

Understanding the Environmental Assessment Requirements of BCF-CC Projects

Funding agreements established through the BCF-CC are subject to the federal environmental legislation requirements of the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* (CEAA). The requirements of CEAA are triggered, in this instance, by the provision of federal funding for BCF-CC projects.

This information package has been created to inform potential project applicants of the CEAA process and to answer frequently asked questions.

Q: What is CEAA?

CEAA is a decision-making tool used to identify potential environmental, social, and economic effects of a project and to develop mitigation strategies to remove or manage these effects. The overall intent of the legislation is to ensure projects do not cause significant adverse environmental effects and to promote principles of sustainable development.

Q: What are the major steps of the BCF-CC CEAA process?

The first step is always the BCF-CC Joint Secretariat determining if the proposed project is **excluded** from the CEAA or requires the completion of an **Environmental Assessment** report.

The *BCF-CC CEAA Process flow chart* on the website will help to illustrate the BCF-CC CEAA process.

Q: What is an Environmental Assessment (EA)?

In general, an environmental assessment is the process of predicting the environmental effects of proposed initiatives / projects before they are carried out.

An environmental assessment:

- identifies possible environmental effects;
- proposes measures to mitigate adverse effects; and
- predicts whether there will be significant adverse environmental effects, even after the mitigation is implemented.

Environmental assessments occur early in a project's development prior to construction and are required before any federal funding can be released. An important component for all BCF-CC funded projects requiring an EA is the inclusion of a detailed **Project Description**.

Q: What is a Project Description (PD)?

A project description is usually an early step in the EA process and provides detailed information on the project including its purpose, location, description of the physical

environment, construction methods and potential effects on the natural and social environments. For most BCF-CC projects the PD can be incorporated into the main EA Report.

Q: Do all projects require an EA?

There are several different levels of environmental assessments under CEAA depending upon the size and complexity of the project. In some instances, the BCF-CC Joint Secretariat will determine that the project will be exempted from the Act if it does not pose any environmental harm. If an environmental assessment is not required, an Exclusion Letter will be sent to the Proponent.

For more complex projects, an environmental assessment will be required to address and mitigate environmental effects. ***The proponent is responsible for ensuring an environmental assessment is completed.*** Often a third party with the appropriate expertise and experience is contracted to conduct the environmental assessment on the proponent's behalf.

Q: What happens after the EA is complete?

An Environmental Screening Report (ESR) and Environmental Screening Decision (ESD) document is prepared by the BCF-CC Joint Secretariat, which summarizes the government's review of the project. The ESR identifies all necessary licensing and mitigation requirements for the project. ***No construction may occur until the proponent receives the Environmental Screening Report & Decision from the BCF-CC Joint Secretariat***

The proponent is also responsible for preparing and using an **Environmental Construction and Operation Plan (ECO Plan)** to ensure mitigation strategies are implemented during the construction phase of the project.

Upon completion of the project the proponent will submit a final project report to the BCF-CC Joint Secretariat. Part of this submission will be the Final Environmental Report. A designated individual is required to oversee that the environmental mitigation strategies are followed. This individual should write the Final Environmental Report upon construction completion.

Q: Is there additional information to help in this process?

To help you understand the planning process, **three other documents are available on the BCF-CC Website under the Environmental Assessment heading at:**

www.buildingcanadafundalberta-cc.ca

The documents include:

- 1. BCF-CC CEAA Process Flow Chart**
A flow-chart illustrating the BCF-CC CEAA Process.
- 2. Project Description Policy Guideline**
Information on preparing a Project Description extracted from the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency's website.
- 3. Preferred Environmental Assessment Table of Contents**
An outline for a BCF-CC Environmental Assessment Report.

For more information on CEAA visit the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency's website: http://www.ceaa-acee.gc.ca/index_e.htm.

Please direct questions on this material to:

BCF-CC Environment Officer – Kathryn Fraser
Phone: (780) 495-8679