

The Environmental Assessment

What is it?

In Ontario, the *Environmental Assessment Act* and its regulations ensure environmental effects are taken into consideration for all phases of a project, from planning to decommissioning.

An Environmental Assessment (EA) includes consultation with Indigenous communities, government agencies, stakeholders and the public, consideration and evaluation of alternatives and the mitigation of potential environmental effects. The EA process is designed to assess the existing environment and mitigate potential effects before decisions are made about proceeding with a proposed project.

EAs require approval from the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.

The EA Process

Consultation with Indigenous communities, government agencies, stakeholders and the public occurs throughout the EA process.

The milestones involved in an Individual EA are:

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| Step 1 | Develop and submit a Terms of Reference |
| Step 2 | Prepare an Environmental Assessment based on the approved Terms of Reference |
| Step 3 | Submit an Environmental Assessment |
| Step 4 | Public and government review |
| Step 5 | Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks review |
| Step 6 | Public consultation on the Ministry Review Minister's decision |
| Step 7 | Implement the project and monitor compliance |

The Terms of Reference

The first step is the development of a Terms of Reference (ToR) which sets out the framework and work plan for the preparation of the EA, including an outline of the studies and consultation activities that will be carried out. Important aspects of the EA process will be to identify and evaluate alternative routes, assess potential effects of the new transmission line and determine measures to reduce or mitigate these effects.



The Environmental Assessment Act defines environment to mean:

- Air, land or water;
- Plant and animal life, including human life;
- The social, economic and cultural conditions that influence the life of humans or a community;
- Any building, structure, machine or other device or thing made by humans;
- Any solid, liquid, gas, odour, heat, sound, vibration or radiation resulting directly or indirectly from human activities; or,
- Any part or combination of the foregoing and the interrelationships between any two or more of them.



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