ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OFFICE – REVISED APPLICATION INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS TEMPLATE

BACKGROUND

The Environmental Assessment Office (EAO) has updated its Application Information Requirements (AIR) template. The AIR sets out the information that must be provided by a proponent in an application for an Environmental Assessment Certificate. The AIR is used to determine whether an application contains all the necessary information and therefore may proceed to the review stage of the environmental assessment.

WHAT'S CHANGED?

The revised template:

- Clarifies the information that must be contained in the AIR vs. what information must be contained in the application; and

- Clarifies what text is required and what can be customized or removed (if appropriate).

The revised AIR template also:

- Adds new information requirements relating to Valued Components (VCs) that are selected for assessment, study area boundaries and methodology (consistent with the Guideline for the Selection of Valued Components and Assessment of Potential Effects [VC Guideline], including direct references to the VC Guideline throughout);

- Adds requirements and guidance for a plain language Application Summary (replaces the requirement for an Executive Summary);

- Adds hyperlinks to emerging guidance and tools relevant to environmental assessments (such as heritage effects, public consultation, substitution details, environmental mitigation policy and tailings management);

- Adds a new chapter to Part B to discuss the requirements of the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act 2012* (for substituted projects);

- Revises the Table of Concordance to include more detail to make it easier to locate information in the application;

- Adds guidance for linking to documents already posted to on the EAO's on-line Electronic Project Information Centre (ePIC) to avoid having to repeat information (e.g. Proponent Description/Project Description, VC Selection Document).

The revised AIR template also includes the formatting changes illustrated below:

1. Blue text is meant to be replaced in the AIR with project-specific content or with hyperlinks to relevant documents. If the text to be replaced is only part of a sentence, the text to be replaced will be bracketed like this [replace this text].

2. Guidance Text boxes are placed throughout the template and are designed to be deleted in the final document. There are two types of guidance text boxes in the AIR template:

> Blue boxes provide general guidance for all environmental assessments (EAs)

> Gold boxes provide guidance for required information or text for the AIR and/or the Application for substituted EAs

PURPOSE

The purpose of the AIR template is to focus the AIR and subsequent application on what matters and to allow those who are constructing the AIR to avoid repeating information that is contained elsewhere (such as on the EAO's website). A focused template and clearly prescribed content supports the effective and efficient review of applications.

TRANSITIONAL PROVISION

Use of the new template is optional for projects that have already proceeded with the 2013 template. However, there may be guidance in the new template, particularly for substituted environmental assessments, that proponents and practitioners may find useful. The EAO may request that proponents incorporate language from the new AIR template on a case-by-case basis.

AMENDMENTS

This template will be amended from time to time to reflect emerging methodologies and guidance, changes in government policy and direction, and lessons from user experience. It has been tested for use by a number of projects at the AIR development stage and feedback has been addressed where applicable. Any future revisions will be communicated to affected parties and posted on the EAO's website.

Question & Comments: Questions and comments about the revised template can be submitted to EAOINFO@gov.bc.ca.