

CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Why is this important to the study?

The N-GTA study is subject to the Ontario Environmental Assessment Act (EAA); it may also be subject to the requirements of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA). The requirements under CEAA are different from the Ontario EAA. The most significant difference involves timing of when the Acts are triggered.

The Ontario EA process is initiated at the conception of a project; under CEAA, an EA isn't initiated until there is a specific trigger, which for MTO typically occurs much later in the approvals process.

WHAT IS THE CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT ACT?

The *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* (CEAA) is a federal law that requires the environmental effects of a proposed project to be carefully considered before construction can begin.

It came into force in 1995 and requires that federal authorities and agencies ensure that environmental assessments (EA) are conducted on federally led projects, or where federal land or financial assistance, or certain regulatory responsibilities (e.g., issuance of permits, authorizations etc.) apply. The Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency administers the federal EA.

WHAT DOES THE FEDERAL EA PROCESS INVOLVE?

There are four types of federal environmental assessments: screenings, comprehensive studies, mediations and review panels. Federal authorities and agencies lead screenings and comprehensive studies; mediations and review panels are conducted independent of government involvement. The majority of projects subject to a federal environmental assessment will undergo either a screening or a comprehensive study.

There are four key steps to an environmental assessment under CEAA. They include:

1. **Describing** the project in detail;
2. **Evaluating** the negative environmental effects;
3. Determining ways to **eliminate or reduce** negative effects on the environment; and
4. Determining the **significance** of the residual adverse environmental effects.

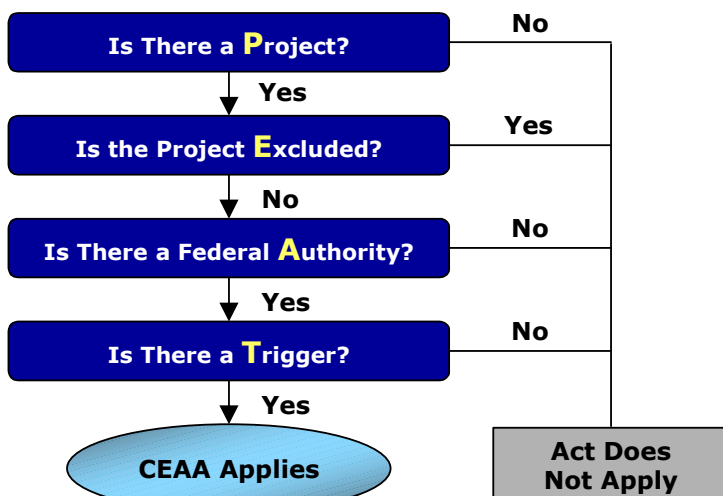
COORDINATED EA PROCESS FOR MTO PROJECTS

Ontario and the federal government have agreed to coordinate their respective EA processes as outlined in the Canada-Ontario Agreement for Environmental Assessment Cooperation (November 2004). As a result, MTO is committed to working in a coordinated manner with both the provincial and federal governments. For information specific to the N-GTA project, refer to the EA Terms of Reference (Document A – Supporting Documentation) which includes the process chart outlining how the study tasks and EA requirements will be coordinated.

STATUS OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT IN THE NGTA STUDY

In anticipation of CEAA being triggered, representatives of the federal departments with an interest (e.g., Environment, Fisheries and Oceans, Transport Canada, Health.) are currently "informally" engaged. In addition to becoming familiar with the project early in its planning stages, this provides those departments with the opportunity to provide the study team with expected assessment information requirements - making EA coordination achievable.

P.E.A.T. Process for Determining if CEAA Applies



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