

SEEA Process Bulletin 2024-2: ECCC Review of Environmental Effects

Published June 7, 2024

As noted in the Cabinet Directive on Strategic Environmental and Economic Assessment (SEEA), Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) may review proposals and challenge departments and agencies on the quality of their environmental analysis (SEEA section 3.3.3). Strategically applying ECCC expertise to proposals across departments supports decision-makers and fosters credible and consistent information on environmental impacts.

Identifying Proposals for Review by ECCC

The Climate, Nature and Economy Lens (CNEL) preliminary screening questions 1 through 5 establish the basic criteria for environmental analysis. When an important environmental effect is identified in one or more areas of the preliminary screening, a detailed analysis is required by the originating department. Considerations for when an environmental effect may be considered important in the context of the CNEL preliminary screening questions can be found in the [SEEA Guidance](#).

A subset of CNELs, those noting potentially consequential and far-reaching impacts on the environment, should be shared with ECCC for further review. Considerations for determining whether a CNEL should be shared with ECCC for further review include the following:

Risk to the Environment

ECCC **may review** a CNEL where the originating department, a central agency, or ECCC have reasonable grounds to believe the proposal poses a significant risk to the environment.

Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions

ECCC **will review** a CNEL where the originating department, a central agency, or ECCC have reasonable grounds to believe that the proposal's net effect on Canada's GHG emissions, positive or negative, would be **0.5 megatonnes (Mt)** of carbon dioxide equivalent or more in any year.

- Note that 0.5 Mt is a relatively high threshold, equivalent to the emissions produced by 100,000 typical gasoline-powered automobiles in a year, and it is unlikely to be crossed by proposals that do not have large effects on high-emitting sectors. Where there is uncertainty on the emission impacts of a proposal, advice can be sought from ECCC.
- Where feasible, ECCC will model GHG claims of 1.0 Mt or greater.

Resilience to Climate Change

ECCC **may review** a CNEL that indicates that a proposal will “implement direct measures to increase Canada's resilience to climate change” (CNEL Question A-511).

Links to Environmental Commitments

ECCC **may review** a CNEL for a proposal that is named in or directly implements elements of a federal environmental plan, strategy, or international commitment or which makes significant quantitative or qualitative contributions to environmental goals or targets therein.

- Particular attention will be paid to proposals making significant contributions, either quantitative or qualitative, to the environmental targets in the [Federal Sustainable Development Strategy](#).
- Other national environmental commitments include the [2030 Emissions Reduction Plan](#), the [National Adaptation Strategy](#), [Canada's 2030 National Biodiversity Strategy](#), and the [Greening Government Strategy](#).

Public Profile

ECCC **may review** a CNEL where the environmental effects, either positive or negative, are likely to attract high or sustained attention from the public, Indigenous groups, other levels of government, or stakeholders.

Identification by a Department or Central Agency

ECCC **will review** a CNEL when review is requested by the originating department or agency or by the responsible central agency.

ECCC Review Approach

ECCC's review of a CNEL will focus on accuracy, clarity, and credibility based on the information provided or otherwise available to ECCC.

ECCC will aim to complete its review within five business days of receipt of a CNEL. Timelines may be extended if GHG modelling is required.

Additional Resources

For additional resources and guidance, drafters should contact the SEEA experts within their department or agency. Questions from SEEA experts can be directed to the SEEA Secretariat at ECCC at sees-seea@ec.gc.ca.