

GUIDELINES FOR THE PREPARATION OF A PROJECT PROPOSAL

Saskatchewan Environmental Assessment Review Process

FOREWORD

The Saskatchewan environmental assessment process normally begins when a proponent with a project that may have environmental impacts submits a project proposal to the Environmental Assessment Branch of Saskatchewan Environment (SE). SE requests a proposal when it is possible that project approval may be required under *The Environmental Assessment Act*. A proponent should contact the Environmental Assessment Branch of SE for clarification if s/he is unclear as to whether a proposal may have environmental impacts and should be submitted.

Proposals are circulated for a technical review by SE and other agencies. The review will determine the level of assessment that is required. The proponent is then advised as to whether the project requires a full environmental impact assessment (EIA) or whether the project may proceed subject to applicable regulatory requirements. (Proponents should be aware that determinations by the Branch are subject to legal challenge by a third party, in which case a judge would make the final determination on EIA requirement.)

INFORMATION REQUIRED IN A PROJECT PROPOSAL

A proposal should be a well organized, typed document which provides reviewers with enough information to understand what is being proposed and the environment in which the project is to be located. The proposal should describe the possible environmental impacts of the project, together with any measures that the proponent is planning to use to reduce or avoid these impacts. Impacts that cannot be avoided should also be described.

Presentation of complete information, including specific commitments to avoid or reduce identified environmental impacts, will help ensure proposal review is completed within a reasonable review period (usually 30 to 45 days). Where issues are raised as a result of the technical review, the proponent will be asked to submit additional information.

Proponents who are unable to provide the information identified in the following sections should consider hiring a consultant(s) with appropriate professional qualifications to assist in proposal preparation.

INTRODUCTION

This section of the project proposal should provide a brief project summary and identify the proponent and key project personnel. Project schedule, location, life of the project, and the number and type of people to be employed and the project's benefits can be described. The proponent may also wish to discuss project need.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This section should present a clear and detailed description of the proposed project. All phases of the project should be described, from planning through construction and operation to decommissioning.

Location: A detailed description of the location should be provided. Maps showing the location of the proposed project relative to other land uses and developments should be presented.

Project: Relevant project details include size, length (for linear projects), lay out, capacity, production rates, process information and dimensional characteristics. Descriptions should be accompanied by site and regional maps, flow charts, diagrams, graphs and photographs that will assist reviewers in understanding the proposed project. While final design details normally will not be available when the proposal is prepared, preliminary design details should be presented. Final design will be reviewed as part of follow-up regulatory procedures administered by SE and other agencies.

Inputs: All inputs (e.g., water, other natural resources, electricity, process chemicals, hazardous substances) should be identified and their quantities and sources described.

Ancillary Projects: Any associated or ancillary projects (e.g., pipelines, borrow pits, roads, treatment plants) normally should be included as part of the project proposal, or the proponent identified if they are to be proposed by another developer. Ancillary projects include any related project that would not exist without the main project.

Byproducts: The amount and type of all byproducts and wastes should be described, including products, recyclable materials, hazardous and non-hazardous wastes, waste water, air emissions and garbage, together with the means by which these materials will be treated, stored, contained, transported, used and/or disposed of. Any ancillary projects necessary to deal with wastes (e.g., new pipelines, treatment plants, landfills or other disposal facilities) should also be described.

Alternatives: Any alternatives considered during project planning (e.g., location, process, route) should be described and an explanation of why they were rejected provided. Any environmental considerations which were relevant to selection of the preferred alternative should be identified.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

This section should describe the environment in which the project is to be located. **The type of information and level of detail provided in each part of this section will vary according to the project, its location, and the type of environmental features it may affect.** Depending on the project and its location, this section should include descriptions of:

Biological environment. The proposal should describe vegetation (e.g., native prairie, woodland, seeded grassland, agronomic crops) at and around the project site, presence of wildlife in the project area and value of the project area as wildlife habitat. Fish and fish habitat should be described if surface waterbodies will be affected. Occurrences of rare species (plants and animals) and suitable habitat should be identified, particularly where the project will affect uncultivated areas. Field evaluations may be required to supplement existing information, or a “risk assessment” may be required which evaluates potential conflicts with features of concern (in the event that seasonal or other factors preclude a field appraisal).

Physical environment. Unique landforms, slopes, runoff characteristics and soil types should be described, plus proximity to streams or waterbodies. Subsurface stratigraphy and depth to groundwater should be determined if the project may affect groundwater. Baseline surface and ground water quality should be described where appropriate. Field evaluations may be required to provide site-specific data.

Human environment. Land use at and around the project area should be described, together with existing infrastructure (roads, utilities). Nearby residents and communities should be identified, as should special land-use designations (e.g., parks, local zoning). Existing contamination or disturbances should also be described. In addition, any site which may have significant cultural or heritage value should be identified. Heritage Branch, Saskatchewan Culture, Youth & Recreation, should be contacted early in the planning process to ensure that potential heritage conflicts are identified and avoided. Phone: 306-787-5772.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIVE MEASURES

This section should describe the effects (positive and negative) which the project may have on the environmental features identified in previous sections of the proposal. The level of evaluation on particular subjects will vary according to project complexity and potential for interaction with particular environmental components. For example, any special risks or hazards posed by wastes and by-products should be described, together with contingency plans to deal with emergency situations (e.g., spills, plant malfunctions). Other impacts may relate to wildlife or plant species. Measures to avoid, minimize or manage impacts should be described. If some mitigative measures have been included in the Project Description, they should be summarized in this section. Any project changes or mitigation made in response to public concern should be identified. Any residual impacts that cannot be mitigated should be summarized. Also, contingency plans and monitoring programs should be outlined.

If impacts are not completely understood, their potential occurrence should be identified, together with the proponent's plans to undertake additional evaluation and to implement specific contingency plans in the event of their occurrence. **The completeness of the proponent's evaluation in this section and the proponent's ability to demonstrate that significant potential impacts have either been eliminated or reduced are key considerations in determining whether a full environmental impact assessment will be required.**

DECOMMISSIONING AND RECLAMATION

This section should provide specific plans for project decommissioning, and describe how the area affected by the project will be reclaimed or otherwise restored.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Any public consultation undertaken or planned by the proponent should be documented. These consultations may include informal discussions with landowners and nearby residents, meetings with municipal councils or public-interest groups, open houses or public meetings. Any indication of community acceptance or public interest in the project (e.g., news articles) should be documented. Any future consultation planned to deal with public issues would be beneficial. This information assists in evaluating whether there is local, regional or widespread public concern with the proposed project.

SOCIO-ECONOMICS

The potential impact to local communities in terms of potential jobs and contracts should be outlined. This is especially important for projects in northern Saskatchewan. For such projects, this section should be more detailed and should outline the types of jobs and contracts, the inputs that will be purchased locally and the proponent's policy on the hiring of local employees for both labour and managerial positions.

NUMBER OF PROPOSALS TO BE SUBMITTED

Fifteen to 20 copies of proposals are typically required. In addition to circulation to provincial agencies, copies are provided to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, and may be distributed to municipal governments, local First Nations, environmental or other public-interest groups, and members of the general public. Contact the Project Manager for a determination of the number of copies required for a particular project.

Proposals should be submitted to the Project Manager or to:

Director
Environmental Assessment Branch
Saskatchewan Environment
3211 Albert Street
Regina, Saskatchewan S4S 5W6

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