

# Environmental Assessment Program

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## Preparing for and Submitting an Environmental Impact Assessment Report Updated February 2010

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### Introduction

If an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) has been deemed necessary, there are a number of steps involved in preparing for and then submitting an EIA report. These steps consist of:

- Submitting a First Nations Consultation Plan;
- Reporting of First Nations Consultation activities;
- Submitting the Project Summary Table and Project Location Map;
- Submitting and advertising the Proposed Terms of Reference (PTOR);
- Publication of the Final Terms of Reference (FTOR);
- Submitting the EIA and Applications;
- Publication of the Joint Notice; and
- Start of the EIA Review

This Guide outlines the information necessary to ensure the successful completion of each step to allow the review of the EIA report to begin. Proponents should refer to the [Guide to preparing Environmental Impact Assessments in Alberta](#) for information on preparing the actual EIA report itself.

### First Nations Consultation Plan

Once AENV determines that an EIA report is required, an Aboriginal Relations Advisor will discuss with the Proponent the requirements for First Nations consultation during project development. All projects that require an EIA report will be reviewed to see if Alberta's *First Nation Consultation Guidelines* apply.

If the Guidelines apply, a First Nations Consultation Plan (the Plan) must be submitted to and approved by an AENV Aboriginal Relations Advisor prior to advertising the PTOR. Once the Plan has been approved, the Proponent will be advised and AENV will inform the First Nations identified in the Plan of the project and the Proponent's consultation role.

Following approval of the Plan, Proponents will be required to begin reporting their First Nations consultation activities to Alberta Environment on a bi-monthly basis. The Aboriginal Relations Advisor for the project will provide a template for this reporting.

The Guidelines require Proponents to provide First Nations with Plain Language project specific information. This should be in the form of a short, concise document with maps as outlined in the Guidelines.

Alberta Environment encourages Proponents to make this document available to the

public as well, to ensure stakeholders have a clear understanding of the proposed project.

See Part III of the [First Nations Consultation Guidelines](#) for more information.

## **Project Summary Table and Project Location Map**

Proponents are required to complete a Project Summary Table and submit it with their PTOR. In support of the Project Summary Table, Proponents are required to provide a Project Location Map. Further guidance on content and format of these documents is provided in the [Guide to Using the Project Summary Table](#).

## **Proposed Terms of Reference**

AENV has developed [Standardized Terms of Reference](#) for in-situ, oil sands mining, coal mining and industrial plant projects. Proponents should use the Standardized Terms of Reference as a template for the development of their project specific PTOR. Proponents are encouraged to contact their Environmental Assessment (EA) Coordinator to obtain the latest version of the Standardized Terms of Reference.

The Proponent will then prepare and submit the PTOR to AENV. The PTOR should be submitted at least six (6) months before the EIA is submitted.

Once the PTOR is submitted and First Nations Consultation Plan is approved, the EA Coordinator will provide the Proponent with a template for the PTOR notice. The Proponent will be required to develop the PTOR notice based on the template and identify which newspapers the PTOR notice will be advertised in. The PTOR notice must appear in at least one Aboriginal paper if the Consultation Guidelines apply. The PTOR notice and the list of newspapers must be approved by AENV prior to

advertisement. The PTOR comment period will be determined by AENV.

Proponents should be aware that the deadline for public comment is based on the last date the advertisement is published and that several small local papers and/or Aboriginal papers may publish only weekly or monthly. This should be accounted for in the Proponent's project scheduling.

The Proponent is responsible for the cost of advertising the PTOR and must provide the EA Registrar with copies of the tear sheets for each of the newspapers the PTOR was advertised in.

## **Final Terms of Reference**

AENV will use comments received from the public and other government agencies to develop the FTOR. The Proponent will be given a draft of the changes; however, the Environmental Assessment Director<sup>1</sup> makes the final content decisions. The Director will issue the FTOR and AENV will publish a notice stating that they have been finalized and are available to the public. AENV will post a copy of the FTOR on the website and also send a copy of the FTOR to everyone who provided comments and to those First Nations identified in the Consultation Plan.

The FTOR forms the basis for the development of the EIA report. AENV's completeness decision will be largely based on whether the EIA report fulfills the requirements set out in the FTOR.

## **Submitting the EIA Report**

Proponents are requested to advise AENV of the expected submission date for their EIA report well in advance.

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<sup>1</sup> An Alberta Environment employee appointed by Ministerial Order to make decisions under Part 2, Division 1 of the *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act*.

Before the EIA is submitted the Proponent must obtain an EIA report distribution list from the EA Coordinator. The distribution list will tell the Proponent how many copies of the EIA report (paper and CDs) will be required. Proponents will be required to send copies of the EIA report to the Regulatory Approvals Centre (RAC) with a cheque for the appropriate approval application amount based on the Fees Schedule available from AENV. As well, Proponents will be required to send copies to the appropriate Regulatory Board (Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC), Energy Resources Conservation Board (ERCB), and/or Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB)).

Once the Alberta Environment approval applications have been deemed administratively complete, AENV and the Regulatory Board will prepare a Joint Notice which will inform the public that the EIA report and associated applications have been filed and of the deadline for Statement of Concerns. The Proponent is responsible for the cost of advertising the Joint Notice.

### **Start of the EIA Review**

Currently AENV is hiring third-party contractors (3PC) to assist with technical review areas normally covered by AENV staff (Air, Terrestrial and Water). The process of selecting a 3PC Contractor takes about six (6) weeks. Once the Contractor has been selected and the 3PC contract is signed the government review can start. The EA Coordinator will tell the Proponent how many copies of the EIA report to send to the 3PC Contractor.

The EA Coordinator will work with the Proponent to schedule a kick-off meeting and other meetings required during the course of review.

### **Citation**

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### **Environmental Assessment Contacts**

Further information about Alberta's Environmental Assessment process can be obtained from:

Environmental Assessment Team  
Alberta Environment  
111 Twin Atria  
4999 – 98 Avenue  
Edmonton, Alberta  
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Phone: (780) 427-5828

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Email:

[environmental.assessment@gov.ab.ca](mailto:environmental.assessment@gov.ab.ca)

Website:

<http://www.environment.alberta.ca/1274.html>

or from the nearest Alberta Environment Regional Office.

### **Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency Contact Information**

Information about the Canadian Environmental Assessment process can be obtained from:

Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency  
Alberta and Northwest Territories Office  
61 Airport Road NW  
Edmonton, Alberta T5G 0W6

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