

APPLICATION INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS TEMPLATE TAILINGS MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS FOR MINING PROJECTS UNDERGOING AN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

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The Environmental Assessment Office (EAO) has established additional information requirements for mines undergoing environmental assessments. These requirements will enable EAO to evaluate tailings management options and efforts to mitigate risks and potential impact.

Proposed mining projects that have new proposed tailings dams are required to provide the following information:

The application for an environmental assessment certificate must include a description and an assessment of alternative means of undertaking the proposed project with respect to options for tailings management that considers technology, siting and water balance.

The assessment must present and compare best practices and best available technologies for tailings management for the project, along with options for managing water balance to enhance safety and reduce the risk (likelihood and consequence) of a tailings dam failure during all phases of mine life (construction, operations, closure, post-closure). The assessment must present and compare technically and economically viable engineering solutions that are available to adequately address site conditions.

The assessment must provide a clear and transparent evaluation of the factors that supported the selection of the most suitable option. Factors that will be taken into consideration in the evaluation include safety, technical and financial aspects, and implications for environmental, health, social, heritage and economic values. The assessment must consider these factors in relation to tailings management options in both the short and long-term context. Life cycle cost assumptions (construction, operations, closure, post-closure) must be included in the analysis of options.

While EAO recognizes that the selection of project design rests with the proponent, the requirements are to ensure that proponents have:

- considered other options that can address the potential for adverse effects on the factors noted above;
- for the project design option selected, considered the potential risks and implications of that option, and have a technically and economically feasible plan to address the potential risks and implications; and
- provided a clear and transparent rationale for the selected option(s).

EAO will use the information to evaluate tailings management options and to determine whether the plans and strategies presented by mining companies adequately address any potential risks or implications.

Further questions can be directed to EAO.INFO@gov.bc.ca.

