



# Cumulative Effects Framework

*Assessing and Managing Cumulative Effects in British Columbia*

## CEF Interim Policy Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### **What is the Cumulative Effects Framework (CEF)?**

The cumulative effects framework is a set of policies, procedures and decision-support tools that helps identify and manage cumulative effects consistently and transparently across British Columbia's natural resource sector.

### **What's in the CEF Interim Policy?**

The interim policy identifies and defines government's approach to integrating cumulative effects considerations into natural resource sector decision-making in BC. Specifically, the cumulative effects framework interim policy:

- identifies consistent standards and direction for assessing and reporting cumulative effects, for a defined set of values;
- provides general expectations for considering and managing cumulative effects in natural resource decision-making;
- identifies key roles and responsibilities, including regional governance structures to enable consistent and coordinated management responses across natural resource sector agencies;
- outlines expectations and commitment for continued engagement and collaboration with First Nations and stakeholders; and
- confirms a commitment to continued monitoring and evaluation of policy implementation progress and effectiveness.

### **How was the CEF Interim Policy developed?**

The interim policy is the result of years of collaborative work developing the framework, testing the approach in demonstration projects, refining assessments, engaging First Nations and stakeholders and improving the policy. Approval of the interim policy represents a significant milestone and the start of province-wide cumulative effects framework implementation.

**Who does the CEF Interim Policy apply to?**

The cumulative effects interim policy is primarily intended for government staff and decision makers responsible for completing and approving cumulative effects framework assessments as well as natural resource sector decision makers and staff involved in the process of authorizing use of Crown lands and resources or directing the management of resource values.

**What does interim approval mean?**

Interim approval is intended to provide a structured evaluation opportunity of the policy as well as to facilitate continued engagement with First Nations, stakeholders and government staff. Implementation reports will be provided to the Natural Resource Board to ensure there are no unintended consequences of policy approval. As implementation proceeds, the interim policy may be revised. The adaptive nature of the cumulative effects framework allows for continuous improvement of all cumulative effects framework policies and products over time.

**How was engagement feedback used in developing the interim policy?**

Engagement feedback and comments were gathered over multiple years, but primarily through 2015 and 2016. Comments were reviewed and identified various opportunities for improving draft policy and value assessments. Engagement feedback helped to inform, modify and improve the cumulative effects framework and is reflected in the interim policy. Engagement underscores the importance of understanding and incorporating stakeholder ideas and perspectives, while still balancing the diverse interests of British Columbians and the natural resource sector.

**Is this new legislation?**

The cumulative effects framework does not create new legislative requirements; rather it informs and guides cumulative effects considerations through existing natural resource sector legislation, policies, programs and initiatives. Integrating the cumulative effects framework into existing natural resource decision-making processes and enabling cross-sector governance will ensure cumulative effects are identified, considered and managed consistently.

**Why is the interim policy important?**

The cumulative effects framework interim policy will help provide a consistent, transparent and predictable set of policies, procedures and decision-support tools to identify and manage cumulative effects in the natural resource sector. Once fully implemented, the cumulative effects framework will help support strategic (e.g., establishing new government initiatives and direction), tactical (e.g., coordinating regional planning and management priorities), and operational decisions (e.g., informing authorizations for natural resource activities). The cumulative effects framework interim policy reinforces government direction and resolve to integrate cumulative effects considerations into natural resource sector decision-making. The interim policy is one more tool that contributes to the overall objective of ensuring the social, environmental and economic values important to the people of British Columbia are managed in a consistent and balanced approach.

**How will the interim policy change things?**

With the approval of the cumulative effects framework interim policy we can now transition to province-wide cumulative effects framework implementation and integration into natural resource sector decision-making. Implementation will continue to expand as initial cumulative effects framework value assessments, reports and decision-support tools are made available.

**How will we know if the interim policy is effective?**

Adaptive management and continuous improvement are key components to the cumulative effects framework and its implementation. Policy and procedure documents may be amended or refined based on insights gained from monitoring the progress and effectiveness of cumulative effects framework implementation. Identifying and incorporating emerging best practices and new insights from comments and feedback will help improve the cumulative effects framework. To ensure the cumulative effects framework interim policy and assessments are effectively addressing cumulative effects, government will report to the Natural Resource Board on the progress of interim policy implementation.

**Will there be further engagement?**

Yes. Engagement will continue with First Nations, key stakeholders, and government staff. Feedback received will help inform modifications to the interim policy so it can be responsive and continuously improved and refined over time. Comments and feedback can always be submitted at anytime at [CumulativeEffects@gov.bc.ca](mailto:CumulativeEffects@gov.bc.ca).

**What about cumulative effects framework training?**

Online resources and information sessions will be provided to help familiarize end-users with the use and application of cumulative effects framework tools, reports and assessments. Extension and training for ministry staff will be an ongoing priority for cumulative effects framework implementation with the goal of building a common understanding of the policy and the application of cumulative effects framework. Training will also focus on building capacity for affected natural resource sector staff to deliver key functions required for the implementation of the interim policy and overall framework.

**When and where will cumulative effects framework assessments be publicly available?**

New Cumulative effects framework assessments for a priority set of values will start to be publicly available in mid to late 2017. Current condition reports for values will be made available online through the cumulative effects framework website (assessment reports), BC Government warehouse (assessment results data) and iMapBC (assessment maps). Assessment result data and associated guidance will also be centrally accessible through the Natural Resource Sector Online Services. As other cumulative effects framework assessment protocols are approved for additional cumulative effects framework values they will also be publicly accessible through the same online portals.