

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN ASSESSMENTS

WHO WE ARE

YESAB is an independent body that administers the assessment responsibilities of the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act* (YESAA) and regulations. Specifically, its role is to administer the assessment process under YESAA.

THE ORIGINS OF YESAA

Chapter 12 of the *Umbrella Final Agreement* (UFA) and Yukon First Nation final agreements establish the foundation for a legislated development assessment process applicable to all lands in Yukon. The *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act* was enacted by the Parliament of Canada and received Royal Assent on May 13, 2003 and came fully into force November 2005.

WHAT IS ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT?

The assessment process is a structured approach to identifying and addressing potential environmental and socio-economic effects of proposed development activities. When a potential effect is determined to be significant and adverse, the assessor recommends measures to reduce, control or eliminate the effect. If the significant adverse effect cannot be mitigated, the assessor must recommend that the project not proceed. YESAB directs its recommendations to decision bodies, which are federal, territorial or First Nation governments or agencies, who make the final decision.

THE BENEFITS OF ASSESSMENT IN YUKON

Environmental and socio-economic assessments provide opportunities for the public to become involved in the review of development activities in the territory by helping to identify values, project-related effects on those values and ways and means of avoiding or reducing those effects. Assessments inform project design and government decisions about projects and development more generally. As the product of a participatory and independently-administered process, assessments under YESAA also help to reinforce the transparency and accountability of development decisions.

WHAT WE DON'T DO

- We DON'T tally votes for or against a project during an assessment.
- We DON'T issue permits or authorizations for projects.
- We DON'T make any final decisions regarding project approvals.
- We DON'T enforce regulations or any conditions and terms of permits.

PARTICIPATE IN ASSESSMENTS

Public participation is an effective way for an assessor to become aware of the values potentially affected by a proposed project. Effective participation allows for an open and balanced process that informs the assessment and subsequent decisions, resulting in better projects.

MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION

In order for comments to be most useful to assessors, outline all the environmental and socioeconomic values considered important and explain how these values may be affected by a proposed project. Participants may also share ideas on how to avoid or minimize effects. All comments made during an assessment are posted to the YESAB Online Registry and can be viewed by the public.

YESAB staff are also available to help capture the views and opinions from the public or assist in submitting comments into an assessment.

HOW ARE PUBLIC COMMENTS CONSIDERED IN AN ASSESSMENT?

Any information shared by the public will be given full and fair consideration in an assessment. Information collected during an assessment can influence the scope or focus of the assessment as well as its outcome or recommendation.

HOW TO SUBMIT COMMENTS

EVERY PROJECT ASSESSMENT INCLUDES A PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD. Participants can submit views from any device through the YESAB Online Registry at "<http://www.yesabregistry.ca/>" (search by project number). Participants can also comment by email, mail, phone, fax, or in person through a Designated Office.

HOW TO FIND A PROJECT OF INTEREST

Participants can establish a profile on the YOR and request to be notified about projects of interest. To find a project proposal and make comments, search through the YOR's "<http://www.yesabregistry.ca/>" advanced search function by:

- Project number
- Project location
- Project title
- Proponent name
- Type of assessment
- Assessment district
- First Nation traditional territory
- Geographical locations (latitude/longitude or UTM)
- Project sector

MAKE YOUR VOICE COUNT, GO TO THE YESAB
ONLINE REGISTRY: **YESABREGISTRY.CA**



UNDERSTANDING VALUES

Values refer to environmental or socio-economic features that may be affected by a project. Values may reflect scientific, social, cultural, economic, historical, archaeological, or aesthetic attributes of these features and the importance people place on them. Examples of values might include air or water quality, trapping or hunting opportunities, community well being, heritage or culture. The public plays a critical role in identifying values that may be affected by a project.

Values can also be identified by the assessor, the proponent, government agencies, interest groups or First Nations. The identification of appropriate values allows the assessment to be focused on those aspects of the natural and human environment that are of greatest importance to society.

HOW TO DEVELOP EFFECTIVE COMMENTS

Use the questions below to help formulate valuable comment submissions.

1 What do you value in the proposed project area?

Values may include specific wildlife species/populations, environmental elements (land, air, water), aesthetics, social/ cultural values (trapping, way of life, jobs/livelihoods), etc. How do you use or interact with the area?

2 How might those values be affected or impacted by the proposed project, and why?

Explain how you think these values would be affected if the project goes ahead. How would this be different from the way it is now?

3 Do you have any suggestions for how these effects could be reduced or eliminated?

Include any measures you believe may lessen adverse project effects, and why you think these measures would be successful.

4 Are your concerns based on your own experience, studies you are familiar with or information passed on to you from someone else?

This will help assessors consider your information and allow them to follow-up with questions, if necessary.

COMMENT SUBMISSION OPTIONS

- The YESAB Online Registry (YOR)
- Fax or mail
- E-mail
- By meeting with an assessor

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