

SEEA Process Bulletin 2024-5:

Guidelines for preparing and releasing public statements

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Context

The [Cabinet Directive on Strategic Environmental and Economic Assessment](#) (SEEA) directs departments and agencies to issue a public statement of environmental and economic effects for all proposals for which they have conducted a detailed analysis (either environmental and/or economic), following the proposal's implementation or announcement.

Objectives

Releasing public statements is intended to provide assurance to the public that environmental and economic effects were considered during proposal development and decision-making and will be mitigated or monitored as appropriate.

Trigger

A public statement should be prepared and released for proposals for which a “detailed analysis” is conducted. The following operational definitions will be used:

- A proposal is considered to have triggered a **detailed environmental analysis** if any sections of the **Climate Nature and Economy Lens (CNEL) Part A – Strategic Environmental Analysis** were completed.
- A proposal is considered to have triggered a **detailed economic analysis** if it was not deemed exempt from such analysis and that **CNEL Part B – Strategic Economic Analysis** was completed.

When to issue the public statement

Departments and agencies are to issue a public statement of environmental and economic effects following the implementation or announcement of a proposal for which a SEEA was conducted.

Public statements should only be released after an announcement when the proposal is in its final or fixed form. If the proposal remains subject to additional decisions which may have consequential effects on its environmental or economic effects, e.g., a funding decision or Treasury Board submission, a public statement should not be released at that time.

When feasible, it is recommended that a public statement be released within two (2) months of the implementation or announcement of a proposal.

How and where to issue the public statement

Public statements will be drafted, approved, and made available to the public on Canada.ca by the department or agency that led the proposal.

Content and style

While the Directive provides departments and agencies with the flexibility to determine the content and extent of public statements, basic information and style considerations should guide the preparation of public statements.

Public statements should, at a minimum, feature the following:

- A brief summary of the policy, program or regulatory proposal which was assessed, including:
 - The objectives of the proposal
 - How the proposal plans to achieve its objectives
 - How the proposal will help Canada deliver on its priorities
- How and why the department or agency is involved in the proposal
- A summary of the key findings of the sections of the CNEL for which at least part of the section was completed (i.e. Part A, Part B, Part C, Part D) – the content from the “Summary” section of the CNEL may serve this purpose
- If a detailed analysis was triggered only for environmental impacts but not for economic impacts, or vice versa, per definitions of detailed analyses provided above, this should be clearly indicated

It may be useful to include hyperlinks to key legislative, regulatory, policy or operational resources mentioned in the public statement when those resources could provide additional details to help orient the audience to the proposal and/or its implications.

While the CNEL may refer to the proposal in tentative terms as the analysis is prepared pre-decision, the public statement should refer to the proposal conclusively, as it has already been approved (e.g. “The *Regulations...*” as opposed to “The proposed *Regulations...*”).

Public statements must be made available in both official languages. Organizations are encouraged to consult with their internal web communications experts to ensure that public statements conform to Government of Canada guidelines for public-facing web content.

Approval

The level of approval for public statements varies by department and agency. It is recommended that organizations define and document their approvals protocol.

Releasing information on quantitative greenhouse gas emissions estimates or economic impacts

Organizations must seek approval before releasing quantitative greenhouse gas emissions estimates or economic impacts prepared by Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) or Finance Canada as

part of the CNEL analysis. Seeking permission before releasing estimates serves to ensure the results remain compatible with the national reference cases. Organizations that developed their own greenhouse gas estimates should also consult with ECCC prior to including them in public statements.

To seek approval before releasing the results of quantitative economic assessments conducted by Finance Canada, please contact: cnel-ocne@fin.gc.ca.

To seek approval before releasing quantitative greenhouse gas emissions estimates, please contact: ocne-cnel@ec.gc.ca.

Approach to sensitive information

Public statements should not contain any information considered sensitive, nor jeopardize Cabinet Confidence.

Monitoring of public statement publication

Under Section 3.3.3 of the SEEA, ECCC may advise departments and agencies when the expectations set out in the Directive have not been met.

ECCC will not review or approve public statements prior to publication but will monitor public statements across departments and agencies for quality and clarity and may provide additional targeted support to address any issues that may emerge.

When reporting on the integration of environmental and economic assessment practices in their Departmental Sustainable Development Strategy reporting, as required by Section 5.4 of the SEEA, organizations should consider including a weblink to their public statements.

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 ees-seea@ec.gc.ca.