

Developing a project – Environmental impact assessments



Things to know

- Legislative responsibility for the protection of the natural environment is shared by federal, provincial and municipal governments. For example, federal and provincial governments both have environmental assessment legislation and endangered species legislation.
- Environmental regulations can apply to both greenfield developments and existing industrial operations. For example, the expansion or alteration of an existing facility could trigger a new environmental assessment and new operating permits/approvals.
- At the federal level, designated projects (activities listed in the [Physical Activities Regulations](#)) are subject to the [Impact Assessment Act](#). The federal Minister of Environment also has the authority to require impact assessments for non-designated projects. Federal impact assessments involve detailed consideration and assessment of potential environmental, health, social and economic impacts of the proposed project, as well as consultation with potentially affected Indigenous groups. At the conclusion of the process, the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada or a review panel will provide recommendations regarding the project's impacts and conditions of approval to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change or the federal Governor-in-Council.
- Each province has environmental assessment legislation that typically coordinates with the *Impact Assessment Act* in order to avoid duplication.

USEFUL RESOURCES

Government resources

- [Impact assessment process overview](#)
- [Practitioner's guide to federal impact assessments under the *Impact Assessment Act*](#)
- [Guide to applying for an environmental compliance approval](#) (Ontario)
- [Apply for *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act* approvals](#) (Alberta)
- [Compliance and enforcement for environmental assessment projects](#) (British Columbia)
- [Environmental assessment for Northern Québec projects](#)
- [Environmental assessment for Southern Québec projects](#)

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- [Government of Canada enacts changes to environmental assessment processes](#)

Things to do

- For major new projects, determine (based on the proposed project details) whether any federal or provincial environmental assessment is required.
- Prepare an initial “Material Permits List” to better plan project development, understand any critical path items and initiate contact with applicable regulators.
- Develop a regulatory and engagement strategy to ensure that key project risks are identified and managed from the outset of project planning.
- Communicate directly with the Impact Assessment Agency, if applicable, prior to submitting an Initial Project Description to facilitate development of documentation and a timely and efficient planning phase.

RELATED TOPICS

- [Indigenous consultation](#)
- [Dealing with environmental regulators](#)
- [Municipal land use planning and development](#)



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