is likely to:
 - ~ have an effect on any unique, rare or endangered feature of the environment;
 - ~ substantially utilize any provincial resource, and in doing so, preempt the use, or potential use of that resource for any other purpose;
 - ~ cause the emission of unregulated pollutants or create by-products;
 - ~ cause widespread public concern because of potential environmental changes;
 - ~ involve a new technology that may induce significant environmental change; or
 - ~ have a significant impact on the environment or necessitate a further development, which is likely to have a significant impact on the environment.
- The Act takes precedence over other provincial legislation.
- The onus is on the proponent to seek approval for a project that would be considered a development under the Act. A self-screening tool is available for individuals and businesses to conduct a preliminary evaluation of the likelihood that their project may meet the criteria of a development.
- The Act provides authority for the Minister of Environment to include legally-binding terms and conditions to ensure adequate environmental safeguards are in place for any project that goes through review.

The Environmental Assessment (EA) Process consists of:

- Screening of projects with the potential for significant environmental impacts by the Saskatchewan Environmental Assessment Review Panel (SEARP), a panel comprised of qualified professional and technical experts from across government that provides regulatory and scientific subject matter expertise to the ministry during the EA process, to determine whether the project is a development within the meaning of the Act;
- Following screening, if a project is determined not to be a development, the proponent receives a Ministerial determination that can include legally binding terms and conditions. Proponents can then proceed to obtaining necessary permits and licenses;
- For projects that are developments and must go through a full EIA. The EIA process includes a number of steps including:
 - ~ notifying the public that an EIA is underway;
 - ~ development of a terms of reference to direct the preparation of the environmental impact statement (EIS) by a proponent;
 - ~ technical review of the EIS by SEARP;
 - ~ releasing the EIS and Technical Review Comments for a 30-to-60 day public review and comment period; and
 - ~ a decision by the Minister of Environment to approve the project with terms and conditions or refuse to approve the project based on the environmental acceptability of the proposed project.

Link to Downstream Permitting and Approvals:

When conducting EA reviews, the ministry and technical reviewers consider the scope of the project as proposed, the measures proposed by a proponent to mitigate impacts, and the ability to address any residual impacts through terms and conditions of a Ministerial determination or by subsequent permits, licenses and approvals required for a project.

EA approval is not an approval to proceed with construction activities, it is simply provided to inform the proponent that they may proceed to obtain other permits and approvals that may be required by other provincial, municipal or federal legislation.

Public Engagement and the Duty to Consult with First Nations and Métis Communities:

- Public engagement is an important component of the EA process. Proponents are required to engage with stakeholders about their project throughout the process in order to share information and document and address any concerns.
- The public is also provided an opportunity to review and comment on developments during a 30-to-60 day public review.
- For projects that require an EIA, a pre-consultation assessment is conducted to determine whether the Crown has a Duty to Consult as a result of the impacts of the development on First Nations and Métis established, or credibly claimed, rights to hunt, fish, trap for food, and the carrying out of traditional uses on unoccupied Crown land or occupied Crown land to which First Nations and Métis have a right-of-access.
- Should the Crown's obligation under the Duty to Consult be triggered by a proposed development, the proponent is assigned the procedural aspects for carrying out the Duty to Consult as part of the EA process; however, the Crown still holds the constitutional obligation to ensure Duty to Consult and accommodate requirements are met.

For more information, please contact the Ministry of Environment toll-free at 1-800-567-4224 or centre.inquiry@gov.sk.ca.