








Federal Integrated Assessment Roadmap

**Impact Assessment Act and Nuclear
Safety and Control Act**

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→ The Power of Commitment

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this document is to inform and guide municipalities hosting new nuclear facilities or major expansions of existing nuclear facilities so they can optimize the benefits to their communities while ensuring their concerns are adequately considered in the decision process. All new nuclear facilities or significant expansions of existing nuclear facilities in Canada are subject to a federal licensing approvals process consisting of the federal *Impact Assessment Act (IAA or Act)* and the *Nuclear Safety and Control Act (NSCA)* before being able to proceed to construction.

The federal Impact Assessment (IA) process applies only to major projects (e.g., a dam, port, or nuclear facility) and are conducted to examine the positive and negative effects (impacts) that a proposed major project could have. Further, federal impact assessments apply only to major projects that are the most likely to have significant adverse effects in areas of federal jurisdiction (i.e., fish and fish habitat, aquatic species at risk, cross boundary marine pollution, impacts on federal lands and impacts on Indigenous Peoples).

The IA process consists of five phases starting with the planning phase or Phase 1 which is led by the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (IAAC or Agency). Once the planning phase is completed, an impact statement is prepared as part of Phase 2. The impact statement is followed by the impact assessment (Phase 3) which culminates in the preparation of an impact assessment report. This report is used by the Governor in Council in Phase 4 to decide on whether the proposed project is allowed to proceed or not. Phase 5 consists of post decision follow-up activities for those proposed projects given approval to proceed.

The *NSCA* is Canada's federal legislation on the regulation of the Canadian nuclear industry. If the proposed project includes activities that are regulated under the *NSCA*, then the federal Minister refers the impact assessment to an integrated review panel. In this case, IAAC conducts an "integrated assessment" with the *NSCA* so that the regulatory requirements of the *NSCA* are integrated into the impact assessment process (**Section 2**).

The federal impact assessment process involves several participants including the proponent, IAAC, Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC), federal jurisdictions and experts, Indigenous groups, other jurisdictions like the province, the public, and the integrated review panel (**Section 3**).

Although major projects like a new nuclear facility or an expanded nuclear facility located within a host municipality can have significant impacts on that community, municipalities¹ are not given any elevated participant status by the federal IAA. Instead, local government is grouped in with the public. The only exception for this is with the IAAC public participation funding programs, in which case local governments are considered 'government' and are not eligible for public funding programs. A host municipality can experience impacts throughout all phases of project development including construction (e.g., noise and dust generation, increased traffic, influx of migrant workers, housing supply and cost pressures, etc.), operations (e.g., demands on infrastructure services, additional emergency response requirements, increased demand on social and health services, etc.), decommissioning (e.g., economic cycles, storage of radioactive waste, etc.).

On the flip side, a new nuclear facility or expansion of an existing nuclear facility can offer several benefits to the host municipality and surrounding area. These benefits can include such things as job creation, youth retention in the area, increased sales at local businesses, etc. Due to the magnitude and timelines of large-scale nuclear projects, the impacts on the host community can be significant and extend over multiple generations.

Notwithstanding this, municipalities hosting a new nuclear facility or an expansion of an existing nuclear facility need to proactively participate in the federal impact assessment and licensing phases of the project to ensure their interests are served as much as possible because the Act does not appropriately acknowledge the burden they are expected to carry for the good of Canadian society. **Section 4** elaborates on this further. Also, it is recommended that a municipality potentially hosting a new nuclear facility, or a major expansion of an existing nuclear facility need to

¹ In Ontario, municipalities can be either single-tier, upper-tier, or lower-tier.

augment their "public" participant role in the integrated assessment by seeking a partnering relationship with the proponent in the pursuit of a Community Benefits Agreement (**Section 5**).

2. The Federal Integrated Assessment

In Canada, the preparation, construction, operation and/or decommissioning of major nuclear facilities such as a new nuclear generating station or a significant expansion of an existing nuclear generating station are a "designated" project, meaning they are subject to the *Impact Assessment Act (IAA)* as described in the Physical Activities Regulations² (i.e., the Project List). In addition, some projects have lifecycle regulators which regulate the project's activity throughout its life (e.g., some nuclear projects). When an impact assessment is required for these types of projects, IAAC conducts an "integrated assessment" with the lifecycle regulator.

These assessments integrate the regulatory requirements of the lifecycle regulator into the impact assessment process to ensure the principle of "one project, one assessment" while incorporating the benefit of the lifecycle regulator's experience and expertise. The CNSC is a lifecycle regulator for nuclear projects in Canada. As a result, major nuclear facility projects require an integrated assessment because they are regulated by the CNSC under the *Nuclear Safety and Control Act (NSCA)*.

Projects that require an integrated assessment are referred to an integrated review panel by the Minister of Environment and Climate Change (Minister) who is responsible for IAAC. The integrated review panel is comprised of members who work with the lifecycle regulator and are appointed by IAAC. The panel includes at least one appointee from the lifecycle regulator. Other members may be appointed from a roster of potential candidates established by the Minister.

The integrated review panel is responsible for the following:

- Leading the engagement process during the impact assessment phase
- Holding hearings open to the public, potentially affected Indigenous groups, and federal authorities
- Preparing the impact assessment report with recommendations and conclusions and sending it to the Minister
- Issuing applicable licences as the decision-making body for the lifecycle regulator

A Five-Phased Approach to an Integrated Assessment

Like a federal impact assessment, integrated assessments are organized into five phases (**Figure 1**). The five phases begin with planning and ends with what is referred to a post-decision phase:

- Phase 1: Planning
- Phase 2: Impact Statement
- Phase 3: Impact Assessment
- Phase 4: Decision
- Phase 5: Post Decision

While each phase has a legislated timeline, the goal is to complete the entire assessment process within three years for a nuclear project, which is ambitious. Each of the five phases are described as follows reflecting the information provided on the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada's website: **[The Impact Assessment Process: Timelines and Outputs - Canada.ca](#)**

² Gov't of Canada, Justic Law Website, Impact Assessment Act (2024), Physical Activities Regulations, SOR/2019-285, published December 9, 2019



THE KEY PARTICIPANTS IN THE IMPACT ASSESSMENT SYSTEM ARE



Figure 1 Federal Impact Assessment Process Diagram. Source: Gov't of Canada, Impact Assessment Process Overview, 2024

2.1 Phase 1: Planning

To officially start, the proponent provides the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (IAAC) with a document describing the project. This document is called the **Initial Project Description**. It includes the location of the project and identifies the communities and Indigenous Peoples that may be affected. The Initial Project Description is then posted on the Canadian Impact Assessment Registry (Registry) for comment and formal engagement activities with project participants such as Indigenous Peoples and the public begin. Comments may be from multiple sources, such as other jurisdictions (provincial, territorial, federal, and Indigenous authorities), Indigenous groups, the public, and other stakeholders.

Using the comments received, IAAC prepares a **Summary of Issues** raised that apply to federal jurisdiction and the proponent is asked to respond to those issues. The Summary is posted on the Registry. The proponent prepares a **Response to the Summary of Issues** that explains how it intends to address the issues raised and a **Detailed Project Description** that meets the requirements of the Information and Management of Time Limits Regulations. Once completed, the proponent submits these documents to IAAC. IAAC reviews the Detailed Project Description and posts it and the Response to the Summary of Issues to the Registry once it is accepted as conforming to the regulations.

As part of Phase 1, the Minister issues a Notice of Impact Assessment Decision with reasons, which identifies whether a full impact assessment is required, and may refer the assessment to an integrated review panel, which is the case for nuclear projects. IAAC then prepares and issues several planning documents to the proponent, outlining the information and studies required to develop an Impact Statement. The planning documents prepared for each designated project include the following:

- The **Tailored Impact Statement Guidelines** (Guidelines) set the scope of the assessment factors and identify the information and studies that IAAC requires and considers necessary for the conduct of the impact assessment. The development of the Guidelines considers the individual project context and aims to focus the

assessment on the priority project effects, impacts on the rights of Indigenous peoples of Canada, and issues that are material to decision making under the IAA. More specifically, the Guidelines outline the information and studies the proponent must provide to prepare the **Impact Statement** and inform the assessment reflecting the key issues identified during the Planning Phase, provide the scope of the factors to be considered in the impact assessment, explain how IAAC will work with other jurisdictions, outlines how IAAC will consult with and engage with project participants, and describe other activities, such as the types of permits required.

In the case of new nuclear facilities or an expansion of an existing nuclear facility, IAAC leads the development of the Guidelines working with CNSC as the lifecycle regulator. Considering this, the Agency has released a draft Tailored Impact Statement Guidelines Templates (nuclear reactors version) for designated projects subject to the IAA and NSCA for proponents, which can be viewed at <https://iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/documents/p88771/159565E.pdf>.

- The **Public Participation Plan** is to be tailored to the project and includes the Plan's objectives reflecting the views heard during the Planning phase, a list of groups and individuals who have indicated that they have an interest in participating in the impact assessment, how groups and individuals indicated that they wish to participate in the assessment, and a table that describes the impact assessment phases and the engagement opportunities during each phase. The Public Participation Plan is designed to provide proponents, the public and other participants with certainty about how and when public participation will occur.
- The **Indigenous Engagement and Partnership Plan** is developed jointly with Indigenous groups. The Plan is tailored to the project and includes the Plan's objectives, the Indigenous communities identified by IAAC for Crown consultation and those communities that have expressed an interest in engaging, information related to the methods and tools that may be used as well as preferences for specific engagement methods. It would also include information related to more collaborative approaches such as Indigenous-led studies to inform the impact assessment or co-drafting parts of assessment reports, a table that describes the phases of the impact assessment and the engagement opportunities during each phase, and roles and responsibilities of federal authorities that may be required to issue permits or authorizations in relation to the designated project. IAAC posts the Plan on the Registry. Notwithstanding the Plan, community-specific consultation plans or protocols may also be developed to provide further details on engagement in the impact assessment process.
- The **Impact Assessment Cooperation Plan** is established between IAAC and other jurisdictions (i.e., provincial, territorial, and/or Indigenous). The Plan describes how IAAC will cooperate with other jurisdictions to reduce duplication, increase efficiency and certainty, and draw on the best available expertise to support the principle of "one project, one assessment.". For impact assessments referred to a review panel such as a new nuclear facility or expansion of an existing nuclear facility, the cooperation plan may be used to inform the terms of reference of the review panel and any arrangements made in support of the assessment by the review panel.
- The **Permitting Plan** is developed in coordination with federal authorities. The Plan is tailored to the project and includes a brief summary of the project, a list of anticipated permits, licences and authorizations required, a brief description of each permit, licence and authorization as well as hyperlinks to relevant online resources or references, an overview of the main steps for each post-impact assessment permit, licence and authorization with an indication of time lines and the types of information that may be required.

IAAC posts the draft Guidelines and draft Plans on the Registry for comment. The Agency continues to engage and considers input received to finalize the Guidelines and Plans. In accordance with the Act, the Agency must post the final Guidelines and Plans on the Registry within 180 days after the day on which the Initial Project Description is posted on the Registry, which marks the end of the Planning phase. Notwithstanding this legislated timeline of up to 180 days, IAAC can extend this timeline by up to 90 days on the request of another jurisdiction and is required to post reasons for any extension on the Registry.

Further information on the preceding planning documents including the templates that are to be used is provided at [Practitioner's Guide to the Impact Assessment Act - Canada.ca](https://www24.international.gc.ca/iaac-aeic/050/documents/p88771/159565E.pdf).

2.2 Phase 2: Impact Statement

The Impact Statement phase starts when the Notice of Commencement is posted to the Registry by IAAC. In this phase, the proponent assesses the impacts of the project, engages with participants like Indigenous Peoples and the public, and submits a detailed technical document called an **Impact Statement**. That document is based on the requirements outlined in the Final Tailored Impact Statement Guidelines (Guidelines) issued by the Agency at the end of Phase 1. The purpose of the Impact Statement is to identify and assess the impacts of the project, how various people may be affected, and the measures proposed to mitigate these effects. While the proponent is developing the Impact Statement, IAAC and CNSC develop the **integrated Review Panel's Terms of Reference**. Also, IAAC appoints the chairperson and panel members.

The Terms of Reference sets the time limit for the Review Panel to submit its report to the Minister. IAAC also sets a time limit for it to post recommendations for the Minister with respect to mitigation measures and follow-up programs to be included as conditions in a decision statement. The combined time limit for the Review Panel to complete its assessment and for IAAC to post its recommendation after receipt of the Panel's report must not exceed 600 days.

Once IAAC receives the proponent's Impact Statement, it is posted on the Registry for comment by project participants such as Indigenous groups, the public, etc. At the same time, IAAC and CNSC review the document and, if there are concerns and/or information is missing, then the proponent is requested to address the concerns and/or missing information. This determination is informed by the input and comments provided by project participants. IAAC ensures that all required information has been provided and posted to the Registry.

IAAC must be satisfied that the Proponent has provided all the required information outlined in the Final Guidelines, within three-years from the date the Notice of Commencement is posted on the Registry. Upon request from the Proponent, IAAC may extend the timeline. The Agency issues a Notice of Determination on the Registry when it determines that the Proponent has provided all the required information and studies outlined in the Final Guidelines in the Impact Statement. The posting of this notice marks the end of the Impact Statement phase.

Once all required information has been provided to the Agency, the impact assessment can be initiated.

2.3 Phase 3: Impact Assessment

In Phase 3, the integrated review panel conducts its analysis by considering potential environmental, health, social, and economic impacts of the proposed project, including benefits, based on the Impact Statement. The potential impacts on Indigenous Peoples and their rights are also assessed. Consultation activities with project participants continue during Phase 3. In addition, the panel holds a **public hearing**. The panel considers input received from Indigenous Peoples, the public, federal experts, other jurisdictions (such as a province), and other participants and prepares its **Impact Assessment Report** and submits it to the Minister. The Report is posted on the Registry.

The Impact Assessment Report

- Describes and assesses the information gathered
- Explains what Indigenous Knowledge was obtained and considered
- Provides an analysis of the direct or indirect adverse federal effects of the project and the extent to which they are significant
- Proposes conditions to prevent or reduce adverse federal effects, including technically and economically feasible mitigation measures
- Informs decision-making as to whether any significant adverse federal effects may be justified because they are in the public interest

Some parts of the report may be prepared by other jurisdictions like Indigenous governing bodies.

If the project is found to be in the public's interest, the proposed conditions may become legally binding. For example, at this point in the IA process, the conditions are just proposed or draft so in the approval decision they may or may

not be included. If they are included, then they are legally binding. The draft conditions are publicly shared on the Registry so project participants (e.g., Indigenous groups, federal Authorities, public, etc.) may provide feedback.

2.4 Phase 4: Decision

In Phase 4, the Governor in Council determines if the project should move forward or not. Following this determination, the Minister issues a **Decision Statement** to the project proponent, which is also posted on the Registry. If the project is allowed to proceed, the statement also lists the conditions the proponent must adhere to when carrying out the project because the Decision Statement is a legally binding document.

In addition, the Decision Statement indicates whether

- The project is likely to cause significant adverse federal effects
- The extent to which these effects will remain significant after the proposed mitigation measures are applied
- Any significant adverse federal effects are justified in the public interest

Also, a Decision Statement provides the following information to the proponent:

- Lists any enforceable conditions to which the proponent must comply
- Describes the necessary follow-up measures (refer to the next phase)
- Indicates a time limit as to when the proponent must begin to carry out the designated project

If the project is being allowed to proceed, then the proponent can begin to obtain any additional authorizations and permits required.

2.5 Phase 5: Post Decision

The integrated review panel, acting on behalf of CNSC, makes the licensing decision based on the assessment. IAAC and the lifecycle regulator are normally responsible for overseeing the compliance and enforcement of any conditions the project proponent might have to address that were identified during the assessment, but on occasion this falls to the lifecycle regulator. In such cases, it may also issue any applicable licence(s) for future project phases.

To monitor whether the proponent is complying with the statement, the Agency and/or CNSC conduct inspections. If the proponent is found to be non-compliant, it is a violation of federal law, and the proponent can be fined. The Agency and/or CNSC track and report on their follow-up activities to determine whether:

- The impacts of the project were accurately predicted
- The required conditions and follow-up measures were implemented
- The conditions were effective in preventing or reducing adverse federal effects
- The proponent is complying with the *Act* and regulations

Indigenous Peoples and the public have opportunities to participate in both monitoring and follow-up activities.

If the proponent wants to make a change to the project, they must submit information to IAAC for analysis. If the change requires the conditions and/or project description to be modified, details of the change as well as the Agency's analysis are posted on the Registry. This is done to obtain feedback from such project participants as Indigenous Peoples, the public, and other stakeholders.

3. The Participants in an Integrated Assessment

As mentioned in the preceding section, there are several participants involved in an integrated assessment including those engaged in preparing the documents and those commenting on them. The participants include the following:

- Proponent
- Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (IAAC or Agency)
- Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) (lifecycle regulator)
- Federal jurisdictions
- Federal experts
- Indigenous groups or peoples
- Other jurisdictions
- Public
- Integrated review panel

Although alluded to in Section 2, the roles and responsibilities of each of the preceding participants are more specifically defined in **Table 1**.

It is important to point out that unlike the *Ontario Environmental Assessment Act (OEAA)* where the proponent leads the environmental assessment process, IAAC takes the lead in the federal integrated assessment during Phase 1 (Planning) and Phase 2 (Impact Statement). IAAC takes on more of a support role in Phase 3 (Impact Assessment) with the integrated review panel taking on the lead.

Table 1 Roles and Responsibilities of the Participants in an Integrated Assessment

Participant	Roles and Responsibilities in an Integrated Assessment
Proponent	The person or entity that will carry out the proposed project.
Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (IAAC or Agency)	The federal agency that conducts the integrated assessment with the CNSC as the lifecycle regulator in the case of major nuclear projects. The Agency sets up the integrated review panel and provides the panel with technical, procedural, and logistical support during the integrated assessment.
Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC)	Regulates the use of nuclear energy and materials to protect health, safety, security and the environment, implements Canada's international commitments on the peaceful use of nuclear energy, and disseminates scientific, technical and regulatory information. As a lifecycle regulator in an integrated assessment, one member of the CNSC is appointed to the panel.
Federal jurisdictions	Means a federal authority or any agency or body that is established under an Act of Parliament and that has powers, duties or functions in relation to an assessment of the environmental effects of a designated project (e.g., fish and fish habitat, aquatic species at risk, migratory birds, etc.)
Federal experts	These are federal departments and agencies that have specialized information or knowledge, which is provided upon request to IAAC and/or another body that is conducting an impact assessment (such as an integrated review panel). They also engage with the proponent during the integrated assessment.

Participant	Roles and Responsibilities in an Integrated Assessment
Indigenous groups or peoples	These are the Indigenous groups identified by the Agency whose Aboriginal and/or treaty rights may be adversely affected by the proposed project, as well as any Indigenous jurisdictions that may have responsibilities in relation to the integrated assessment.
Other jurisdictions	These include provinces, territories, and Indigenous authorities. A key principle of the IAA is cooperation with other jurisdictions to support a single impact assessment process for major projects with each jurisdiction maintaining authority over their respective areas of jurisdiction. The IAA allows for several approaches to cooperation with other jurisdictions including that which is project-specific. A project-specific approach is developed during the planning phase for the project and may be documented through a project-specific agreement or simply outlined in the Cooperation Plan for the project.
Public	Not specifically defined in the IAA, but generally means those members of the public who wish to participate in an impact assessment. This includes individuals, groups, associations, communities, municipalities, and other stakeholders.
Integrated review panel	The integrated review panel is comprised of members who work with the lifecycle regulator (e.g., CNSC) and are appointed by IAAC. The panel must include one appointee from the lifecycle regulator. Other members may be appointed from a roster of potential candidates established by the Minister. The integrated review panel is responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Leading the engagement process during the impact assessment phase – Holding hearings open to the public, potentially affected Indigenous groups, and federal authorities – Preparing the impact assessment report with recommendations and conclusions – Issuing applicable licences as the decision-making body for the lifecycle regulator

The term "municipality" can be used to refer to two-tier levels of government (including lower and upper) or single tier governments. In a two-tier municipal system both levels deliver a range of services for communities; however, each are designated their own set of responsibilities. It is equally important for both the upper and lower tier municipalities to participate in the IA process to ensure their respective interests and impacts are communicated.

4. Involvement of a Host Municipality in an Integrated Assessment

Notwithstanding the fact that municipalities are only considered "public" within the context of the IA process, it is critically important for a host municipality to actively participate in it making the most of the review and commenting opportunities afforded to them. Again, for clarity purposes, a host municipality is one in which a new nuclear facility or an expansion of an existing nuclear facility is proposed within and can refer to both a single-tier municipality as well as a two-tier (lower and upper) structure of local government.

Table 2 briefly summarizes the opportunities available to a host municipality to actively participate in the integrated assessment process with reference to **Section 2**.

Table 2 Opportunities for Participation by a Host Municipality in an Integrated Assessment

Participation Opportunities	Focus
Phase 1: Planning	
Initial Project Description (comment period of at least 30 days is given)	Review this key document and identify the host municipality's issues of concern (e.g., potential impacts) before the project design is finalized. This is the first formal opportunity in the integrated assessment to submit comments.
Summary of Issues	Review this key document and identify the host municipality's issues of importance
Response to the Summary of Issues	Review this key document to ensure the host municipality's issues of importance are satisfactorily addressed by the proponent
Detailed Project Description (comment period of at least 30 days)	Review this key document, if required by IAAC, to ensure the host municipality's issues of concern are appropriately captured by the proponent
Tailored Impact Statement Guidelines (comment period of at least 30 days)	Review this key document and identify the components or studies that the host municipality would like to be undertaken in the impact assessment to IAAC
Public Participation Plan (comment period of at least 30 days)	Review this key document and indicate to IAAC how the host municipality would like to be meaningfully engaged in the impact assessment (e.g., methods or approaches, techniques, tools, etc.)
Indigenous Engagement and Partnership Plan (comment period of at least 30 days)	Review and comment as appropriate
Impact Assessment Cooperation Plan (comment period of at least 30 days)	Review and comment as appropriate
Permitting Plan (comment period of at least 30 days)	Review and identify potential municipal permits and/or approvals applicable to the proposed project
Phase 2: Impact Statement	
Terms of Reference for the Integrated Review Panel	Review and comment as appropriate
Impact Statement (comment period of at least 60 days)	Review this key document and identify any deficiencies from the host municipality's perspective (e.g., project impacts, effects on the host municipality, mitigation measures) and provide community knowledge for consideration by the proponent, Agency, and integrated review panel.
Phase 3: Impact Assessment	
Public Hearing	Participate expressing the host municipality's views on the potential impacts of the proposed project and posing questions for the proponent to respond to
Impact Assessment Report (comments are accepted during the impact assessment phase until the record is closed while the comment period of at least 30 days is provided for the draft conditions themselves)	Review this key document (e.g., project impacts, effects on the host municipality, mitigation measures, draft conditions, follow up programs) and provide community knowledge for consideration by the proponent, Agency, and integrated review panel in finalizing the Impact Assessment Report and proposed conditions
Phase 4: Decision	
Decision Statement	Review and comment as appropriate
Phase 5: Post Decision	
Monitoring and Follow-up Activities	Participate as warranted based on the approved conditions

Reviewing and Commenting on Documentation

As an active participant, the host municipality should portray themselves as a *community knowledge holder* in their communications with the other participants, but especially with the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (IAAC) and integrated review panel. The *Impact Assessment Act (IAA)* states that community knowledge provided with respect to the designated project must be considered by IAAC and the integrated review panel during the IA process. IAAC defines community knowledge as follows:

- Knowledge held by individuals or shared by a community, which is built up over time through direct use of, or interaction with, a resource or environment (natural or social). This makes community knowledge context specific and unique³.

IAAC recognizes municipal governments as one of the sources of community knowledge. This opportunity to be a source of community knowledge is not unique to just the host municipality. Municipalities can come together to jointly participate in the impact assessment process for a designated project recognizing that all of them would be impacted to some extent or each municipality could submit comments individually.

Types of community knowledge can include any knowledge related to the assessment of the potential environmental, health, social, or economic effects of a proposed project and include municipal led studies such as land-use studies. As a result, a host municipality should provide existing relevant studies carried out by them and others. Where data gaps exist, a host municipality should seek to have those additional studies relevant to the assessment of the potential effects carried out as part of the integrated assessment directly on their own or in partnership with other participants such as the proponent or adjoining area municipalities also affected by the proposed project.

As identified in **Table 2**, most of the opportunities afforded to a host municipality in the integrated assessment process are associated with reviewing documents prepared by IAAC, the integrated review panel, or the proponent and providing comments for consideration. Although a host municipality should consider reviewing and commenting on all documentation prepared as part of the integrated assessment process, some of the documents are more critical to review and comment on compared to others (denoted by the word "key" in **Table 2**). The "key" documents represent those more relevant to a host municipality's participation in the integrated assessment process from their perspective. In addition, the comments should be detailed as much as possible to ensure they are adequately considered by IAAC, the integrated review panel, and the proponent and specifically responded to.

It is also important to note that the focus of the reviews could be technical, legal, and/or financial depending upon the document itself and carried out either by the host municipality themselves and/or on their behalf through retained professionals as appropriate.

Commenting Timelines

As identified in **Table 2**, most of the periods given by IAAC for providing comments are 30 days so as to adhere to the timelines established in the *Act* for the impact assessment process (i.e., 180 days for the Planning Phase). As a result, it is crucial that the host municipality provides their comments on the documents being prepared by the proponent, Agency, and/or the integrated review panel within those specified time periods and not inadvertently miss a commenting deadline. The Agency will post the documents prepared as part of the integrated assessment on the Registry for comment providing notification of the opportunity for participants like the public including the host municipality to do so. Notwithstanding this, a host municipality should establish their own document review/comment schedule for internal tracking purposes and update it regularly (e.g., monthly). Commenting timelines can be difficult to meet, particularly if they need to be endorsed by Council.

Tailored Impact Statement Guidelines

In addition to the opportunities listed in **Table 2**, there will be additional documents prepared by the proponent in accordance with Tailored Impact Statement Guidelines (TISG) that the host municipality needs to be involved in (e.g., establishing the study's terms of reference, reviewing studies, commenting on studies, etc.) to ensure their

³ Impact Assessment Agency of Canada, Policy Context: Considering Community Knowledge under the *Impact Assessment Act*, July 2021, page 4.

community's concerns, needs and interests are appropriately considered in the baseline and impact assessment work. This is especially relevant to baseline studies produced by the proponent because this documentation sets the framework for the type and extent of impacts predicted on the environment including the host municipality. Consequently, if the baseline conditions are faulty, then the impacts predicted later in the integrated assessment will not be accurate having a cascading adverse effect on the proposed impact management strategies developed (e.g., avoidance, mitigation, compensation).

Considering this, **Appendix A** includes a list of potential studies for host municipalities to consider in having completed/addressed as part of the integrated assessment process. The studies have been grouped by area of interest and is by no means exhaustive recognizing that each project, community, and environment are unique. To this end, the host municipality needs to advocate for the necessity of these studies in their comments to IAAC, the integrated review panel, and the proponent starting with the first official opportunity to comment in the integrated assessment: the Initial Project Description.

5. Going Beyond the Integrated Assessment

In addition to fulfilling their "unfunded public" participant role in the integrated assessment, municipalities hosting major nuclear facility projects need to go beyond this base expectation if they are going to maximize their influence and potentially achieve favourable conditions for the design, construction, operation and decommissioning of such projects to optimize beneficial effects for their community and have mitigation strategies in place to reduce any associated negative impacts identified through the federal IA process. As mentioned in **Table 1**, municipalities are considered within the category of "public" in an integrated assessment because they are an entity of the province with no constitutional recognition in a federally regulated process. Unfortunately, a host municipality is not eligible for participant funding through the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (IAAC) as municipalities are recognized as government entities for federal funding programs.

Consequently, municipalities hosting major nuclear projects are challenged in Canada's multi-level governance structure because their influence in the decision-making process and resulting outcomes is limited as a "public" participant. Considering this, municipalities potentially hosting new nuclear facilities or major expansions of existing nuclear facilities need to augment their "public" participant role in the integrated assessment by seeking a partnering relationship with the proponent. As soon as the potential host municipality becomes aware of the proposed nuclear facility project, they need to proactively reach out to the proponent during the pre-planning phase if the proponent has not taken the initiative to do so on their own and open a dialogue in the pursuit of a Capacity Funding Agreement and/or Community Benefits Agreement (CBA). Notwithstanding this, it is never too late for a municipality hosting a nuclear facility, which is undergoing a proposed expansion to pursue a CBA with the proponent.

5.1 Community Benefits Agreement

In general, CBAs are project-specific legal agreements or contractual requirements of construction, infrastructure, and/or development projects negotiated between a municipality and the proponent to ensure that the impacted community can share the benefits of a development. For the host municipality, CBAs can outline infrastructure servicing requirements, emergency services required to support the site, create targeted employment, training, and apprenticeship opportunities, set new procurement pathways for local and diverse small businesses, social enterprises and suppliers, and improve neighbourhood amenities through the life cycle of a project. Thus, the host municipality is kept socially and financially positive with the introduction of a large project into the community. The proponent benefits because they also help generate public support for the proposed project. When designed and implemented well, CBAs can be mutually beneficial for the host municipality, the proponent, businesses, local communities, workers, and government. Since CBAs can benefit both the host municipality and proponent, it is important to address topics affecting both parties through negotiated solutions or defined processes.

A key component of a CBA is the clear articulation of the roles, responsibilities, and obligations of all parties involved, including the host municipality, the proponent, and any relevant regulatory bodies. The agreement should also detail the financial arrangements, site requirements, community benefits, and long-term sustainability aspects of the project. These aspects are described in further detail in **Table 3**.

Table 3 Community Benefit Agreement Summary

Area	Sub-area	Focus
Roles and Responsibilities	Municipality	The municipality's role typically includes land use planning, zoning regulations, and ensuring the project aligns with community needs and aspirations. They may also be responsible for providing infrastructure, services, or coordinating community engagement.
	Project Proponent	The project proponent (e.g., a company) is responsible for ensuring the project meets safety and environmental standards, fulfilling its obligations under the agreement, and providing financial compensation or benefits to the municipality and/or the community.
	Regulatory Bodies	Relevant regulatory bodies (e.g., provincial ministries) play a role in ensuring the project complies with regulations and environmental standards and may have oversight or approval responsibilities.
Financial Arrangements	Compensation	The agreement should clearly outline any financial compensation or payments made by the project proponent to the municipality, such as guaranteed capacity fees or contributions towards community benefits.
	Funding	The agreement may specify how the project will be funded, including any government grants, private investment, or a combination of both.
	Cost-Sharing	If the municipality is required to provide infrastructure or services, the agreement should clearly outline how these costs will be shared between the municipality and the project proponent.
Site Requirements	Location	The agreement must define the specific location of the proposed facility or project.
	Site Characteristics	The agreement should address the site's suitability for the proposed project, including environmental considerations, access, and infrastructure.
	Compliance	The agreement should ensure that the project complies with all relevant regulations and standards, including environmental protection requirements.
Community Benefit	Economic Development	The agreement may include provisions for job creation, investment in local businesses, and economic development opportunities within the municipality.
	Community Engagement	The agreement should ensure ongoing communication and engagement between the project proponent and the community, addressing concerns and aspirations.
	Social Impact	The agreement should address any social impacts of the project, such as changes to the local population or infrastructure.
Long-Term Sustainability	Environmental Protection	The agreement must include robust environmental protection measures to ensure the project minimizes its impact on the environment and complies with all relevant regulations.
	Monitoring and Reporting	The agreement should outline a mechanism for monitoring the project's performance and reporting on its environmental and social impacts.
	Termination	The agreement should clearly define the conditions under which the project may be terminated, including financial penalties and remedies for breach of agreement.

Area	Sub-area	Focus
Dispute Resolution		The agreement should clearly outline the process for resolving any disputes that may arise between the parties involved, including mediation or arbitration.
Legal Framework		The agreement should be legally sound, clearly defining the obligations and rights of all parties, and should be drafted with the assistance of legal counsel to ensure enforceability.

Costs and Taxation Considerations

Further to **Table 3**, assessing the impact on life cycle costs in the host municipalities' asset management plan is also key in a CBA. Even minor changes can shorten the expected life of key assets, which may need replacing or rehabilitation during the term of the agreement. As a result, the agreement must include methods to address significant project changes during the project's lifecycle and establish a process for resolving future items before signing.

External consultation costs, including socio-economic, financial, and technical aspects, should also be considered in collaboration with the proponent. Many of the outcomes of the consultations will need to be revisited and updated to account for future major project modifications. As noted previously, costs for government entities like municipalities are not eligible for Impact Assessment Agency of Canada funding programs.

Host municipalities should ensure that they understand the framework for property taxation and/or payments in lieu of property tax related to nuclear facilities early in the review process. In Ontario, studies of existing host municipalities have found that the provincial finance policy has resulted in the host community subsidizing electricity rates for users across the province.

Municipality of South Bruce and the Nuclear Waste Management Organization Sample CBA Example (2024)

The Municipality of South Bruce (MSB) in collaboration with the Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) developed a CBA (referred to as a hosting agreement) for a deep geological repository. The agreement includes provisions for safety, community benefits, and ongoing municipal input. The agreement reflects a decade of public input and is based on 36 Guiding Principles. **Attachment B** provides the sections associated with that agreement as an example for host municipalities to consider in developing their own CBA with a proponent.

6. Summary

All new nuclear facilities or significant expansions of existing nuclear facilities in Canada are subject to a federal licensing approvals process consisting of the federal *Impact Assessment Act (IAA or Act)* and the *Nuclear Safety and Control Act (NSCA)* before being able to proceed to construction. In this situation, the federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change (Minister) refers the Impact Assessment (IA) to an integrated review panel. In this case, an integrated review panel ensures compliance within the Impact Assessment (IA). The Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (IAAC or Agency) conducts an "integrated assessment" with the *NSCA* so that the regulatory requirements of the *NSCA* are integrated into the IA process.

The federal IA process consists of five phases starting with the planning phase or Phase 1 which is led by the IAAC. Once the planning phase is completed, an impact statement is prepared as part of Phase 2. The impact statement is followed by the impact assessment (Phase 3) which culminates in the preparation of an impact assessment report. This report is used by the Governor in Council in Phase 4 to decide on whether the proposed project is allowed to proceed or not. Phase 5 consists of post decision follow-up activities for those proposed projects given approval to proceed. The IA process involves several participants including the proponent, IAAC, Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC), federal jurisdictions and experts, Indigenous groups, other jurisdictions like the province, the public, and the integrated review panel.

Although major projects like a new nuclear facility or an expanded nuclear facility located within a host municipality can have significant impacts on that community, municipalities are not given any elevated participant status by the federal IAA. Instead, local government is grouped in with the public. Due to the magnitude and timelines of large-scale nuclear projects, the impacts on the host community can be significant and extend over multiple generations; therefore, it is important for the host municipality to be actively involved in the IA process.

A new nuclear facility or expansion of an existing nuclear facility can offer several benefits to the host municipality and surrounding area. These benefits can include such things as job creation, youth retention in the area, increased sales at local businesses, etc.). Notwithstanding this, municipalities hosting a new nuclear facility or an expansion of an existing nuclear facility need to proactively participate in the federal IA and licensing phases of the project to ensure their interests are served as much as possible because the *Act* does not appropriately acknowledge the burden they are expected to carry for the good of Canadian society. Also, it is recommended that a municipality potentially hosting a new nuclear facility, or a major expansion of an existing nuclear facility need to augment their "public" participant role in the integrated assessment by seeking a partnering relationship with the proponent in the pursuit of a Community Benefits Agreement.

Appendices

Appendix A

Potential Studies for Consideration by the Host Municipality in the Federal Integrated Assessment Process

Table A-1 Potential Studies for Consideration by the Host Municipality in the Federal Integrated Assessment Process

Study	Study Lead	Host Municipality's Role	Rationale
Economic Conditions			
Demographics/Population Growth Study	Host Municipality	Lead Study	Understand current demographics, changes in population (e.g., size, age structure, etc.), identify factors driving those changes, and develop future growth projections in the host municipality.
Fiscal Impact and Public Finance Assessment	Host Municipality	Lead Study	Understand the financial implications of the project on the host municipality.
Local Economic Development Study	Host Municipality	Lead Study	Understand the economic landscape of the local area, identify opportunities for growth, address challenges and strategies for economic development.
Regional Economic Development Study	Host Municipality	Lead Study	Understand the economic landscape of the broader regional area, identify opportunities for growth, address challenges and strategies for economic development.
Labour Baseline Study	Proponent	Peer Review	Understand the existing workforce in the host municipality and identify trends and demand, and assess labour supply and demand.
Workforce Development Study	Proponent	Peer Review	Understand employment requirements and timing for the project (all phases) and identify worker skill gaps and labour shortages in specific areas and/or industries in the host municipality.
Economic Development Program for Youth	Host Municipality	Lead Study	Understand the existing economic situation for youth in the host municipality and identify economic development opportunities with the project for youth
Local Hiring Effects Study	Host Municipality	Lead Study	Understand the benefits and effects of prioritizing local resident hiring for the project.
Agricultural Business Impact Study	Proponent	Peer Review	Understand the potential impacts of the project on agricultural businesses in the host municipality.
Aggregate Resources Study	Proponent	Peer Review	Understand aggregate resources and supply and demand in the host municipality and broader area.
Resources			
Land Use Study	Host Municipality	Lead Study	Understand provincial, regional, and municipal land use designations and policies at and in the vicinity of the project site and any potential project implications.
Housing Supply and Demand Analysis Study	Host Municipality	Lead Study	Understand population and household trends, income trends, housing supply and demand, and housing costs and affordability within the host municipality.
Recreational Facilities and Programs Study	Host Municipality	Lead Study	Understand existing recreational facilities and programs in the host municipality, assess future community needs (with and without the project), and identify areas for improvement.
Tourism Study	Host Municipality	Lead Study	Understand existing tourist attractions and destinations within the host municipality and current and future travel trends and potential impacts from the project that may affect them.
Visual Impact Study	Proponent	Peer Review	Understand potential visual impacts of the project on nearby residents/properties and local tourism.

Study	Study Lead	Host Municipality's Role	Rationale
Social			
Local/Regional Education and Child Care Study	Proponent	Peer Review	Understand early childhood education and care conditions in the host municipality and potential impacts from the project that may exasperate those conditions.
Social Programs Study	Proponent	Peer Review	Understand government-led initiatives in place in the host municipality to address social needs and inequalities and potential impacts from the project that may exasperate those needs/inequalities.
Vulnerable Populations Study	Proponent	Peer Review	Understand those people within the host municipality who are at a high risk for adverse outcomes due to factors like poverty, social isolation, and/or poor health conditions and potential impacts from the project that may exasperate those conditions.
Community Health and Safety	Proponent	Peer Review	Understand current community health and safety conditions, identify potential safety risks and public health issues, and identify challenges and areas for improvement.
Emergency Management and Services Study	Proponent	Peer Review	Understand current emergency services for responding to potential project related emergencies and/or crises and identify areas for improvement (local, broader regional, provincial).
Community Health Programs	Proponent	Peer Review	Understand existing community health programs serving the host municipality, their effectiveness, and implications of the project (e.g., potential impacts, needs, etc.).
Health Infrastructure Study	Proponent	Peer Review	Understand the current state of health infrastructure serving the host municipality, its effectiveness, and implications of the project (e.g., potential impacts, needs, etc.).
Radiation Safety Assessment	Proponent	Peer Review	Understand current radiation safety assessment procedures and identify areas for improvement.
Infrastructure			
Infrastructure Baseline and Feasibility Study	Proponent	Peer Review	Understand the host municipality's existing infrastructure (e.g., water, wastewater, transportation, etc.) and its capacity to support future development and population growth (with and without the project).
Waste Management Capacity Study	Proponent	Peer Review	Understand the project's potential impacts on the existing waste management system/facilities and identify future waste management capacity needs.
Waste Water Treatment Capacity Study	Proponent	Peer Review	Understand the project's potential impacts on the current wastewater system (conveyance, treatment) including future wastewater capacity needs.
Potable Water Supply Study	Proponent	Peer Review	Understand the project's potential impacts on the existing potable water system (distribution, treatment) including future potable water capacity needs to ensure safe and reliable drinking water.
Local Traffic Effects Study	Proponent	Peer Review	Understand the project's potential impacts on traffic conditions within the host municipality (construction and operations).

Study	Study Lead	Host Municipality's Role	Rationale
Road Conditions Effects Study	Proponent	Peer Review	To understand the project's potential impacts on the host municipality's existing roads (construction and operations).
Environment			
Fish and Fish Habitat Study	Proponent	Peer Review	To understand existing fish and fish/aquatic habitat at and in the vicinity of the project site and potential impacts.
Terrestrial Ecosystems Study	Proponent	Peer Review	To understand the terrestrial environment (e.g., vegetation, wildlife, Species at Risk) at and in the vicinity of the project site and potential impacts.
Air Quality Assessment Study	Proponent	Peer Review	To understand potential air quality impacts on nearby residents.
Noise and Vibration Impact Study	Proponent	Peer Review	To understand potential short-term construction and operational noise and vibration impacts on nearby residents/properties (noise sensitive areas).
Geologic/Hydrogeologic Studies	Proponent	Peer Review	To understand current geological and hydrogeological conditions at and in the vicinity of the project site and potential impacts.
Groundwater/Surface water Studies	Proponent	Peer Review	To understand current surface water conditions at and in the vicinity of the project site and potential quality/quantity impacts.
Radioactive Waste Storage/Management	Proponent	Peer Review	To understand current radiation safety assessment and procedures of the project sites and potential impacts.

Notes:

1. As the knowledge holder, the host municipality should participate in the development of the baseline conditions for each study where required.
2. The host municipality's peer review should include consideration of cumulative effects.

Appendix B

Proposed Sections of a Community Benefit Agreement

Table B-1 *Proposed Sections of a Community Benefit Agreement*

Definitions
Project Description
Willingness, Community Support and Site Selection
Project Governance
Project Scope Modifications
Participation in Regulatory Decision-Making
Financial Benefits
Employment and Training
Property and Business Loss Protection
Business Opportunities
Services and Infrastructure
Taxation and Fees
Municipal Authority
Contractors
Confidentiality
Communications
Dispute Resolution
Representation and Warranties
Term, Termination and Survival
Notices



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