

Appendix A

Glossary of Environmental Assessment Terms

Note: The following is selectively excerpted from: [*Terms commonly used in Ontario environmental assessments*](#), Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, January, 2014.

Disclaimer

This glossary is intended for information purposes only. While this glossary contains many commonly used definitions from the *Environmental Assessment Act* and its regulations, it also contains terms that are not defined by the legislation. These terms are added for guidance purposes and are solely intended to explain these concepts in as simple way as possible.

This glossary is not a substitute for the *Environmental Assessment Act* or any of its regulations. In all cases, the wording contained in the *Environmental Assessment Act* would prevail.

Aboriginal Peoples

The Constitution Act, 1982 specifies that Aboriginal peoples include Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada.

Alternative Design

A type of alternative method.

Alternative Methods

Alternative methods of carrying out the proposed undertaking are different ways of doing the same activity. Alternative methods could include consideration of one or more of the following: alternative technologies; alternative methods of applying specific technologies; alternative sites for a proposed undertaking; alternative design methods; and, alternative methods of operating any facilities associated with a proposed undertaking.

Alternatives

Both alternative methods and alternatives to a proposed undertaking.

Alternatives To

Alternatives to the proposed undertaking are functionally different ways of approaching and dealing with a problem or opportunity.

Branch

Environmental Approvals Branch, Ministry of the Environment.

Commitment

Represents a guarantee from a proponent about a certain course of action, that is, "I will do this, at this time, in this way." Proponents acknowledge these guarantees by documenting obligations and responsibilities, which they agree to follow, in environmental assessment

documentation (terms of reference and environmental assessment). Once the Minister and Cabinet approve an application, the commitments within the document are often made legally binding as a condition of approval. Commitments are also found in environmental reports for class environmental assessment projects, electricity projects, waste management projects and transit projects. Although not approved by the Minister and Cabinet, they represent guarantees from a proponent about a certain course of action.

Conditions

Conditions of *Environmental Assessment Act* approval are legally binding and may be used as a compliance tool. Conditions can determine the way in which detail design, implementation and operation or closure of an undertaking will proceed. Conditions of *Environmental Assessment Act* approval will depend on the details of the undertaking and the environmental assessment and may be used to address Government Review Team and public and community concerns.

Consolidated Hearings Act

A hearing under the *Consolidated Hearings Act* allows a decision to be made under more than one statute, including the *Environmental Assessment Act*, *Environmental Protection Act*, *Planning Act*, and others through joint hearings.

Consultation

A two-way communication process to involve interested persons in the planning, implementation and monitoring of a proposed undertaking. Consultation is intended to:

- Identify concerns;
- Identify relevant information;
- Identify relevant guidelines, policies and standards;
- Facilitate the development of a list of all required approvals, licences or permits;
- Provide guidance to the proponent about the preparation of various types of environmental assessment documentation;
- Ensure that relevant information is shared about the proposed undertaking;
- Encourage the submission of requests for further information and analysis early in the environmental assessment process;
- Enable the ministry to make a fair and balanced decision.

Deadlines Regulation

Refers to *Ontario Regulation 616/98*, which establishes the timing of reviews and decisions for terms of references, environmental assessments and class environmental assessments by the ministry.

Director

Director of the Environmental Assessment and Approvals Branch, Ministry of the Environment. In October 2011, the Environmental Assessment and Approvals Branch underwent a functional reorganization which resulted in the creation of two branches: Environmental Approvals Branch and Environmental Approvals Access and Service Integration Branch. For the purposes of the environmental assessment guidance materials, the definition of “Director” also refers to the functional position Director, Environmental Approvals Branch.

Do Nothing Alternative

An alternative that is typically included in the evaluation of alternatives that identifies the implications of doing nothing to address the problem or opportunity that has been identified. Also referred to as the “null” alternative in some class environmental assessments.

Environment

The *Environmental Assessment Act* defines environment to mean:

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

Environmental Assessment

Environmental assessment is a study, which assesses the potential environmental effects (positive or negative) of an individual proposal. Key components of an environmental assessment include consultation with government agencies and the public; consideration and evaluation of alternatives; and, the management of potential environmental effects. Conducting an environmental assessment promotes good environmental planning before decisions are made about proceeding with a proposal. This is also referred to as an “individual” environmental assessment.

Environmental Assessment Act

The *Environmental Assessment Act* (and amendments and regulations thereto) is a provincial statute that sets out a planning and decision-making process to evaluate the potential environmental effects of a proposed undertaking. Proponents wishing to proceed with an undertaking must document their planning and decision-making process and submit the results from their environmental assessment to the Minister for approval.

Environmental Assessment Coordinator

The assigned staff person from one of the ministry’s five regional offices. Environmental Assessment Coordinators administer provincial environmental assessment requirements by managing the ministry’s technical review, ensuring that concerns specific to the ministry’s mandate are provided to the proponent to be addressed, and providing guidance on the specific processes, provisions and requirements of class environmental assessments and Environmental Screening Processes.

Environmental Effect

The effect that a proposed undertaking or its alternatives has or could potentially have on the environment, either positive or negative, direct or indirect, short- or long-term.

Environmental Review Tribunal

An administrative body that has the authority under the *Environmental Assessment Act* to conduct hearings when they are required by the Minister of the Environment.

The Environmental Review Tribunal is an independent and impartial tribunal established by provincial legislation. The Tribunal functions as a quasi-judicial body, subject to the rules of natural justice and the requirements of the *Statutory Powers Procedure Act*. The Tribunal's primary role is adjudicating applications and appeals under various environmental and planning statutes.

Government Review Team

Staff from government ministries and agencies (federal; provincial, including local Conservation Authorities; and, municipal, including local Boards of Health) who contribute to the review of environmental assessment documentation (terms of reference, environmental assessment and class environmental assessment) by providing comments from their mandated areas of responsibility. In the class environmental assessment context, there is no formal Government Review Team.

Impact Management Measures

Measures which can lessen potential negative environmental effects or enhance positive environmental effects. These measures could include mitigation, compensation, or community enhancement.

“Individual” Environmental Assessment

A term used to describe the application for and the process of seeking approval under Part II of the *Environmental Assessment Act*. (see environmental assessment)

Interested Persons

Individuals or organizations with an interest in a particular undertaking. Persons with an interest in a particular undertaking often include neighbours and individuals, environmental groups or clubs, naturalist organizations, agricultural organizations, sports or recreational groups, organizations from the local community, municipal heritage committees, ratepayers associations, cottage associations, Aboriginal peoples and communities, Francophones and businesses. Interested persons are not required to demonstrate that they will personally be affected by a particular undertaking. Interested persons are often called stakeholders.

Joint Board

An administrative body that has the authority under the *Consolidated Hearings Act* to conduct joint hearings under more than one statute, including the *Environmental Assessment Act*, *Environmental Protection Act*, *Planning Act*, and others.

Minister

Minister of the Environment.

Ministry

Ministry of the Environment.

Ministry Review

The ministry Review is a document which is prepared by the ministry during the review and approval process for environmental assessments and class environmental assessments. The ministry Review outlines whether the proponent of a project or class environmental assessment process is in compliance with its approved terms of reference; how the proponent has met the

requirements under the *Environmental Assessment Act*, including public consultation; and, the ministry's analyses of the public, Aboriginal, and government agency comments received by the ministry on the environmental assessment or class environmental assessment. Once the ministry Review is published and a notice of completion is issued, all members of the public, Aboriginal communities, and agencies have a final opportunity to submit their comments to the ministry on the ministry Review, the environmental assessment documentation or the proposed undertaking. Requests to the Minister to consider sending the application for a hearing on significant outstanding environmental issues can also be submitted at this time.

Ministry Technical Reviewers

Ministry of the Environment staff, other than the Project Officer, who contribute to the review of the draft and proposed terms of reference. They form part of the Government Review Team for the proposal.

Monitoring

The activities carried out by the applicant after approval of an undertaking to determine the environmental effects of the undertaking ("effects monitoring"). Monitoring can also refer to those activities carried out by the Ministry of the Environment to ensure that an applicant complies with the conditions of approval of the class environmental assessment ("compliance monitoring"). Effectiveness monitoring is a third type of monitoring in which an applicant evaluates how effectively its class environmental assessment is working in the planning and implementation of its class environmental assessment projects.

Negative Environmental Effects

Negative environmental effects are the negative effects that a project has, or could potentially have, directly or indirectly on the environment at any stage in the project life cycle. Negative environmental effects may include, but are not limited to, the harmful alteration, disruption, destruction, or loss of natural features, flora or fauna and their habitat, ecological functions, natural resources, air or water quality, and cultural or heritage resources. Negative environmental effects may also include the displacement, impairment, conflict or interference with existing land uses, businesses or economic enterprises, recreational uses or activities, cultural pursuits, social conditions or the local economy.

Net Effects

Negative environmental effects of a project and related activities that will remain after mitigation and impact management measures have been applied.

[*Note: in this EA both negative and positive net effects have been assessed.*]

Places Of Public Record

Official locations where interested persons may review the proposed terms of reference and environmental assessment.

Project Officer

The assigned staff person from the Environmental Approvals Branch who manages and coordinates the review of the components of an *Environmental Assessment Act* application (that is, a terms of reference or an environmental assessment) for approval. The Project Officer also

provides guidance on the environmental assessment process to proponents, government agencies and other interested persons.

Proponent

A person, agency, group or organization who carries out or proposes to carry out an undertaking or is the owner or person having charge, management or control of an undertaking.

Public Record File

A public record file will be maintained by the Environmental Approvals Branch for every undertaking for which there is an application for approval under Part II and Part II.1 as well as orders under section 16 and the preparation of Declaration Orders under section 3.2 and Harmonization Orders under section 3.1 of the *Environmental Assessment Act* in accordance with the requirement to maintain a record under section 30 of that act.

In addition, the Environmental Approvals Branch will maintain a public record file for elevation requests under the streamlined environmental assessment process for electricity projects and waste management projects, objections for transit projects and requests for an individual environmental assessment pursuant to Declaration Orders. The purpose of the public record file is to promote transparency and consultation. Public record files are only kept for class environmental assessment undertakings where a Part II Order has been requested.

Record of Consultation

A document submitted with the proposed terms of reference that describes the consultation carried out during the preparation of the terms of reference and the results of that consultation.

Regional Director

Director of one of the five regional offices of the Ministry of the Environment.

Regulatory Agency

Government ministries, agencies, authorities, or departments (federal; provincial, including local conservation authorities; and, municipal, including local boards of health) who may have an interest, participate and contribute to the review of documentation prepared by the proponent for a transit project by providing comments based on their mandate.

Stand-Alone Document

Additional documentation prepared separately from the terms of reference, which provides more information, but is not subject to the approval of the Minister (for example, Record of Consultation and supporting documentation).

Supporting Documentation

Documentation that is submitted to the ministry, in addition to the proposed terms of reference, which provides further information on issues discussed in the proposed terms of reference. Information contained in the supporting documentation should support the proponent's request that the terms of reference be approved by providing justification for the choices made and details of processes or methodologies to be used. These are routinely submitted as stand-alone documents.

Terms Of Reference

A document prepared by the proponent and submitted to the Ministry of the Environment for approval. The terms of reference sets out the framework for the planning and decision-making process to be followed by the proponent during the preparation of an environmental assessment or class environmental assessment. In other words, it is the proponent's work plan for what is going to be studied and includes a consultation plan. If approved, the environmental assessment must be prepared according to the terms of reference.

Undertaking

An enterprise, activity or a proposal, plan, or program that a proponent initiates or proposes to initiate.