

Environmental Impact Assessment

THE PROACTIVE APPROACH TO ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Commercial and industrial development results in changes to the environment. In the past, this type of activity was sometimes conducted with little consideration of the long-term social and environmental effects. That approach resulted in costly impacts that were sometimes impossible to remediate. Environmental impact assessments predict and prevent unwanted impacts, and present solutions to mitigate and monitor anticipated effects. This enables a proactive approach to the decision-making and planning process.

Green Plan Ltd. has conducted environmental impact assessments (EIAs) for many industrial and urban developments.

Our project team is fully aware of government requirements for impact assessments and environmental protection and can present the results of their investigations competently and professionally – in written reports and at public hearings or open houses.



Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA's) provide a systematic approach for identifying the environmental effects of proposed projects. By identifying adverse environmental effects before they occur, EIAs allow decision makers to modify plans so that the effects can be minimized or eliminated.

As a planning tool, EIAs have been applied by all levels of government in Canada since the 1960s. Many governments have adapted legislation making it a legal requirement to conduct EIA's for certain projects such as:

- major sour gas processing plants
- major underground or surface coal mining projects
- hydro and thermal power plants
- oil sands mining projects and associated processing facilities
- in-situ oil sands projects
- large scale industrial facilities requiring industrial development permits
- major pipelines
- major transmission lines
- major recreation developments
- major railways and highways
- airport developments
- major residential developments
- major water resources projects

The EIA process typically culminates with the submission of an EIA report to the applicable regulatory authority upon which a decision is made to either proceed, terminate the project or undergo further study. The EIA report typically includes the following information:

- description and rationale of the proposed activity, including alternatives considered
- description of the existing environment
- potential effects of the activity on the environment
- recommended mitigation measures that would reduce
- eliminate or compensate for the environmental impacts of the activity
- description of how mitigation measures will be monitored over time to ensure effectiveness
- public participation

REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS FOR EIAs IN CANADA

It is the proponent's responsibility to seek clarification from the applicable government authority whether an environmental impact assessment will be required for a project. Failure to do so early in the project planning stage may result in unnecessary delays. Furthermore, failure to conduct an EIA may be a violation of federal, provincial, or municipal statutes.

FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

The Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA)

CEAA applies to projects for which the federal government holds decision-making authority – whether as proponent, land administrator, source of funding, or regulator. Some projects may require authorization by both provincial or territorial governments and the federal government.

To avoid the duplication and excessive costs of separate EIAs, CEAA gives the Minister the power to enter into agreements or arrangements with any jurisdiction for the purpose of assessing the environmental effects of projects where both parties have authorization responsibilities.

The main CEAA triggers include:

- *The Fisheries Act*
work that affects fish habitat
- *Navigable Waters Protection Act*
work that affects navigability of water courses
- *Indian Act*
work on First Nations land

PROVINCIAL REQUIREMENTS

Most provincial governments have legislation that requires EIAs on major resource developments.

In many provinces there is a joint agreement between the Federal government and Provincial government regarding EIAs.

MUNICIPAL REQUIREMENTS

Many development activities proposed for lands within municipalities are subject to environmental review in the form of a municipal policy or bylaw.

An EIA can also be required on the basis of obtaining a building or development permit, or other approvals related to land development.

Typically, EIAs are submitted to the municipal planning or development department and forwarded to City Council for review.

