



# Fact Sheet

## The Canadian Environmental Assessment Act

The Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA) is a federal law that requires consideration of the potential impact a proposed project may have on the environment before federal authorities take any actions, such as funding, that allow a project to proceed. The purpose of the CEAA is to:

- Avoid significant adverse environmental effects;
- Promote sustainable development;
- Ensure cooperation, coordination and efficiency;
- Avoid transboundary effects;
- Ensure meaningful and timely public participation

### Environmental Assessment

Environmental Assessment (EA) is used to identify the potential impact of projects or activities on the environment including: air, water, land and living organisms.

By screening projects for environmental impact, proponents and federal departments/agencies can evaluate the effects a project may have and, proposes measures to potentially mitigate those effects on the environment. An environmental assessment identifies the risks to the environment before a project has begun.

An environmental assessment:

- is a comprehensive and systematic process designed to identify, analyze and evaluate possible environmental effects of proposed projects;
- proposes measures to mitigate adverse effects;
- predicts whether there will be significant adverse environmental effects, even after the mitigation is implemented.

Under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* federal departments and agencies must ensure an EA is undertaken before:

- they carry out a project;
- provide financial assistance to enable a project to be carried out;
- sell, lease or otherwise transfer control or administration of land to enable a project to be undertaken;
- issue an authorization to enable a project to go forward.

### **Environmental Mitigation**

Environmental mitigation measures are intended to prevent or reduce adverse environmental impacts of a proposed project or activity. A project proponent must carry out mitigation measures identified as a result of an EA to receive federal support.

### **Environmental Assessment Responsibility**

WD may manage the assessment process or may delegate responsibility for all or any part of the EA directly to the project proponent. In all cases, WD retains responsibilities to grant federal funding approval for a project based on the outcome of the EA.

### **Proponent Responsibilities**

A project proponent can assist the EA process by providing engineering plans and documents, environmental studies, historical resources impact assessments, or environmental impact statements. Working closely with WD and other federal Responsible Authorities ensures that requirements are communicated in a timely manner.

### **Environmental Assessment Timelines and Costs**

There are different types of EAs and the timeline and costs are dependent on the EA process required.

The Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency serves as a centre of expertise for federal environmental assessment and is responsible for administration of the assessment process. For detailed information on environmental assessments, including the types of EAs, consult the [Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency](#) website.

### **Other Considerations**

Proponents must acquire any necessary authorizations, approvals or licenses and comply with any relevant legislated environmental requirements.

For more detailed information on the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act and environmental assessments consult the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency's website at: [www.ceaa-acee.gc.ca](http://www.ceaa-acee.gc.ca).