

Public Participation in Assessments

Through effective public participation, more informed decisions will, in the end, lead to better projects.

The *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act (YESAA)* guarantees opportunities for public participation in assessments conducted under it. The Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board (YESAB) and its Designated Offices are mandated to fulfill this purpose in assessments.

Including the views, experiences, and information of interested persons and the public can benefit an assessment in a number of ways. Public participation will provide assessors with information and concerns from a variety of perspectives. For interested persons, participation provides for the meaningful sharing of information and the opportunity to have their views known with respect to activities that may affect them or the areas that they care about.

The public participation process also promotes values of openness, honesty, trust and transparency of purpose and process. The assessment will also demonstrate full and fair consideration of the information, concerns and issues shared.

Public participation is one of the most effective ways that an assessor can become aware of the values and vision of the people who might be most directly affected by a proposed project. This information is particularly important when an assessor is determining the significance of potential socio-economic effects of a proposed project.

Through effective public participation, more informed decisions will, in the end, lead to better projects. Specific local information from individuals with historic ties and special interest in an area or a proposed activity can provide additional environmental and social context regarding where, when and how the project should proceed. This in turn leads to more socially acceptable developments where consideration has been given to the interests and views of those most affected.

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Opportunities for Public Participation in an Assessment

Opportunities for public participation will vary significantly depending on the type of assessment under our Act. For instance the opportunities for public participation will be significantly greater for an Executive Committee screening than for a Designated Office evaluation. Opportunities for public participation will also vary from project to project based on the scale of the project, the

environmental sensitivity to the type of development and the concerns raised by the public. Timelines for public comment may be extended at the discretion of the assessor within the time periods prescribed by YESAB's Rules of Practice and Procedure. Public meetings may be held to provide further opportunities for participation.

Sending and Publishing Notice

When an assessment begins, notification will be sent to interested persons identified on a list generated for each assessment. This notification list will include any person who has an interest in a project and has written to be added to the notification list. Organizations and persons can be added to the notification list throughout the assessment.

The Act and Rules require the assessor to give public notice of an assessment through another form other than the notification list. This may include a Yukon periodical with wide distribution or a radio broadcast that has a large Yukon listening audience. In some communities, the assessor will also post notices in prominent locations. These forms of notice can also be used to advertise public meetings or other public participation opportunities.

Currently YESAB advertises all projects entering the Seeking Views and Information stage beside the weather page of the Yukon News every Friday and posts a collection of public notices.



Providing Information During an Assessment

Comments towards an assessment can be made through written submissions. Written submissions can be created and posted to the YESAB Online Registry or may be delivered by hand, mail, fax or electronic communication to the appropriate Designated Office or the main Board office. Templates have been created for written and online submissions that can assist in the development and submission of comments, views and information.

There may be further opportunities for public participation in some assessments.

A public meeting may be held so that interested people can discuss issues surrounding an assessment. Comments and views shared will be considered in the development of recommendations.

Considering Information Shared in an Assessment

Any information shared by interested persons and the public will be posted to the YESAB Online Registry and given full and fair consideration in an assessment. If a submission is received by mail, fax, or hand delivery, the document will be scanned and posted to the YESAB Online Registry. Any follow-up correspondence in response to your information from the assessor, proponent, or other participant will also be posted to the Online Registry. The Online Registry or your nearest Designated Office will provide further details on how information is considered in an assessment.