



Environmental Assessment Office

SERVICE PLAN SUMMARY

2006/07 - 2008/09



Ministry of
Environment

Message from the Minister

I am pleased to present the 2006/07 – 2008/09 Service Plan Summary for the Environmental Assessment Office (EAO). In this plan, you will see how the EAO contributes to the broader mandate and increased responsibilities of the Ministry of Environment for effective and responsive environmental management. The full service plan for the EAO was presented with the Ministry of Environment.

We are acting to deliver on the government's goal to lead the world in sustainable environmental management. To do this, we have ensured the EAO retains its important role as a neutral agency.

The EAO delivers a predictable, open and timely process that considers the environmental, economic, social, health and heritage aspects of projects that help to promote the environmental goals set by our government, while fostering a strong and vibrant economy. Government has an obligation to consult with First Nations and, where indicated, accommodate their interests. The EAO seeks the active involvement of potentially affected First Nations in the assessment process to fully understand and report on the potential effects of proposed projects on First Nations communities and interests and propose ways to address those effects.

The strong performance of the provincial economy, as well as increasing demand for energy and other commodities from Asia and the United States, has resulted in an unprecedented number of mining, energy and infrastructure projects entering the environmental assessment process. In fact, the number of projects entering the process is more than triple what it was even four years ago and the trend is likely to continue.

The EAO works with other government bodies, including federal government agencies, and EAO clients to improve upon the environmental assessment process. Efforts are ongoing to harmonize federal and provincial environmental assessments and to identify other opportunities to ensure a streamlined and efficient process for British Columbians.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Barry Penner'.

Honourable Barry Penner
Minister of Environment
February 2006

Purpose of the Office

The Environmental Assessment Office (EAO) coordinates the assessment of proposed major projects in British Columbia as required under the *Environmental Assessment Act* (the Act). The assessment process examines major projects for potentially adverse environmental, economic, social, health and heritage effects that may occur during the life cycle of these projects. The process includes:

- » opportunities for all interested parties to provide input and identify issues;
- » consultations with First Nations;
- » technical studies to identify potentially adverse effects of a proposed project;
- » strategies to prevent, or reduce, adverse effects; and,
- » development of a comprehensive report summarizing input and findings.

Project certification, if issued by ministers at the conclusion of an environmental assessment, represents government's approval in principle and allows a proponent to seek any other statutory authorizations needed to proceed with the project.

Ministry Goals

The EAO's goals focus on the completeness of environmental assessment reporting and the clarity of the environmental assessment process. They will move the organization toward its vision of excellence in environmental assessment and support its mission to report the outcome of environmental assessments to government.

Goal 1: Environmental assessment reports and recommendations are comprehensive and timely.

Environmental assessment reports are based on a thorough review of all relevant issues and include representation of the interests of those affected by a proposed project. This provides the basis for balanced decisions by government on whether a project should proceed.

Goal 2: The environmental assessment process is clear and streamlined.

The process managed by the EAO is continually evaluated and refined to ensure that it is easy for proponents to understand, provides effective tools to assist the development of assessment applications and streamlines regulatory requirements.

Support for the Five Great Goals

The work of the EAO is linked to three of government's Five Great Goals:

- » Lead the world in sustainable environmental management, with the best air and water quality, and the best fisheries management, bar none.
- » Lead the way in North America in healthy living and physical fitness.
- » Create more jobs per capita than anywhere else in Canada.

Cross Ministry Initiatives

To support government's priorities, the EAO is involved in the following cross ministry initiatives:

- » All Season's Resort Strategy
- » Mountain Pine Beetle Action Plan
- » Asia-Pacific Strategy



Ministry Vision and Mission

Vision

Environmentally and socially responsible development that contributes to a strong and vibrant economy in British Columbia.

Mission

The EAO delivers a timely and integrated process for assessing the environmental, social, heritage, economic and health effects, and potential impacts to First Nations claims to Aboriginal rights and title, of major projects in British Columbia, reports the findings of environmental assessment reviews to government and may make recommendations regarding project certification.

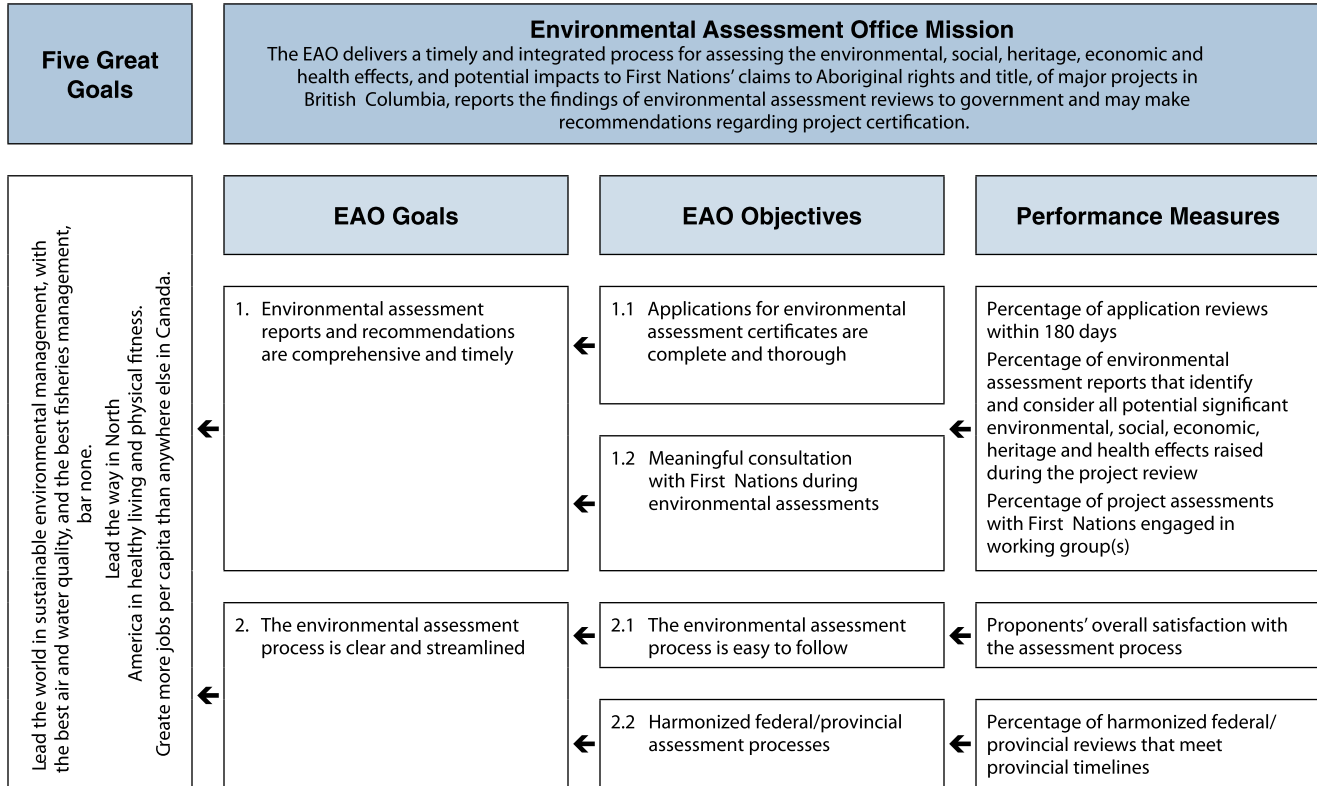


Core Business Areas

- 1. *Project Assessments*** – are managed by individual teams composed of a project leader and one or more process support staff. Staff in project teams work on several different projects simultaneously and draw on technical expertise from across government and the private sector. They apply knowledge, judgment and analytical expertise to coordinate inter-agency and public processes and to prepare project assessment reports that recommend whether projects should proceed or not.
- 2. *Corporate Operations*** – is responsible for providing operational support to the Office in the areas of service planning, budgeting, expenditure control, staff development, human resources, policy and legislation, records management, and management of the electronic Project Information Centre (ePIC) and website.

Ministry Performance Plan Summary

This section details each of the ministry's goals, objectives and performance measures and illustrates how they contribute to government's Five Great Goals.







Contact Information

For more information on the BC Environmental Assessment Office (EAO) visit our website at:
www.eao.gov.bc.ca

The complete Service Plan for the Ministry of Environment and the EAO is available at:
www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2006/sp/env