

BRITISH COLUMBIA ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PROCESS GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

This document is intended to provide a guide for proponents when preparing Project Descriptions. In most cases, a Project Description is the first formal document provided to the Environmental Assessment Office (EAO) by a proponent at the beginning of an environmental assessment (EA) review.

Purpose of a Project Description

The Project Description is used by the EAO to determine whether the project: (1) falls within a category of projects that is “reviewable” under the Reviewable Projects Regulation and (2) meets the EA review thresholds for that category. If the answers to (1) **and** (2) are yes, then the project qualifies as “reviewable” under the *Environmental Assessment Act* (the “Act”).

Where a project qualifies as “reviewable”, the EAO must decide pursuant to section 10 of the Act, whether an environmental assessment is warranted (i.e., the project “...*may have a significant adverse environmental, economic, social, heritage or health effect, taking into account practical means of preventing or reducing to an acceptable level any potential adverse effects of the project...*”). If the answer is “yes, an environmental assessment is warranted”, the EAO decides whether the environmental assessment will be led and managed by the EAO or will be referred to the Minister of Sustainable Resource Management to determine how the assessment will be conducted. For most projects, environmental assessments are managed and led by the EAO.

If after careful consideration, the EAO determines that the project “...*will not have significant adverse environmental, economic, social, heritage or health effects...*” the EAO will issue an order to the proponent indicating that the project may proceed without an environmental assessment under the Act.

The Project Description is needed regardless of whether or not the requirement for an environmental assessment is waived. The Project Description is provided to government agencies, First Nations and local governments to enable them to determine whether they are interested in participating in a project review and to initiate discussions on the scope of the assessment. It may also be used by federal government agencies to determine whether the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* is triggered.

The Project Description is placed on the EAO’s website as the background material supporting a decision under section 10 of the Act.

Contents of a Project Description

The Project Description should provide a general overview of the following information:

Proponent Information: Name, mailing address, phone and fax numbers, email address, name of representative managing the project, company incorporation, and structure and stock exchange listing, if applicable)

General Background Information: A brief summary of the project including: the type and size of the project, with specific reference to environmental assessment thresholds, project purpose and rationale; location (latitude and longitude), a map and conceptual site plan, if available.

Project Overview: A brief description of the major on-site/off-site project components, duration of the project, if appropriate; and potential environmental, economic, heritage, social and health effects (in general terms).

Land use setting: A general description of the land use “setting” (i.e., whether land where project and project components are situated is private or Crown land) and existing land use within the vicinity of the project site.

Consultation Activities: A summary of consultation activities that have been carried out with First Nations, public and local governments.

Proposed Development Schedule: A tentative schedule for submitting an environmental assessment and developing the project.

Required Permits: A list of required permits, if known