

Project Profile

Project Name:	Assessing options for aligning the Area-based Analysis (ABA) and Cumulative Effects Framework (CEF) methodologies
Project Number:	CIM-2018-01
Proponent:	EcoLogic Research
Funding Envelope:	Cumulative Impacts Management
Timeframe:	July 1, 2017 to January 31, 2018

Project objectives

The objectives of the project are to:

1. Provide a clear and concise analysis of the important similarities and differences between the Oil and Gas Commission's Area-based Analysis (ABA) and the BC Government's Cumulative Effects Framework (CEF) with respect to the assessment and management of unintended cumulative effects.
2. Provide feasible technical, policy and legislative options for aligning the approaches to achieve the overall goal of managing cumulative effects.

Project description

The goal of this project is to assess options for aligning ABA and the CEF. It will include a detailed analysis of the legislation, regulations and policies relevant to either ABA and/or the CEF. The analysis, along with discussions with key staff from the respective agencies, will provide the basis for developing options for better alignment. These could include the implementation of existing or new policy tools by government or by OGC, or regulatory or legislative changes.

The primary audience for the resulting report will be government and OGC directors and executive.

Project background

Cumulative effects assessment and management is an emerging focus of natural resource management in BC. After several years of development, the BC government implemented in 2016 a *Cumulative Effects*

Framework Interim Policy (CEF). This policy provides guidance for the assessment of cumulative effects and use of assessment results by statutory decision-makers and others involved crown land management. Concurrently, the BC Oil and Gas Commission (OGC) has been developing and implementing its Area-based Analysis (ABA) approach to addressing the risk of cumulative effects related to oil and gas activities.

Both initiatives have the same goal of minimizing unintended cumulative effects, but they have evolved in parallel within different regulatory and policy contexts. As implementation of both processes continues to roll out on the same land base, the issue of misalignment has been raised by stakeholders and by First Nations, and has been recognized by both OGC and the government of BC.

Project approach

The project involves:

1. A review of legislation, regulations and policy relevant to cumulative effects assessment and management in BC's natural resource sector.
2. A comparative analysis of ABA and the CEF that presents the degree of alignment with respect to their technical foundations, assessment protocols, and decision-making direction. Related initiatives of both agencies such as the Regional Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Environmental Stewardship Initiative will also be included in the analysis.
3. Development of options for implementation by government and/or the OGC that could reconcile the approaches to improve certainty for project proponents and First Nations while meeting the intent of avoiding unintended cumulative effects.
4. Development of considerations for implementation of new ABA values.

Project deliverables

The deliverables from this project include the following:

1. A report summarizing the project findings.