

Early Engagement Guide

VERSION 2.1

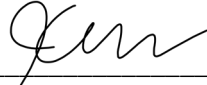
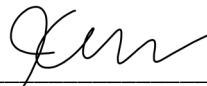
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EAO

Environmental
Assessment Office

Version Control History

Version #	Date (YYY-MM-DD)	Modification	Approved by
Version 1.0	2019/12/16	n/a	 Scott Bailey, Assistant Deputy Minister Operations Division Environmental Assessment Office  Trish Sterloff, Executive Director Strategic Services and Compliance Environmental Assessment Office
Version 1.1	2024/06/19	Review process on the Initial Project Description Updated language on sharing information with Indigenous nations	 Julie Chace, Executive Director Strategic Services and Compliance Environmental Assessment Office
Version 2.0	2025/06/05	Updates to information sharing requirements with First Nations, distinctions- based approach to consultation, IPD and DPD requirements, plain language descriptions, and updated links.	 Julie Chace, Executive Director Strategic Services and Compliance Environmental Assessment Office
Version 2.1	2026/05/19	Updates to clarify CEAO authority under Section 15(2)	 Alex MacLennan, Associate Deputy Minister Environmental Assessment Office

This document provides guidance to help environmental assessment proponents, participants and the public better understand British Columbia's environmental assessment process. It is not advice and does not replace requirements of the *Environmental Assessment Act*, 2018 or its regulations, or bind any decision-maker.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Act - the 2018 *Environmental Assessment Act*

B.C. - British Columbia

CAC - Community Advisory Committee

CEAO - Chief Executive Assessment Officer

DPD - Detailed Project Description

EA - Environmental Assessment

EAO - Environmental Assessment Office

GHG - greenhouse gas

IPD - Initial Project Description

NTS - National Topographic System

RPR - Reviewable Projects Regulation

TAC - Technical Advisory Committee

VC - valued component

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This document provides guidance for carrying out the Early Engagement phase of an environmental assessment (EA) pursuant to the [Environmental Assessment Act \(2018\)](#) (the Act), specifically [Part 4 – Early Engagement, sections 13 through 15](#). The primary user of this guidance will be proponents of reviewable projects. Other participants in a provincial EA, including First Nations and the public, may also use this guidance document to understand the roles, responsibilities, and process requirements during Early Engagement. This Early Engagement Guide is intended to be read and interpreted in conjunction with the Act.

Early Engagement is the first phase in the provincial EA process. It is an important preparatory stage during which meaningful conversations take place about a proposed project with the project proponent, First Nations, the public, local governments, provincial and federal government agencies, and other parties involved to identify potential interests, issues and concerns early in the EA process. This early period of engaging and listening to the various parties that may be involved in a project's EA helps establish an important foundation for the remainder of the process – both in terms of developing the relationships between the various parties, as well as gaining a better understanding of the key issues and interests of the various parties. During this phase, the First Nations that may be affected by the proposed project are identified, and the EAO begins to gain a shared understanding of their Section 35 rights¹ and other interests that may be affected by the proposed project, which will inform the scope of the assessment of a project and the EAO's consensus seeking.

Input from these groups informs aspects of project design, siting, and associated activities to address major issues early in the EA process. It also informs the decision made by the Chief Executive Assessment Officer (CEAO) under [Section 16](#) of the Act (called the Readiness Decision) as well as subsequent phases in the EA process.

See Figure 1 for an overview of the EA phases and associated timelines.

Achieving the intended outcomes of Early Engagement

The purpose of the Early Engagement Phase is to identify the interests, concerns, and values of those affected by the Project and begin to form relationships. To optimize this phase, the EAO encourages proponents to:

- Form strong, respectful relationships with First Nations prior to entering Early Engagement
- Begin public, municipal, and other stakeholder engagement prior to entering Early Engagement
- Submit a clear and concise, plain-language Initial Project Description that is aimed at increasing public understanding of the Project, by including an adequate description of the project components and activities to assist interested parties in understanding potential project effects

Further details and recommendations for Early Engagement are available in the Proponent Checklist (Appendix 3).

¹ For more information, see [section 3.3](#) of this document.

Environmental Assessment Process (2018)

SUMMARY OF THE PROCESS FROM EARLY ENGAGEMENT TO POST-CERTIFICATE

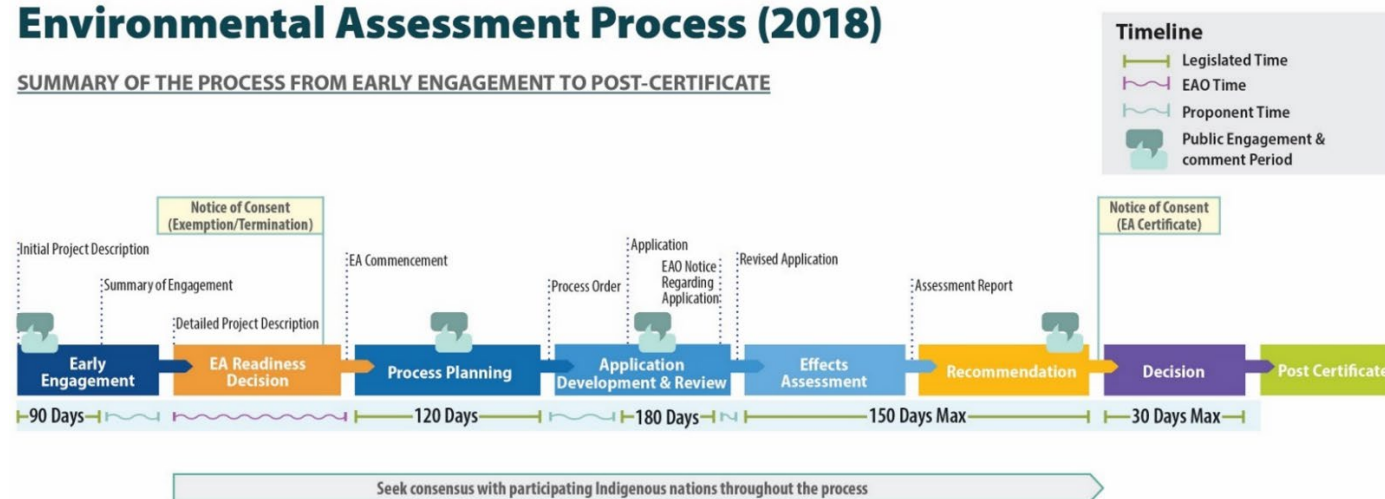


Figure 1. Overview of the EA process and identification of the Early Engagement phase within the process

2.0 EARLY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

This section provides more information on the process that occurs during the Early Engagement Phase. An overview of the Early Engagement process is provided in Figure 2 below.

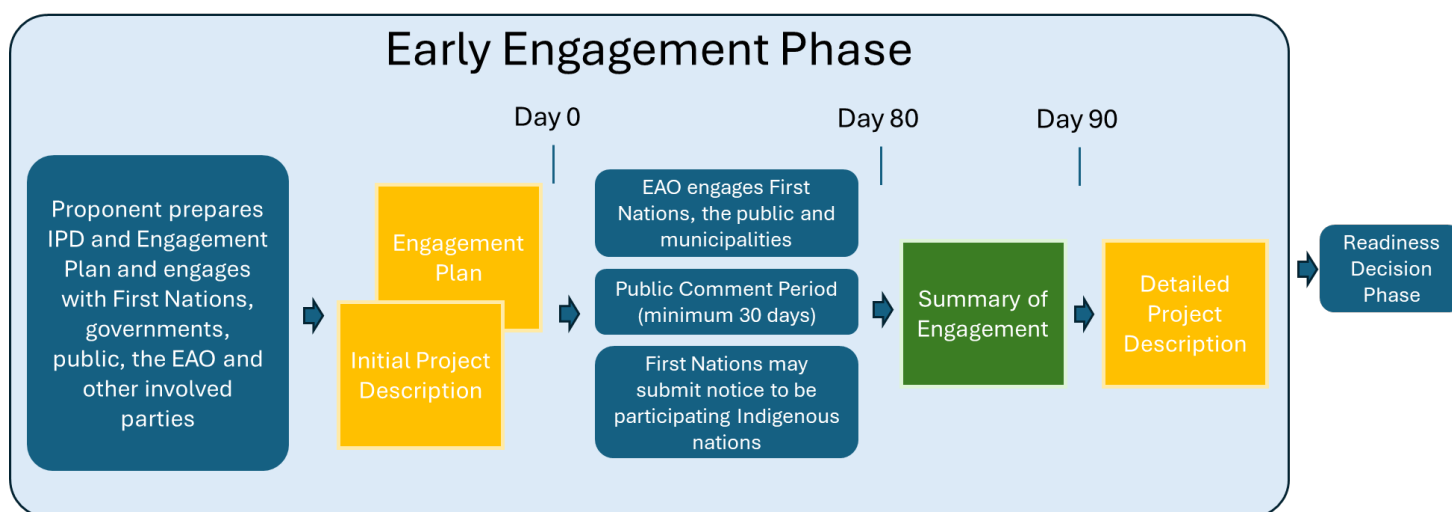


Figure 2. Overview of the Early Engagement Phase Process

During the Early Engagement phase there are three key documents that a proponent is responsible for preparing (the Initial Project Description, Engagement Plan, and Detailed Project Description) and one that the EAO must prepare (the EAO's Summary of Engagement). Providing quality materials within the specified timelines supports an efficient and timely process. The timing of and parties responsible for key deliverables during Early Engagement are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Early Engagement deliverables, responsible parties, and associated timelines

Document/Activity	Responsible Party	Timing
Initial Project Description	Proponent	Start of Early Engagement
Engagement Plan	Proponent	Start of Early Engagement
Public Comment Period (minimum 30 days)	The EAO	After acceptance of the IPD and Engagement Plan
EAO engagement with interested parties	The EAO	After acceptance of the IPD and Engagement Plan
Notice to EAO of intention to be a participating Indigenous nation	First Nations	Must be provided by day 80 of Early Engagement
Confirmation of participating Indigenous nations	The EAO	By day 90 of Early Engagement
Summary of Engagement	The EAO	By day 90 of Early Engagement
Detailed Project Description	Proponent	Within one year of the receipt of the Summary of Engagement.

2.1. Submission of the Initial Project Description and Engagement Plan

The Early Engagement phase begins with the proponent's submission of its Initial Project Description (IPD) and Engagement Plan to the EAO, as required under [Section 13\(1\)](#) of the Act. Refer to [Appendix 1](#) and [Appendix 2](#), respectively, for guidelines on completing a project-specific IPD and Engagement Plan.

If the project may trigger a federal impact assessment under the *Impact Assessment Act* or *Canadian Energy Regulator Act*, the IPD would also need to meet the requirements of that process. For more information, please see the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada's [website](#).

To ensure the process runs smoothly, proponents are strongly encouraged to:

- Meet with the EAO in advance of submitting the IPD and Engagement Plan to discuss the proposed project, and share at least one draft of the documents with the EAO for information and feedback;
- Self-evaluate readiness to enter Early Engagement using the Early Engagement Proponent Checklist, provided in [Appendix 3](#) of this guide;
- Discuss the draft IPD and draft Engagement Plan with local governments² and the public prior to submission to the EAO to better understand how interested parties want to be engaged during the EA process;
- Identify the specific First Nations to engage and develop relationships with by using the public facing [Consultation Areas spatial tool](#) available online and checking with the EAO to inform which First Nations to engage;
- Review any agreements that are in place between First Nations and the EAO³ to consider whether there may be additional requirements for their IPD and Engagement Plan; and
- Provide opportunities for input and review from First Nations on the IPD and Engagement Plan, including but not limited to sharing drafts for review and comment and including feedback, specific to each First Nation.

² For more information, see Section [2.1.5](#) of this document.

³ Agreements between the EAO and First Nations are available on the [EAO's website](#).

After the final IPD and Engagement Plan are received, the EAO will review the documents to confirm conformity with this guide and decide whether to accept the documents or require that changes be made prior to acceptance, as per [Section 13\(3\)](#) of the Act. Once the IPD and Engagement Plan are determined to be adequate, the EAO will issue a legal order under [Section 13\(3\)\(a\)](#) of the Act to approve the documents.

The EAO will also issue a fee order of \$25,000 under [Section 13\(1\)](#) of the Act to the proponent within 30 days of filing of the IPD and Engagement Plan. Please refer to the [Environmental Assessment Fees Regulation](#) for more information.

2.1.1. Initial Project Description

The IPD should provide enough information to parties participating in the EA to build a preliminary understanding of the proposed project, and to support the identification of potential interests and concerns that would need to be considered or addressed if the proposed project proceeds to the next phase of the EA. The IPD will also inform the EAO's public comment period and preliminary engagement with First Nations. The IPD is meant to have a flexible format that is focused on providing easily accessible and understandable information, plain language, limited technical details, and uses visual graphics, where appropriate. The information contained in the IPD is typically updated for inclusion in the DPD based on the feedback received during Early Engagement.

The IPD must include a map showing the area of anticipated direct or indirect effects of the project. First Nations and the EAO use this information to gain an initial understanding of how the project may interact with First Nations and their Section 35 rights. This information helps to inform First Nations about whether the nation and their rights may be adversely affected by the project and whether they provide notice to be a participating Indigenous nation. First Nations may have additional considerations for an IPD in relation to their rights or they may identify additional information through review of a proponent's draft IPD. Proponents should demonstrate in the IPD how they have addressed or intend to address questions or concerns raised by First Nations during engagement on the draft IPD.

Refer to [Appendix 1 – Initial Project Description Guidelines](#) for more information on completing a project-specific IPD. If a proponent intends to pursue an exemption at the Readiness Decision, the IPD should provide the information that is required under [Section 16](#) of the Act and in the [Certificate Exemption Policy](#).

2.1.2. Engagement Plan

Proponents are required to submit an Engagement Plan with their IPD per [Section 13](#) of the Act. The Engagement Plan outlines the proponent's approach (including methods and activities) proposed for engagement with First Nations, the public, local governments, provincial and federal government agencies, and stakeholders throughout Early Engagement. The Engagement Plan should also include a summary of all engagement conducted prior to the start of Early Engagement. Refer to [Appendix 2 – Engagement Plan Guidelines](#) for further information on completing a project-specific Engagement Plan.

The Engagement Plan should consider different types of engagement to ensure that there are opportunities for all potentially impacted parties to be involved in the EA. The scope of engagement will vary between projects and should be informed by the potential project effects and the location of the project in relation to First Nations and the public or areas of importance to First Nations or the public.

As with the IPD, the proponent is strongly encouraged to share a draft of the Engagement Plan with First Nations and meaningfully integrate their feedback prior to submitting to the EAO for approval. First Nations may have additional engagement consideration that may be incorporated into the Engagement Plan.

The Engagement Plan will also help inform the design of subsequent engagement processes, which will be defined later in the Assessment Plan during the Process Planning phase of the EA.

Proponents should maintain engagement records throughout the Early Engagement phase regarding identified issues, and, if applicable, the resolution reached, for inclusion in the DPD.

If a proponent intends to seek an exemption from the requirement of an EA, the Engagement Plan should identify how interested parties have been or will be made aware of this intent and include any feedback received from them. Proponents should refer to the [Certificate Exemption Policy](#) for more information on an exemption request.

2.2. The First 90 Days

The legislated timelines during the Early Engagement Phase commence with the CEAO's approval of the IPD and Engagement Plan (marking day 0 of the 90-day legislated timeline). The EAO will then hold a minimum 30-day public comment period on the IPD per [Section 13\(4\)](#) of the Act. During this time, the EAO will also undertake engagement with First Nations and other parties to the EA as appropriate, including the public, local governments, provincial and federal government agencies, and stakeholders. The extent and type of engagement will be determined on a project-specific basis based on the level of interest and potential effects of the proposed project. The EAO-led engagement could include:

- Meetings and information sharing with First Nations, the public, local governments, and provincial and federal government agencies;
- In-person or online public open houses;
- Community workshops and presentations; and
- Meetings with stakeholders, organizations, community interest groups, or individuals with a relevant interest in the proposed project.

The EAO expects that the proponent will provide support to the EAO with respect to its activities during Early Engagement, including conducting public information sessions and advertising during the public comment period. The EAO will require the proponent to respond to all public comments received on the IPD in its Detailed Project Description (DPD), unless otherwise directed by the EAO. Please refer to the EAO's [Public Engagement Policy](#) for further information on conducting transparent and meaningful engagement activities.

2.3. First Nation Engagement

During the first 90 days, the EAO will be seeking to clarify its [consultation obligations](#) to First Nations who may be affected by the proposed project. Concurrently to the posting of an approved IPD and Engagement Plan, the EAO will notify all First Nations to whom the EAO has identified a consultation obligation about the project. The EAO will also seek to meet with these First Nations to better understand their section 35 rights and other interests or concerns that may be affected by the proposed project.

These preliminary conversations will inform the EAO's Summary of Engagement. First Nations may notify the EAO if they wish to participate in the EA process as participating Indigenous nations.

Beginning in Early Engagement, the EAO will work with First Nations to seek a shared understanding of the First Nation's section 35 rights and other interests and concerns that may be affected by a proposed project. The intent is that by the

Participating Indigenous nations are First Nations who have chosen to participate in the provincial Environmental Assessment process. Only First Nations whose section 35 rights may be affected by the project (direct or indirect effects) may participate.

First Nations become participating Indigenous nations by submitting notice to the EAO within 80 days of the Initial Project Description being submitted in the Early Engagement phase.

start Process Planning phase, all parties including the proponent, First Nations, and the EAO will have documented a shared understanding of which First Nations will be participating in the EA process, the depth of consultation obligations the Province owes to each First Nation and the section 35 rights and other interests and concerns should be assessed during the EA process. The EAO will provide First Nations with capacity funding to support participation in the EAO-led activities during Early Engagement to clarify these obligations. All other capacity funding requirements of First Nations during Early Engagement and for the rest of the EA process is the responsibility of the proponent. The EAO recommends proponents view capacity funding as an essential component of a participating Indigenous nation's involvement in the EA and their ability to make an informed notice of consent decision concerning the project.

Each First Nation has a unique relationship to a project area. This unique connection is reflected in the matters that are assessed in an EA in relation to each First Nation. Matters that are assessed are determined based upon potential for impact. Some First Nations may have a broad suite of section 35 rights and other interests and concerns to address in an EA process while others may have more focused interests or concerns to address. The EAO will work with the proponent and each First Nation during the Process Planning phase to clarify the matters that will be assessed for each First Nation including any information or procedural requirements that may be appropriate.

The goals for First Nation involvement in Early Engagement includes:

1. Identify the First Nations that will be participating Indigenous nation(s), as defined in the Act;
2. Develop a shared understanding of each First Nation's Section 35 rights or Treaty rights and other interests and concerns to address in the EA;
3. Identify how each First Nation and the proponent intend to work together during the Application Development phase;
4. Identify any independent review processes that a First Nation may have, the scope and timing of these assessments and seek to identify opportunities for process coordination;
5. Discuss any concerns regarding potential extraordinary adverse effects;
6. Identify any agreements between First Nations for working together in the project area in cases of overlap or shared territories.

2.3.1. How Proponents Identify First Nations to Engage

Prior to submitting an IPD and Engagement Plan to the EAO, proponents should identify First Nations to engage by using the provincial [Consultative Areas Database](#) and by reaching out to the EAO. Proponents may refer to the EAO's process planning [guidance](#) for more information on how later the scope of project components and project-related effects is determined. Proponents should estimate the area of likely direct or indirect effects and overlay this area with the Consultative Area Database. Identified First Nations should be provided an opportunity for involvement in developing of the IPD, Engagement Plan, and DPD. By day 90 of the Early Engagement phase, the EAO will confirm in the EAO's Summary of Engagement which First Nations must be involved in the EA including the First Nations that will be participating Indigenous nations.

In some cases, the EAO may have an agreement with a First Nation regarding undertaking EAs in their territory. Treaties and non-treaty agreements may also have specific requirements for an EA. Proponents should familiarize themselves with the requirements of relevant agreements or treaties and, where appropriate, reflect these additional considerations in the IPD, Engagement Plan, and/or DPD.

2.3.2. Participating Indigenous Nations

Participating Indigenous nations are afforded specific procedural rights under the Act including consensus seeking opportunities, the opportunity to provide a notification of consent or lack of consent specific decision points, and access to facilitated dispute resolution for issues related to the project EA that cannot be resolved through consensus seeking.

After a proponent files an IPD and Engagement Plan with the EAO, the EAO will notify all First Nations to whom the EAO understands it has a consultation obligation in relation to the proposed project. First Nations who wish to participate in an EA as a participating Indigenous nation must notify the EAO of their intention by email or letter within the timeline established by the Act (80 days from the acceptance of the IPD). This notification should provide a description of the First Nation's Section 35 rights and other interests or concerns that could be affected by the proposed project. If a First Nation notifies the EAO after the 80 day legislated timeline, the EAO will consider on a case-by-case basis whether it is appropriate in the circumstance to extend the timeline for providing notice.

In some cases, if the CEO does not believe there is a reasonable possibility for a First Nation's section 35 rights to be affected by a proposed project, the CEO will communicate to the First Nation of the CEO's intent to provide notice that the First Nation cannot participate in the EA process. Prior to providing such a notice, the CEO will ensure the First Nation has an opportunity to be heard. If the CEO decides to issue this notice, it will outline the reasons for the determination. If consensus is not reached in relation to the determination, then the EAO or the First Nation may trigger dispute resolution prior to the notice being issued.

Some First Nations may choose not to identify as participating Indigenous nations under the Act. In these cases, the EAO must still fulfill its duty to consult these First Nations and will continue to engage with them according to the Crown's legal obligations. This may require that some procedural aspects of consultation be delegated to the proponent. Details regarding consultation with First Nations who are not participating Indigenous nations will be defined in the Process Order developed during the Process Planning phase.

2.3.3. Section 35 Rights and the Scope of Assessment

During the Early Engagement phase, the EAO will work with each First Nation to better understand their Section 35 rights and interests in the area that have the potential to be affected by the project. For some First Nations this may include confirming what the EAO may already understand about a First Nations Section 35 rights or interests in a specific project area based on past experience. For other First Nations, more exploratory work may be needed to confirm a shared understanding.

The EAO will provide a summary of the Section 35 rights and interests it is aware of as a component of the EAO's Summary of Engagement provided to the proponent on day 90 of the Early Engagement phase. This information will help inform the proponent in the preparation of their DPD and will support consensus seeking between the EAO and participating Indigenous nations regarding the adequacy of the DPD. The EAO will continue to work with each First Nation to refine this understanding and will confirm the matters that will be assessed in the assessment for each First Nation during the Process Planning phase.

While each participating Indigenous nation is afforded the same procedural rights under the Act, the matters that will be assessed and the scope and focus of consensus seeking may be broader for some participating Indigenous nations than for others. Depth of consultation obligations as well as the provincial understanding of the nature of section 35 rights in the project area will affect the scope of assessment, consensus seeking activities, and the consideration of the perspectives of First Nations when informing recommendations to decision makers.

2.4. Public Engagement

The purpose of public engagement in an EA is to incorporate the interests, concerns and knowledge of all affected and interested members of the public in decision making. During Early Engagement, the EAO will seek to understand how the public wants to be engaged throughout the EA process and gather the public's major concerns with project design and siting. The Act's minimum requirements related to public engagement in Early Engagement are for the proponent to submit an Engagement Plan acceptable to the EAO and for the EAO to hold a minimum 30-day public comment period on the IPD. Depending on the public's familiarity with the EA process and the proposed project, the proximity of the proposed project to and the size of local communities, and the potential for adverse project effects, additional public engagement may be warranted.

The EAO will tailor its approach during Early Engagement to the potential effects of the proposed project and the level of public interest. Based on the community setting, the EAO will select appropriate public engagement tools, including but not limited to, meetings, workshops, community events, advertisements, and/or open houses. Proponents are required to undertake public engagement in accordance with their approved Engagement Plan, per project-specific direction from the EAO, and, when requested, to support the EAO-led public engagement. The EAO will provide public comments on the IPD to the proponent by day 90 of Early Engagement in the EAO's Summary of Engagement report. The public comments will inform the development of the proponent's DPD. Further information and guidance on how the EAO and proponents may undertake public engagement can be found in the [Public Engagement Policy](#).

2.5. Engagement with Local Governments

Local governments and municipalities have their own statutory and decision-making processes. It is important for the EAO and proponents to understand the decision-making processes of local governments so that they can effectively participate in an EA. Proponents and the EAO will also engage with local governments to establish project-specific information sharing and communication processes and identify their interests or concerns. Local governments can also be valuable resources for providing information about the community setting, identifying parties who may have local knowledge relevant to the EA, identifying other community contacts, anticipating local interests or concerns, and designing appropriate public engagement activities.

The EAO will seek to meet with local governments during Early Engagement to understand how they want to be engaged in the EA. Local governments may also provide their views on the structure and need for a community advisory committee under [Section 22](#) of the Act. Additionally, the EAO may have a role in supporting local government staff as they bring relevant items relating to the EA to mayor and council. Similarly, proponents should have ongoing engagement with local governments to inform the development of their proposed project.

2.6. Engagement with Provincial and Federal Government Agencies

Staff for provincial and federal government agencies will be subject matter experts that can provide proponents, First Nations, and the EAO with technical advice on a variety of topics within their mandates or areas of competency. Provincial and federal government agencies are also often regulators and/or issuers of additional authorizations required for proposed projects. Provincial and federal government agencies can also proactively identify regulatory issues during the EA, ensuring a smooth transition between the EA and subsequent permitting should a project be approved.

If the proponent seeks to discuss coordinating environmental assessment and permitting processes over the same timelines, these discussions should be had with the EAO and other regulators of major permits. The EAO is responsible for

organizing the connection with provincial and federal government agencies if the proponent wishes to discuss this possibility or other potential issues.

2.7. Summary of Engagement

By day 90 of Early Engagement, the EAO will issue the EAO's Summary of Engagement, which will include a confirmation of the First Nations who will be participating in the EA as participating Indigenous nations, as well as any other First Nations to whom the EAO has identified a consultation obligation in relation to the proposed project. The Summary of Engagement will also include a summary of public comments, as required by [Section 13\(5\)](#) of the Act and, as enabled under Section 15(2), may also contain further direction to the proponent identified by the CEAO on completing their DPD including any engagement requirements with participating Indigenous nations or other First Nations.

The EAO's Summary of Engagement may also identify:

- The EAO's initial understanding of First Nations' section 35 rights and other interests of concern based upon what the EAO has heard to date⁴;
- A summary of the issues and concerns identified by the public, local governments, provincial and federal government agencies, and other stakeholders;
- Additional information or engagement requirements for the DPD identified by the CEAO under Section 15(2), including engagement with participating Indigenous nations; and
- Information needed to inform the Process Planning phase, should the project proceed, including key issues that will require resolution and key audiences the proponent must engage with during the EA.

The EAO's Summary of Engagement, along with all engagement conducted by the proponent, help to inform the proponent's DPD.

2.8. Detailed Project Description

Following receipt of the EAO's Summary of Engagement, proponents have up to one year to provide their DPD to the EAO. The EAO will issue a \$75,000 fee order under [Section 15\(1\)](#) of the Act within 30 days of the submission of the DPD. Please refer to the [Environmental Assessment Fees Regulation](#) for more information. Refer to [Appendix 4 – Detailed Project Description Guidelines](#) for further information on completing a project-specific DPD.

The purpose of the DPD is to:

- Demonstrate how comments received on the IPD have been considered;
- Identify which issues may have been resolved or reduced through changes to the project design and siting, and others that will need to be addressed during the EA;
- Identify how information required by the EAO's Summary of Engagement was included;
- Describe the outcomes of engagement undertaken to date;
- Update and confirm information regarding the proposed project, including any changes to the project that have occurred since the submission of the IPD; and
- Provide adequate information regarding project components and activities and potential effects so that the scope of the project and the scope of the EA can be established during Process Planning, should the project proceed to an EA.

⁴ These views will be further refined throughout the rest of the Early Engagement phase and confirmed during Process Planning.

Proponents are strongly encouraged to work with participating Indigenous nations in preparing the DPD to ensure that the information presented is complete and sufficient to support the EAO seeking consensus with participating Indigenous nations at the Readiness Decision. This may include sharing drafts, seeking input, and addressing feedback received or any other activities required by the approved Engagement Plan or specified in the EAO Summary of Engagement. The more proponents can resolve issues with First Nations or other parties prior to submitting the DPD, the more timely and efficient the Readiness Decision phase will be. Deficient DPDs may result in EAO deciding that further engagement is required prior to proceeding to an EA.

Proponents may choose to provide further information with the DPD to inform the Process Planning phase such as:

- Proposed study, baseline, and modelling methods for key issues that will require resolution to support application development;
- A list of proposed updates or project specific revisions to the standard [Application Information Requirements](#); and/or,
- Additional information related to scoping of the EA.

If an exemption is sought, proponents must provide the information that is required under [Section 16\(2\)\(b\)](#) of the Act in the DPD. Proponents should refer to the [Certificate Exemption Policy](#) for more information on an exemption request.

2.9. Ending the Early Engagement Phase

The submission of the DPD to the EAO begins the Readiness Decision Phase, which is described in the [Readiness Decision Policy](#).

2.10. Preparing for the Process Planning Phase

To facilitate an efficient Process Planning phase, proponents may choose to provide a list to the EAO of any proposed project-specific revisions to the standard [Application Information Requirements Guidelines](#) at the time of filing their DPD with the EAO, in particular to Table 2 Valued Components. Any proposed revisions should follow the guidance for scoping and valued component selection provided in the [Effects Assessment Policy](#) and [Human and Community Wellbeing Guidelines](#), and include considerations identified during Early Engagement, including Indigenous interests regarding the project, comments received from the public, stakeholders, local governments and other agencies.

Where a proponent proposes to add, delete or modify valued components, including subcomponents and indicators, or make other changes to the EAO's standard Application Information Requirements, a rationale is required. **Do not provide an edited version of the Application Information Requirements; instead provide a list or a letter describing what you propose should be changed for your project.**

Additional information that a proponent may provide with the DPD is for the purposes of preparing for the Process Planning phase and is not subject to consensus seeking with participating Indigenous nations at the Readiness Decision. The EAO will be seeking consensus with participating Indigenous nations on the Process Order, including the Application Information Requirements, during Process Planning, and this would inform early drafting of the Process Planning documents. Please refer to the [Process Planning Policy](#) for more information.

APPENDIX 1 – INITIAL PROJECT DESCRIPTION GUIDELINES

The IPD is intended to be a tool to share project information and support discussions during Early Engagement. The headings and information below are provided as guidance for inclusion in a proponent's IPD. While the EAO expects this information be included in the IPD, how the information is presented is at the proponent's discretion. Required information that is not relevant to the project should be noted. Proponents are encouraged to use plain language, visuals, diagrams, and creative formats to present information in the IPD in a way that is accessible, concise, and clear. Technical information and technical drawings should be limited.

The IPD should include an initial description of the proposed project, including its location, that provides an adequate, early understanding of the project components and the potential interactions of the proposed project with the biophysical and human environment, and the interests of First Nations and the public. Proponents are strongly encouraged to share drafts of the IPD for review and comment with First Nations and key stakeholders prior to submission to the EAO.

If a proponent is seeking an exemption, the IPD should clearly state this intention and the rationale for the exemption request. Please contact the EAO and refer to the [Certificate Exemption Policy](#) for further information regarding exemption requests.

Executive Summary

- A plain language summary of the IPD that is clear and concise.

General Information and Contacts

- Project name;
- Project location;
- Project industrial sector and type (e.g., open pit metal mine); and
- Proponent name, mailing address, phone numbers, email address and website URL.
 - Include the name and contact information of the primary representative for the EA.

Purpose and Rationale

- A general rationale for why the project has been proposed; and
- Potential project benefits.

Legislative and Regulatory Context

- The type and size of the project, with specific reference to EA Regulatory Triggers [e.g., the EAO Reviewable Project Regulation and *Impact Assessment Act* (Canada) thresholds];
- A list of anticipated authorizations and permits;
- Consider the requirements of any applicable agreements between the Province and First Nations, including treaties;
- Consider the requirements of any applicable international agreements between the Province and state or federal governments;
- A description of relevant government policies that the project may not be compatible with; and,
- Proposed timing for conducting the provincial EA and federal EA, if applicable.

Project Status and History

- Project history, including past ownership;
- State if it is a new project or a modification to an existing project;
- A list of any existing permits or tenure in place;
- A description of any previous proposal(s) for the project or a similar proposal and the outcomes and history of the proposal(s), if applicable; and,
- If the project was previously declined or terminated, a description of how this proposal differs and how the issues for which the previous proposal was declined or terminated have been addressed.

Project Timing

- A list of proposed project phases (e.g. construction, operation, decommissioning, and reclamation) and the anticipated timing and duration of each phase; and,
- Include any known seasonal timing constraints.

Project Location, Activities and Components

- A description of the proposed project's location in a local and regional context, including proximity to communities or locations of interest to the public, government, or First Nations, and key designated or protected areas such as parks or Wildlife Habitat Areas;
- Proposed project activities and components;
- Proposed on and off-site facilities and equipment;
- A brief description of proposed activities related to processing, transportation and/or shipping of materials to/from the site;
- A description of any other project(s) that are needed for the proposed project to proceed and be feasible (e.g. a pipeline would be needed for an oil and gas facility to proceed);
- A description of the work that has been conducted to arrive at the proposed project as described in the IPD;
- A list of design or siting constraints that are flexible and those that are not flexible;
- A list of other design or siting options that may be considered; and,
- Anticipated daily and annual maximum production or operational capacity of the project (if applicable).

Maps and Shapefiles

- Local and regional scale maps of the project showing its location and known off-site components;
- Map(s) and shapefile(s) showing the expected area of direct and indirect effects of the project⁵;
- Shapefiles of the proposed project footprint and the footprint of known offsite components;
 - Provide shapefiles demonstrating the overlap of known project components with any identified communities or locations of interest to the public. This may include information regarding specific sites of importance to a First Nation or their territory if this information is not confidential in nature and a First Nation has agreed to allow the information to be shared; and,
- Refer to the [Spatial Data Submission Standards Guidelines](#) to ensure mapping data is submitted according to the EAO requirements.

⁵ The purpose of this map will be to inform initial engagement with First Nations including clarifying consultation obligations and First Nation participation in the EA process.

First Nations

- A description of the proximity of the proposed project to First Nations' territory, communities, locations of interest, reserve lands, Treaty lands, etc.;
- A description of potential project interactions with any Section 35 rights or other interests identified by the First Nation;

Questions to consider:

- What potential project impacts on Section 35 rights or other interests of First Nations, including potential cumulative effects, have been identified?
- Which First Nations' consultation area(s) will the project potentially impact? Are there any agreements between the Province and the First Nation or between First Nations in relation to the area?
- Are there any major "red flag" issues that could be addressed through early modifications to project design?
- Are there Indigenous land use, stewardship or territorial plans or other Indigenous initiatives that should be considered for the EA?
- Are there any potential impacts that can already be identified (e.g., potential effects to caribou habitat, increase in linear feature density, water quality management, or important areas)? Can the proponent suggest mitigations to these early issues?
- Are there any agreements between the First Nation and the EAO that establish additional requirements for the IPD?
- A description of how the IPD considered any Indigenous laws, customs and policies; and,
- A list of any issues, concerns, or questions raised by First Nations during engagement on the draft IPD or other information shared in relation to the proposed project⁶ and how this input was considered in the proposed project.

Biophysical Environment

- A description of the natural setting characteristics, including coastal, foreshore, riparian, mountainous, watersheds, and agricultural land;
- A description of disturbed area characteristics, including: brown field, and any history of development;
- Identification of sensitive or vulnerable species, ecosystems, and/or habitats in the project area;
- Results of a search of the Contaminated Site Registry to identify existing registered contaminated sites that overlap with the project area;
 - If this search identifies a Contaminated Site Registry Schedule 2 Activity in the project area, a description of the proposed activities in that area including soil removal or disturbance; and
- A list of existing data, including monitoring reports, previous EAs, regional studies, and/or other sources of information that support the understanding of the existing biophysical conditions.

Optional information:

Include a table listing any studies that are underway and those that are anticipated, including known guidance and standards to be used in these studies.

⁶ This information should be shared with and agreed upon by the First Nation prior to submission to the EAO. Information that is confidential to a First Nation should not be included in the IPD – please contact the EAO to discuss with the First Nation how confidential information may be shared.

Human and Community Wellbeing

- A description of the proposed project's proximity to local communities, including seasonal or temporary residences;
- Identification of the local governments within which the proposed project is located or where effects may occur;
- A description of the proposed project's proximity to important or sensitive community and natural places such as: municipal boundaries, parks, schools, hospitals, housing, water supplies, roads, railways, and protected and recreational areas;
- A list of existing data, including monitoring reports, previous EAs, regional studies, and/or other sources of information that support the understanding of the existing human environment conditions;
- Anticipated local employment and training opportunities;
- Potential social and economic contributions and benefits to local communities;
- Anticipated business opportunities for local suppliers, including any applicable eligibility requirements for suppliers;

Questions to consider:

What nearby human populations might experience disproportionate effects from the proposed project?

Are there existing chronic health problems in communities near the proposed project?

Are there capacity constraints in nearby/host communities in terms of community infrastructure and services (including housing availability, affordability and quality)?

What are the relevant health authorities, emergency service providers and/or other local and regional community service organizations?

- Identification of any sensitive or vulnerable economic, social, heritage, or health values that may be affected by the project; and
- A preliminary understanding of the anticipated size of the workforce for each project phase, where the workforce will be drawn from, and where the workforce will be housed. Refer to the [Human and Community Wellbeing Guidelines](#) for further information.

Emissions, Discharges, and Waste

- A high-level outline of anticipated direct project waste and emissions to land, air, and water, including estimated greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (using annual carbon dioxide equivalents).
 - This information would include direct emissions that are expected to be above provincial or national standards and emissions that have the potential to interact with Indigenous interests, the biophysical environment, and/or the human environment.
- A description of proposed mitigation measures and/or project design changes to address emissions, including GHGs.

Public and Environmental Safety

- A description of potential malfunctions or accidents associated with the industry or specific to the proposed project and how they will be managed.
 - Include any proposed outreach to help First Nations, governments and the public better understand the risks and mitigations; and
 - Include any issues raised about public and environmental safety during engagement with First Nations, the public, provincial and federal government agencies, and stakeholders and how issues were considered in

developing any mitigation measures or design changes.

Alternative Means of Carrying out the Project

- A high-level description of the alternative options for the proposed project, including a rationale for the preferred option that demonstrates how positive and negative effects and/or issues raised during engagement have been considered;
- For mine projects, a description of how the project meets Technology Readiness Level 7 (see [Technology Readiness Assessment Interim Technical Guidance](#));
- The alternative means of undertaking the proposed project may include information related to:
 - the use of best available technologies;
 - the technical and economic feasibility;
 - the potential effects, risks and uncertainties of those alternatives;

Questions to consider:

How susceptible is the proposed project to current and predicted climate change factors?

Does the proposed project depend on any natural resources susceptible to environmental change (e.g. instream water flow)?

Is the proposed project area prone to flooding or severe weather events?

How might climate change affect the frequency and intensity of severe weather events?

How has best available science, Indigenous knowledge and local knowledge been used?

- the preferred option and a rationale for this preference; and,
- the different options for the project location, project routing, technologies, mitigation, or design.

Effects of the Environment on the Project

- An overview of potential effects of natural hazards or processes and climate change on the proposed project.

Land and Water Use

- An outline of the anticipated project footprint and proposed area of disturbance;
- A description of the land required for the proposed project, including whether the project is located on private lands, provincial or federal Crown lands, or Indian Reserve lands;
- Include the applicable zoning, Agriculture Land Reserve designation, land and resource management plans, and other land use designations (e.g. parks and protected areas) and the legal land descriptions and/or tenure numbers of those lands, if known;
- A description of past uses of the land required for the proposed project, including whether the site has been previously developed; and,
- A description of water requirements for the proposed project, if applicable, and the proposed source of water.

Optional information:

Location of previously disturbed site or green field site, agricultural land, foreshore;

Legal information regarding land title;
Proximity to seasonal or temporary residences; and

Relationship to known regional initiatives (such as Environmental Stewardship Initiatives or the Elk Valley Water Quality Plan).

Land Use Plans

- A list of all relevant land use plans, including provincial land use plans, Indigenous land use plans, and relevant municipal plans; and,
- An identification of any rezoning or changes in land designations that would be required for the proposed project.

Project Interactions

- A description of potential interactions between the proposed project and the biophysical and human environments, including Indigenous interests. It may be helpful to present this information in a table format, refer to the [Effects Assessment Policy](#) for examples of interaction tables;
- A summary of any biophysical feasibility studies undertaken that may be pertinent to understanding potential interactions, if applicable;
- A list of any activities proposed to be undertaken during the Early Engagement period to inform the development of the DPD or the Application, should the project proceed to an EA; and,
- An identification of existing cumulative effects in the region that the project may interact with. Refer to the [Effects Assessment Policy](#) for more information.

Questions to consider:

What potential interactions could the proposed project have with First Nations' interests, communities, the biophysical environment, and/or the human environment?

What parts of the proposed project or project-related activities could interact with sensitive ecosystems or habitat, species or communities?

How has feedback and input from potentially affected parties, including First Nations, informed the identification of potential project interactions?

What past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects and activities are there in the proposed project area and region?

APPENDIX 2 – ENGAGEMENT PLAN GUIDELINES

The purpose of the Engagement Plan is to ensure that key parties to the EA are identified early in the EA process and provided a common understanding of how each party will be engaged. Key parties include First Nations, the public, local governments, and stakeholders. The Engagement Plan should promote transparent sharing of information early in the EA process, outline the proponent's approach for seeking information and feedback to inform development of the DPD and subsequent EA processes, provide the methods and activities proposed for engagement throughout Early Engagement, and ensure engagement reflects how each party wants to be engaged with. The EAO expects that the proponent will provide support to the EAO with respect to its activities during Early Engagement, including the conduct of the public information sessions and advertising during the public comment period. Further, the Engagement Plan should facilitate the provision of information to inform development of the DPD. If an exemption is sought, this information should be included in the Engagement Plan to make all parties aware. Please contact the EAO and refer to the [Certificate Exemption Policy](#) for further details.

The headings and information below are provided as guidance for inclusion in the Engagement Plan. The EAO expects this information be included in the Engagement Plan but the structure in which this information is presented may be adapted to ensure the most effective communication possible.

General Information and Contacts

- Project name;
- Project location within the province;
- Project industrial sector and type (e.g., open pit metal mine); and
- Proponent name, mailing address, phone numbers, email address and website URL. Include the name and contact information of the primary representative for the EA.

Project Overview

- A brief description of the proposed project (the Engagement Plan may refer to the IPD for a more detailed overview of the proposed project);
- The proximity of the proposed project to local communities, neighbourhoods and/or areas used by or of value to First Nations and the public; and,
- An outline of engagement that occurred in the development of the Engagement Plan and how any feedback received was considered and addressed.

Engagement Methods

- A list of who the proponent proposes to engage with during Early Engagement, including key contact names for appropriate First Nations, members of the public, local governments, provincial and federal government agencies, and stakeholders, and a rationale for those selected (where appropriate, personal information may be excluded as confidential - the Engagement Plan will be a public document);
- An outline of when and how each party will be engaged with during Early Engagement, including but not limited to, the type and frequency of engagement and any constraints to the engagement;
- An identification of any potentially impacted populations that may be underrepresented by the proposed engagement methods and how this will be mitigated or otherwise addressed. Refer to the [Human and Community Wellbeing Guidelines](#) and [Public Engagement Policy](#) for more information;
- A description of different types of engagement tailored to the project and the area to ensure opportunities for all potentially impacted people (consider language and cultural preferences, minority groups, marginalized

- populations);
- An outline of how information will be communicated in a timely and consistent manner;
- A description of how input and feedback will be gathered and how it will be considered, including how it will be used in project design and what deliverables will be produced to respond to the feedback received such as the use of tracking tables and other documentation methods; and
- An outline of the process for periodic updating of the Engagement Plan, including when and how the document may be updated and the process for communicating any updates made.

Questions to Consider:

How will proponents ensure engagement will be broad enough to capture the diverse interests and needs of communities and community members?

When and in what form will public notifications occur?

How will a gender-based assessment framework inform the approach to engagement?

What types of engagement activities will be provided to achieve equitable engagement and effective information collection?

How will confidentiality be considered depending on parties' wishes?

How will timing of engagement consider factors affecting community availability?

How will input be considered and how will feedback be reported?

Who are the relevant landowners, tenure holders, and community interest groups?

First Nation Engagement

- A list of all First Nations whose Consultation Area overlaps with the project components as well as area of potential direct or indirect effects of the project.
 - Note: do not include maps of territories or consultative areas.
- For each First Nation identified, an overview of engagement activities that have been carried out, a description or tracking table of issues that have been raised with respect to the proposed project, and an explanation of how those issues have been or will be addressed by the proponent, providing a clear rationale for not addressing any issues raised;
- A description of how First Nations were engaged in the development of the IPD and Engagement Plan, including:
 - Opportunities provided to adequately review and gain an understanding of information in the draft IPD and Engagement Plan, including, where applicable, specific procedures for contributing information for sections of the draft IPD and Engagement Plan.
- A list of any relevant agreements (including agreements between First Nations), memorandums of understanding, assessment protocols, treaties or other publicly available information of potentially affected First Nations and how the agreements informed the Engagement Plan;
- A description of how Indigenous knowledge holders will be engaged to ensure Indigenous knowledge is applied appropriately and in alignment with the laws and customs of the First Nations. Refer to the [Indigenous Knowledge Guide](#) for more information; and
- An outline of how participating Indigenous nations will be engaged during the development of the DPD.

Best Practices for First Nation Engagement

- Introduce the proposed project First Nations early (e.g. prior to conducting any major studies, gathering project related environmental data, and submitting an IPD and Engagement Plan to the EAO);
- Meet with First Nations early to establish a collaborative working relationship prior to asking for their feedback

- and to ensure you are engaging with the appropriate Indigenous entities;
- Provide early and ongoing capacity funding to support any activities the First Nation may be engaging in, including any engagement the First Nation may have with the Province;
- Ensure you are familiar with the requirements of any treaties, agreements or other government-to-government arrangements including between First Nations;
- Engage with potentially impacted First Nations to understand their perspectives and to learn more about governance and decision-making requirements for projects in their territory;
- Display an understanding of how engagement with First Nation differs from that with the public or local governments (e.g. recognize section 35 rights, the importance of reconciliation, and refer to the First Nation as a government);
- Discuss the use of Indigenous knowledge with the First Nation and commit to using Indigenous knowledge only with the permission of the First Nation and only in a manner they support;
- Meet with each First Nation individually or collectively if appropriate to discuss proposed changes to drafts of the IPD, Engagement Plan, and DPD based on their feedback;
- Track all issues raised by First Nations and indicate how issues have been or will be addressed during the EA.

Questions to consider:

How does each First Nation govern and make decisions? Is the First Nation part of an elected or hereditary system?

When does the First Nation hold elections? How will this effect timing of their review and decision making?

Who is the entity authorized to represent the First Nation to identify potential impacts to its Section 35 rights? Is it an individual house, clan, elected body etc.? Does the First Nation participate in EAs as a part of a larger collective?

Does the First Nation have any processes and protocols that need to be observed?

Does the First Nation have enough information to decide whether to be a participating Indigenous nation?

Is the First Nation interested in collaborating with the proponent on their application (e.g. information gathering, conducting studies, drafting chapters)?

How will the proponent track and resolve issues identified by each First Nation?

Public and Stakeholder Engagement

- To ensure that engagement is focussed and relevant, a list of the groups, populations, or individuals that the proponent will engage with as part of public engagement;
- To help focus engagement, a list of the public's interests in the proposed project, such as concerns, potential benefits, project design improvements, and how the public wish to be engaged in Early Engagement and the EA;
- A description of any engagement already completed with landowners, land rights holders, other commercial, industrial, agricultural, and recreational land users, as well as the public, including key interests or issues identified and how these interests/issues were considered in project design;
- A table identifying the issues that have been raised by those parties with respect to the proposed project, and an explanation of how those issues have been or will be addressed by the proponent; and
- A description of how local information and knowledge will be collected and considered in project planning and in the preparation of the DPD.

Who is the Public?

The public includes those who could be directly or indirectly affected by a proposed project such as: municipalities, residents from nearby communities, businesses and business groups, non-government organizations, academic institutions, community groups, recreation groups, tenure holders and other public stakeholders, among others.

Best Practices for Public and Stakeholder Engagement

- Ensure that opportunities to engage on the project are made apparent to the public via local media, publicly accessible websites, and/or other available and appropriate means;
- Conduct public engagement in a way that removes as many barriers to participation as possible and captures a diverse range of feedback;
- Tailor engagement to the needs of the community by asking the right questions of the right people to gain meaningful feedback;
- Help the public better understand how to provide useful feedback on the project; and
- Show responsiveness to feedback by modifying project design, plans and/or studies. Refer to the EAO's [Public Engagement Policy](#) for further information.

Questions to consider:

How does the public use the land? What aspects of the land that are important to the public might be affected by the project?

Historically, what sectors have been the major economic drivers in communities nearest to the project? Is the community familiar with this industry already and potential impacts or is it a new industry?

Are members of the public seeking information about the project, opportunities for input, or other issues related to the EA?

Will the project affect some people more than others?

Have specific groups been formed to oppose or support the project?

To date, have consultation activities generally been received by communities in a positive, negative, neutral, or mixed way?

Has the project and/or the EA received attention in the media? If so, what interests and concerns have been identified?

Are there specific environmental or community features that will be impacted by the proposal? How will they be addressed?

Engagement with Local Governments and Government Agencies

- A list of all appropriate local governments, and provincial and federal government agencies to be engaged with and relevant representatives from each agency;
- A description of any previous engagement with local governments, and provincial and federal government agencies prior to submission of the Engagement Plan, including how the Engagement Plan reflects these engagement discussions; and
- A list of any municipal plans relevant to the EA.

Questions to consider:

How does the proponent propose to engage municipalities and provincial/federal government agencies?

How do municipalities want to be engaged during Early Engagement?

What key interests or issues have been identified?

Best Practices for Engagement with Local Governments and Government Agencies

- Engaging early to understand the capacity and needs of local governments and provincial and federal government agencies in the EA process;
- Ensure appropriate local governments and provincial and federal government agencies and experts are involved to help the proponent to address potential impacts from the project; and
- Identify relevant health authorities, emergency service providers and/or other local and regional community

service organisations.

APPENDIX 3 – EARLY ENGAGEMENT PROPONENT CHECKLIST

Prior to submitting an Initial Project Description (IPD) and Engagement Plan please review the following checklist and submit a completed version to the Project Assessment Director.

The Environmental Assessment Office has identified the following questions as critical components to support an efficient process during this phase of the environmental assessment. Answering 'no' to any of the following questions may lead to potential risks during this phase of the environmental assessment including, but not limited to, delays/extension in review times, a requirement to re-submit, and/or additional costs to the proponent.

1. Have you reviewed the Environmental Assessment (EA) [User Guide](#) that provides an overview of the EA process and understand the responsibilities of a proponent throughout the process? ☐ Yes / ☐ No
2. Have you reviewed the Environmental Assessment Office's (EAO) [policy and guidance documents](#) and clearly incorporated the relevant information into the Initial Project Description (IPD) and Engagement Plan to support an efficient Early Engagement phase? In particular, the Early Engagement Guide, Effects Assessment Policy, Human and Community Well-Being Guidelines, and Application Information Requirements Guidelines?⁷ ☐ Yes / ☐ No
3. Are you familiar with the methods set out in the EAO's [Effects Assessment Policy](#) for assessing the effects of a project? ☐ Yes / ☐ No
4. Have you discussed with the federal Impact Assessment Agency of Canada on whether or not the proposed project would require any process under the federal [Impact Assessment Act](#)? If the proposed project does trigger the federal *Impact Assessment Act*, have you engaged with the federal Impact Assessment Agency of Canada to begin the federal environmental assessment process? ☐ Yes / ☐ No / ☐ N/A
5. Have you identified which First Nations territories overlap with the area of anticipated direct or indirect effects from your project? ☐ Yes / ☐ No

Identified First Nations: *please list*

6. Have you reviewed the EAO's [guidance material](#) around the participation of First Nations in the environmental assessment process? In particular, the [Guide to Consensus-Seeking under the Environmental Assessment Act, 2018](#) and the [Guide to Indigenous Knowledge in Environmental Assessments](#)? ☐ Yes / ☐ No
7. Have you started engaging/consulting with the First Nations in the area of direct or indirect effects for of your project? ☐ Yes / ☐ No
8. Have you initiated discussions on any agreements or funding opportunities to support First Nation participation in the environmental assessment of your project? ☐ Yes / ☐ No

⁷ All documents are available the 'Guidance Documents by Process Phase' header on 2018 Act - [Guidance Documents Related to Environmental Assessments - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](#). If you have issues accessing these documents, please contact the Project Assessment Director as needed.

9. Have you shared drafts of the IPD and Engagement Plan with First Nations, sought feedback and worked to address concerns prior to submission to the EAO? ☐ Yes / ☐ No
10. Have you started engagement with local, regional, provincial and federal government agencies that may have an interest in the proposed project and about any authorizations and/or permits that may be required for the project? ☐ Yes / ☐ No
11. Have you engaged other relevant interested parties regarding the proposed project (i.e. tenure holders, guiding associations, local tourism boards, etc.) ☐ Yes / ☐ No
12. Have you taken other projects in the area into consideration and have you started to understand if there are any existing cumulative effects in the area of the proposed project? ☐ Yes / ☐ No / ☐ N/A
13. Do you have subject matter experts that can support the assessment of effects of the project on Valued Components and other [Section 25](#) matters under the *Environmental Assessment Act* (2018), including considerations around Gender-based Analysis Plus⁸, greenhouse gas emissions, and incorporation of Indigenous Knowledge? ☐ Yes / ☐ No
14. Have you considered a variety of options for project design in the IPD and clearly outlined any outstanding design choices to seek feedback on during the Early Engagement phase (e.g., different routing/locations for project components)? ☐ Yes / ☐ No
15. If the proposed project is planning for water treatment, have you completed the [technology readiness assessment](#) for any proposed water treatment plan and are proposing technology that would meet the requirements of the environmental assessment? ☐ Yes / ☐ No / ☐ N/A
16. Are you able to explain, in writing, how your proposed project aligns with the purposes of the EAO? In particular, how the proposed project is consistent with the promotion of sustainability by protecting the environment and fostering a sound economy and the wellbeing of British Columbians and their communities and consistent with supporting reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in British Columbia? ☐ Yes / ☐ No

Completed by: _____ Signature: _____

Role/Position: _____ Date: _____

⁸ See Gender-based Analysis Plus course here: [Take the Gender-based Analysis Plus course - Women and Gender Equality Canada](#)

APPENDIX 4 – DETAILED PROJECT DESCRIPTION GUIDELINES

The DPD should include all information provided in the IPD with clearly identified updates, revisions, and further details following engagement with First Nations, the public, local governments, provincial and federal government agencies, and other stakeholders. It is important that the DPD clearly describe how engagement contributed to changes in the proposed project or EA process. Proponents should use the EAO's Summary of Engagement to inform the DPD, including addressing all information requirements identified by the EAO.

If a proponent is seeking an exemption, the DPD should provide the information necessary to support this request as required by the EAO's Summary of Engagement and in the [Certificate Exemption Policy](#).

The headings and information below are provided as guidance for inclusion in the DPD. As with the IPD, while the EAO expects this information be included in the DPD, how the information is presented is at the proponent's discretion. Proponents are encouraged to use graphics, diagrams, and plain language where appropriate to clearly communicate information in the DPD and avoid technical jargon and technical design drawings.

Executive Summary

- A summary of any updates to information in the IPD.

General Information and Contacts

- Any updates to information in the IPD; and
- Anticipated cost for construction and decommissioning as well as projected annual operating costs.

Purpose and Rationale

- Any updates to information in the IPD.

Legislative and Regulatory Context

- Any updates to information in the IPD.

Project Status and History

- Any updates to information in the IPD.

Project Timing

- Any updates to information in the IPD, including a justification for any updates/changes to project timing and a description of how engagement was considered; and
- A list of timelines for the proposed project's EA and permitting processes and expected timing to submit key permit applications.

Project Location, Activities and Components

- Any updates to information in the IPD, including a justification for any updates/changes to the project location, activities and/or components, and a description of how engagement was considered;
- Include what further information, if any, is needed to confirm design and siting options, and approximate timelines; and
- A description of the work that has been conducted to arrive at the proposal, including what other options were considered and how engagement was considered.

Maps and Shapefiles

- Any updates to information in the IPD;
- When known, include landscape features of importance to First Nations⁹ and local communities in maps; and
- Any new maps showing the boundary within which the project would be built, including updated location, project components and transportation routes.

Refer to [Spatial Data Submission Standards Guidelines](#) for mapping requirements.

First Nation Interests

- Any updates to information in the IPD, including a justification for updates/changes and a description of how engagement was considered;
- For each First Nation identified, an overview of engagement activities that have been carried out, a description of issues that have been raised with respect to the proposed project, and an explanation of how those issues have been or will be addressed by the proponent;
- A description of how First Nations plan to work with the proponent moving forward;
- A list of agreements the proponent has entered into with First Nations during Early Engagement;
- A description of opportunities for the proponent to work with the EAO and First Nations;
- Additional information provided by First Nations;
- An identification of potential effects on the section 35 rights or other interests and concerns of each First Nation;
- A description of how this engagement and information was considered in the DPD, and corresponding changes that were made with justification for these changes; and
- A description of how information contained in the EAO's Summary of Engagement provided by the EAO was addressed in the DPD.

Biophysical Environment

- Any updates to information in the IPD, including a justification for updates/changes and a description of how engagement was considered;
- A table showing a list of studies that are underway and those that are anticipated, including guidance and standards to be used in preparing these studies;
- A description of engagement that occurred following acceptance of the IPD and Engagement Plan, including any additional information collected during this period on sensitive or vulnerable environmental values that may be affected by the proposed project and any further understanding of the potential effects of the project, including cumulative effects;
- A description of future methods of information collection that will occur through continuing engagement;

Questions to consider:

What different habitats might be affected by the proposed project?

What downstream effects may be experienced?

What critical ecosystems are present in areas potentially affected by the proposed project?

Will habitat isolation potentially occur?

Will the effect be limited to a single phase of the proposed project?

Is there the potential for the introduction of invasive species? How can this be minimized?

⁹ This information should be shared with and agreed upon with the First Nation prior to submission to the EAO. Information that is confidential to a First Nation should not be included in the DPD – please contact the EAO to discuss with the First Nation how information may be shared in confidence directly with the EAO.

- A description of Indigenous knowledge that may have been incorporated into the description of existing biophysical environment, with permission of the First Nation; and
- A description of how this engagement and information was considered, and corresponding changes that were made with justification for these changes.

Human and Community Wellbeing

- Any updates to information in the IPD, including a justification for updates/changes and a description of how engagement was considered;
- An outline of the anticipated number of construction and operating jobs and anticipated percent of workforce from local community;
- A description of how the proposed project may affect the local and regional economy;
- A description of the engagement that occurred following acceptance of IPD and Engagement Plan and any additional information collected during this period regarding sensitive or vulnerable economic, social, heritage, or health values that may be affected by the proposed project; and
- A description of how this engagement and information was considered, and corresponding changes that were made with justification for these changes. Refer to the [Human and Community Wellbeing Guidelines](#) for further information.

Questions to consider:

How will scientific, Indigenous and local knowledge and perspectives be integrated into the scoping and information gathering process of the EA, including the perspectives of different sub-populations?

How has gender based assessment been considered?

How will baseline data collection identify existing strengths, weaknesses and diversities and the potential for diverse project interactions in the host and nearby populations (e.g., jobs, training, social issues, local health concerns)?

Does the DPD demonstrate engagement techniques that promote inclusivity and support the participation of diverse groups and perspectives in the EA process?

How can the mental and physical health of workers be accommodated in worker camps?

How can the workforce be safely diversified with the inclusion of Indigenous peoples, gender-diverse people, and/or individuals with disabilities?

Has the cultural diversity in the potential project area been considered?

What opportunities does the proposed project provide to current and future generations?

Does the proposed project put demand on natural systems that will affect the ability for future generations to benefit from them?

How can benefits from the proposed project be provided or extended for future generations?

How have potential long-term negative effects been lessened and positive long-term effects been encouraged?

Emissions, Discharges, and Waste

- Any updates to information in the IPD, including a justification for updates or changes and a description of how engagement was considered;
- An estimate of direct and indirect project GHG emissions by phase;
- A description of the potential effects on the province being able to meet its targets under the *Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Act*; and

- A justification for updates or changes to expected emissions, effluents, discharges and/or wastes and a description of how engagement was considered.

Public and Environmental Safety

- Any updates to information in the IPD, including a justification for updates/changes and a description of how engagement was considered;
- Include a description of potential project-related scenarios when there is a real or perceived risk of a malfunction or accident; and,
- Identification of moderate-to high-risk potential malfunctions or accidents associated with the proposed project and how they will be managed:
 - Refer to risk disclosure standards and provincial risk management policy, including the Risk Management Guideline for the B.C. Public Sector (Province of British Columbia Risk Management Branch and Government Security Office, April 2019).

Alternative Means of Carrying out the Project

- Any updates to information in the IPD, including a justification for updates/changes and a description of how engagement was considered; and
- Provide clear definitions with transparent weighting and criteria for assessing alternative means.

Effects of the Environment on the Project

- Any updates to information in the IPD, including a justification for updates/changes and a description of how engagement was considered; and
- A justification for updates/changes to potential effects and a description of how engagement was considered, especially Indigenous knowledge and local knowledge gathered during Early Engagement.

Land and Water Use

- Any updates to information in the IPD, including a justification for updates/changes and a description of how engagement was considered;
- Identification of the location of previously disturbed site or green field site, agricultural land, foreshore;
- Legal information regarding land title, authorization, permits;
- Identification of the proximity to seasonal or temporary residences;
- Description of the relationship to known regional initiatives (e.g. Elk Valley Water Quality Plan or Indigenous land use plans); and
- A description of project land and water use following engagement clearly noting any changes and a justification for why changes were made and how engagement was considered.

Land Use Plans

- Any updates to information in the IPD, including a justification for updates/changes and a description of how engagement was considered; and
- A justification for updates/changes to relevant provincial land use plans and a description of how engagement was considered.

Questions to consider:

Have all available land use plans (e.g., local, regional, First Nations) been reviewed and taken into consideration?

How have the applicable parties been consulted regarding how the project will affect these plans?

Potential Project Effects

- Any updates to information in the IPD, including a justification for updates/changes and a description of how engagement was considered;
- A description of potential positive and negative effects of the project on the biophysical and human environments, and Indigenous interests, including any potential cumulative effects;
- A summary of key conclusions from any biophysical feasibility studies undertaken that may be pertinent to understanding potential interactions, if applicable;
- An initial description of measures to prevent or reduce the potential negative effects to an acceptable level. Include measures that could be integrated into project design, compliance with applicable regulations, standards, codes of practice, or Best Management Practices, corporate management systems, and/or project-specific measures that will be implemented; and
- A brief description of proposed monitoring programs, if known, that will be implemented to measure the effectiveness of mitigations to prevent or reduce the potential negative project effects.

Questions to consider:

Is the project area already experiencing cumulative effects that the project may add to?

What past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects and activities are there in the project area and region?

Are there any potential extraordinary adverse effects that have been identified?