

Commencement of the Impact Assessment Process

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the Impact Assessment process?

The Impact Assessment process is how the federal government reviews major projects to understand their potential effects within federal jurisdiction on the environment, people, and the economy. It evaluates potential environmental, social, and economic impacts of the project before any approvals are granted. This ensures transparency, accountability, and informed decision-making.

2. Why is the Ontario Pumped Storage Project subject to this process?

The proposed project is predominantly located on federal lands—specifically the Department of National Defence’s 4th Canadian Division Training Centre in Meaford. An Impact Assessment is required for those projects that are designated or where a federal authority is proposing to conduct an activity that could impact the environment.

3. Why is this process important?

The Impact Assessment process is about informed decision-making. The process examines both positive and adverse effects of proposed projects — jobs, economic benefits, as well as land use, water, traffic and potential community impacts.

The goal is to make sure projects are developed responsibly and in a way that supports long-term sustainability by enhancing the positive effects of a project and mitigating potential adverse effects.

4. How can the public participate?

Public participation is central to the Impact Assessment process. There will be opportunities to provide feedback during official comment periods and through various community engagement sessions. Details will be posted on the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada’s website and the project’s website. [Subscribe to updates here.](#)

5. Why should community members participate?

Here’s why community involvement matters:

- Early input leads to better project design by identifying opportunities and challenges at the outset.
- Aligns projects with local growth and infrastructure plans, ensuring long-term benefits for the community.
- Supports informed decision-making through open dialogue and shared perspectives.
- Ensures that projects work for communities now and in the future, creating infrastructure that benefits residents today and generations to come.

6. When will the Impact Assessment process be completed?

Timelines are determined by the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada. Updates will be shared on the [Impact Assessment Registry website](#).

7. Is the Impact Assessment process proponent driven?

When a project proponent proposes to construct and operate a project that may require an Impact Assessment, the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada is required to scope and evaluate potential effects associated with that proposed project. Project proponents are required to provide information on the design, operation, and potential effects of the proposed project based on the requirement established by the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada.

8. Can you explain each phase of the Impact Assessment Process?

There are five phases in the Impact Assessment Process:

- 1. Planning Phase** – The proponent submits an Initial Project Description. The Impact Assessment Agency of Canada, Indigenous rightsholders and groups, and stakeholders – including municipalities – review the description to help identify key issues and what needs to be studied.
- 2. Impact Statement Phase** – The proponent conducts detailed studies on potential effects and proposes mitigation. A technical document known as the Impact Statement is submitted to the Agency for review.
- 3. Assessment and Review** – The Impact Assessment Agency of Canada, alongside federal and provincial expert authorities, reviews the Impact Statement and seeks public and Indigenous feedback. Municipal perspectives help ensure that regional and community impacts are fully understood. During this phase, the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada prepares the Impact Assessment Report to inform decision making.
- 4. Decision Phase** – The Minister of Environment and Climate Change will make a decision or will refer the decision to the Governor in Council to decide if the project is in the public interest, based on environmental, social and economic factors.
- 5. Follow-Up and Monitoring** – Ongoing oversight ensures commitments are met.

Additional information regarding each phase of the [Impact Assessment Process is available here](#).

10. What is the Initial Project Description?

The Initial Project Description (IPD) is the first formal document submitted by a project proponent to the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada during the Planning Phase. The document provides an early overview of the proposed project including information on the purpose and need of the project, project components, schedule, alternatives and potential effects.

The IPD informs communities, Indigenous rightsholders and groups, and stakeholders about the project so they can identify issues and provide input early.

[The IPD is available to review on the Impact Assessment Registry website.](#)

11. When will detailed studies become available for review?

Detailed technical studies and further information will be shared as part of the Impact Statement Phase (Phase 2). This will include environmental, social, and economic assessments, as well as further opportunities for community input.

12. Are public comments documented in the Initial Project Description?

Comments provided to the proponent are an important part of the engagement process, but they are not always reflected verbatim in regulatory filings. Regulatory submissions, such as the Initial Project Description, must follow strict federal guidelines and focus on meeting the requirements set out by the Impact Assessment Act. While individual comments may not appear word-for-word, they are reviewed, grouped and summarized where multiple similar comments have been received and considered as part of the broader planning and decision-making process. Feedback helps inform project design, environmental assessments, and engagement strategies, even if it is not explicitly cited in the filing.

13. Where can I find more information?

Further information is available on the [Impact Assessment Agency of Canada website](#), and a list of frequently asked questions about the [process is available here](#).