

Preamble to EAO's *Guide to Preparing Terms of Reference*

Environmental assessment (EA) is a process for the evaluation of proposed projects that informs decisions on their overall acceptability within the context of prevailing legal and policy objectives and technical expectations. In British Columbia, the *Environmental Assessment Act*, and associated regulations and procedures, enables EA to be tailored to the requirements of each project to ensure a focused, timely, technically sound, and cost-effective review process.

There are two stages of B.C.'s EA review process: pre-application and application review. During pre-application, the focus is on developing project-specific EA procedures, scope of issues, and information requirements that describe *what* is to be contained in an application for EA certification (Application). During the application review stage, the focus is on the adequacy of the information provided and the significance of potential impacts.

A key feature of the EA review process is the opportunity for proponents to develop information requirements or Terms of Reference specific to their project and, in many cases, the flexibility to propose how prevailing policy objectives, standards and targets will be met. A well-designed and complete Terms of Reference provides a good framework for development of a proponent's Application, and contributes to the Application's completeness and reviewability. This, in turn, assists the EAO in preparing its Assessment Report for consideration by Ministers and reduces the likelihood that additional information will be required for issue resolution during the application review stage. It is expected that information requirements for each project will be different and will focus on issues relevant to whether or not the project should proceed.

Issue identification and issue scoping is undertaken in consultation with interested and potentially affected parties – federal and provincial agencies, local government, First Nations and the public – to ensure that all potential effects and issues of relevance to the assessment are incorporated into the Terms of Reference, so that the resulting application for EA certification is complete. Terms of Reference will contain more detailed information requirements for issues of greatest concern. Less significant issues may require only general information or be excluded from the scope of assessment.

Once complete, EAO issues Approved Terms of Reference to proponents as the basis for developing their Application. In issuing final Terms of Reference, EAO determines issues that are relevant and those that are outside the scope of the assessment. It typically takes at least six months to develop, review (agency, First Nations, and public), and finalize information requirements for a given project. The duration of pre-application activities is largely determined by the type and location of the proposed project, the complexity of issues, the extent of existing baseline data, and the nature and extent of proponents' discussions with government agencies and consultations with local communities, stakeholders, and potentially-affected First Nations. Proponents are advised to contact the EAO and relevant government agencies as early as possible to discuss consultation and baseline data collection requirements.

EAO developed the *Guide to Preparing Terms of Reference* in July 2004 to help guide proponents and their consultants in the development of Terms of Reference during pre-application. It is not intended to be used as a standard template or checklist of information to be included in every EA application.

The *Guide* presents the basic outline for Terms of Reference which follow the steps of a typical assessment process (*i.e.*, project description issues scoping, project setting (baseline), impact assessment, and proposed impact management and mitigation). Recent experiences suggest proponents and other review participants often prefer other ways of structuring their Terms of Reference – and ultimately the proponent's EA Application and the EAO's Assessment Report – which can contribute to a more efficient review (*e.g.*, by project component, by issue, by Valued

Ecosystem Component (VEC), etc.). Proponents are encouraged to discuss the structure of their Terms of Reference with EAO and key review agencies to determine the most effective means of presenting the required information.

The sample information requirements in the *Guide* are based on those developed for the Whistler Nordic Centre Project in June 2004. The scope of issues and nature and extent of information required is relevant only to a nordic facility in the Callahan Valley of south-western B.C. It is expected that proponents and their consultants will develop Terms of Reference tailored specifically to their projects.

Useful Resources for Developing Terms of Reference:

The *Guide* is one resource to be considered in developing Terms of Reference. Other sources of information and guidance include relevant standard methods (*e.g.* [RISC Standards](#)), policy statements or objectives identified by government agencies, consultation with EAO and Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency staff, and other examples of Terms of Reference developed for other projects of a similar type and/or in the vicinity of the proposed project area.

Click on the following [titles](#) to access these useful resources for developing Terms of Reference:

- [A Guide to Preparing Terms of Reference \(colour version\)](#)
- [A Guide to Preparing Terms of Reference \(black and white version\)](#)
- [Table 1](#) Terms of Reference listed by Sector
- [Table 2](#) Terms of Reference listed by Region
- [Guidance to Proponents for Submitting Electronic Documentation](#) (Updated June 2005)
- [List of Provincial and Federal Permits, Authorizations and other Useful Links and Resources](#)
- [EAO internet mapping application](#): enables proponents and others to search for projects geographically

Environmental Assessment Office
June 2006

Table 1. Terms of Reference by Sector (updated June 12, 2006)

Click on the project name to view the relevant Terms of Reference document available online through EAO's electronic Project Information Centre (*ePIC*).

Project Name	TOR Status	Region
Energy		
Vancouver Island Transmission Reinforcement	Approved Jan 2006	Vancouver Island
Nahwitti Wind Farm Project	Approved Dec 2005	Vancouver Island
East Toba Montrose Creek Hydroelectric Project	Approved Dec 2005	Lower Mainland
Dokie Wind Energy Project	Approved Nov 2005	Peace
Upper Harrison Water Power Project	Approved Nov 2005	Lower Mainland
Wartenbe Wind Energy Project	Approved Nov 2005	Peace
South Meager Geothermal Project	Approved May 2005	Lower Mainland
Kitimat LNG Terminal Project	Approved April 2005	Skeena
Holberg Wind Energy Project	Approved April 2004	Vancouver Island
Knob Hill Wind Farm Project	Approved June 2003	Vancouver Island
Bear Mountain Wind Park Project	Draft under review	Peace
Mackenzie Green Energy Centre Project	Draft under review	Omineca
Mining		
Ruby Creek Molybdenum	Approved March 2006	Skeena
Galore Creek Project	Approved March 2006	Skeena
Brule Mine Project	Approved Oct 2005	Peace
Swamp Point Gravel Project	Approved Sept 2005	Skeena
Kemess North Project	Approved August 2005	Omineca
Cariboo Gold Project	Approved April 2005	Cariboo
Orca Sand & Gravel Project	Approved Nov 2004	Vancouver Island
Red Chris Porphyry Copper-Gold Mine Project	Approved June 2004	Skeena
Davidson Project	Draft under review	Skeena
Tourist Destination Resorts		
Whistler Nordic Centre Project	Approved June 2004	Lower Mainland
Juliet / Coquihalla Pass Resort Project	Draft under review	Lower Mainland
Transportation		
South Fraser Perimeter Road Project	Approved Jan 2005	Lower Mainland
Deltaport Third Berth Project	Approved Oct 2004	Lower Mainland
Sea-To-Sky Highway Upgrade Project	Approved June 2003	Lower Mainland
Canada Line	Approved Feb 2003	Lower Mainland
Waste Disposal		
Ashcroft Ranch Landfill Project	Approved March 2003	Thompson
Highland Valley Centre for Sustainable Waste Management	Draft under review	Thompson
Water Management		
Terrace Green Street Well Project	Approved March 2006	Skeena
New Fraser River Crossing Project	July 2003	Lower Mainland
Vancouver Convention Centre Expansion	July 2003	Lower Mainland
Prince George - Fishtrap Island Collector Well	Feb 2003	Omineca

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Nahwitti Wind Farm Project	Approved Dec 2005	Energy
Orca Sand & Gravel Project	Approved Nov 2004	Mining
Holberg Wind Energy Project	Approved Apr 2004	Energy
Knob Hill Wind Farm Project	Approved June 2003	Energy
Lower Mainland		
East Toba Montrose Creek Hydroelectric Project	Approved Dec 2005	Energy
Upper Harrison Water Power Project	Approved Nov 2005	Energy
South Meager Geothermal Project	Approved May 2005	Energy
South Fraser Perimeter Road Project	Approved Jan 2005	Transportation
Deltaport Third Berth Project	Approved Oct 2004	Transportation
Whistler Nordic Centre	Approved June 2004	Resorts
New Fraser River Crossing Project	Approved July 2003	Water Mgmt
Vancouver Convention Centre Expansion	Approved July 2003	Water Mgmt
Sea-To-Sky Highway Upgrade Project	Approved June 2003	Transportation
Canada Line	Approved Feb 2003	Transportation
Juliet / Coquihalla Pass Resort Project	Draft under review	Resorts
Thompson and Cariboo		
Cariboo Gold Project	Approved April 2005	Mining
Ashcroft Ranch Landfill Project	Approved March 2003	Waste Disposal
Highland Valley Centre for Sustainable Waste Management	Draft under review	Waste Disposal
Kootenay and Okanagan		
n/a		
Skeena		
Davidson Project	Draft under review	Mining
Ruby Creek Molybdenum	Approved March 2006	Mining
Galore Creek Project	Approved March 2006	Mining
Terrace Green Street Well Project	Approved March 2006	Water Mgmt
Swamp Point Gravel Project	Approved Sept 2005	Mining
Kitimat LNG Terminal Project	Approved April 2005	Energy
Red Chris Porphyry Copper-Gold Mine Project	Approved June 2004	Mining
Omineca and Peace		
Dokie Wind Energy Project	Approved Nov 2005	Energy
Wartenbe Wind Energy Project	Approved Nov 2005	Energy
Brule Mine Project	Approved Oct 2005	Mining
Kemess North Project	Approved Aug 2005	Mining
Prince George - Fishtrap Island Collector Well	Approved Feb 2003	Water Mgmt
Bear Mountain Wind Park Project	Draft under review	Energy
Mackenzie Green Energy Centre Project	Draft under review	Energy

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