

# A Primer on Socio-Economic and Environmental Assessment (SEEA)

Supporting Land Use Planning in Northwest British Columbia

## SEEA and Land Use Planning in Northwest B.C.

The government of British Columbia and First Nations are co-leading the development of land use plans across Northwest B.C. through government-to-government partnerships, with engagement from communities, industry and the public.

As part of this work, a Socio-Economic and Environmental Assessment (SEEA) is being used to help understand how different land use options could affect people, the environment and the economy over time.

## What is a SEEA?

A SEEA is an analytical tool used in B.C. to inform strategic land use planning process. It provides a structured framework and information to help decision-makers and planning partners assess and explore alternative future land use scenarios with current conditions in the planning area.

SEEA's are used to support land use planning by examining the potential benefits, trade-offs, risks and uncertainties associated with the objectives and land management options being considered.

## How SEEA Fits into Land Use Planning: Understanding Trade-offs & Uncertainty

Land use planning often involves trade-offs, such as conservation and economic development. A SEEA helps make these trade-offs clearer by comparing different land use options side by side.

SEEA identifies risks, addresses uncertainty and supports monitoring and adaptive management over time.

The SEEA provides information that helps planning partners and other interested parties to understand the implications of the various land use planning scenarios.

### What does a SEEA Consider in its Assessment?

The assessment draws on multiple sources of information, including available data, technical analysis, Indigenous knowledge, and information gathered through engagement with communities, stakeholders, and industry.

A SEEA considers a range of topic areas, called **accounts**. The specific accounts used in a SEEA are tailored to the planning area and the issues being addressed. These are examples of the types of accounts that may be used in a SEEA.



**Environment & Climate**  
ecosystems, wildlife, climate risks



**Community & Social Well-being**  
housing, services, access, recreation



**Health**  
community health and well-being



**Indigenous Rights & Values**  
rights, cultural practices, stewardship



**Economy**  
jobs, income, future economic opportunity



**Heritage & Archeology**  
archaeological, cultural & paleontological resources

## SEEA Provides a Multiple Accounts Analysis

SEEA's **multiple accounts analysis** is used to understand how land use decisions may affect different aspects of the environment and human well-being.

This approach recognizes that land use decisions often create both positive and negative effects at the same time for a diversity of land users. The multiple accounts analysis reflects this diversity.

Looking at multiple accounts side by side supports more transparent discussions, helps avoid overlooking important considerations, and provides a clearer picture of how different land use options may affect the planning area as a whole.

## Multiple Accounts Analysis

### STEP Define Management Objectives in the Plan

1

What do we want to accomplish in the plan area?

### STEP Measure Anticipated Change

2

How will identified plan values change over time?

### STEP Review Accounts

3

Clearly define what matters, and how the values will be affected by the change.

### STEP Confirm Indicators

4

How the change will be felt, and how can we measure or describe that?

## Using Indigenous Knowledge and Local Perspectives

SEEA is informed by both Indigenous knowledge and Western scientific information. Indigenous knowledge is recognized as a distinct and valid way of understanding the land, waters and relationships between people and place. Knowledge is shared with permission and used according to protocols established by First Nations.

## Where to find more information on the SEEA process for land use planning

For those who want to explore the SEEA process in greater depth, the Province of British Columbia has published a comprehensive SEEA guideline online. You can view or download the complete document here using the QR code provided.



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