

**Appendix H:
Definitions Used in the
Environmental Impact Assessment**

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT DEFINITIONS

Provincial guidelines typically associated with environmental assessments and other federal guidance documents were reviewed and the following list of definitions were developed and used in the environmental assessment of the Project:

- **The Project:** Includes all physical works and activities associated with pre-construction, construction, operations, maintenance and decommissioning.

- **Nature of the Effect:**
 - Positive – effect is beneficial to the environment.
 - Neutral – no change to the environment.
 - Negative – effect is adverse to the environment.

- **Temporal Bounds:**
 - Reversibility:
 - Yes – Generally short-term and intermediate-term effects that do not persist in the environment after the application of reasonable Project-related mitigation and rehabilitation.
 - No – A long-term effect that persists in the environment beyond decommissioning of the Project, i.e., remains indefinitely as a residual effect.

 - Frequency:
 - Once – effects are expected to only occur once during the life of the Project.
 - Effects are unique and don't accumulate over the life of the Project.
 - Sporadic – effects are expected to occur occasionally but without any predictable pattern during the life of the Project.
 - Effects may accumulate over the life of the Project.
 - Continuous – effects are reoccurring continuously or periodically during the life of the Project.
 - Effects may accumulate over the life of the Project.

 - Duration:
 - Short-term effect – occurs for small proportion of the life of the Project, e.g., construction and operational manner.
 - The most common short-term effects are associated with preconstruction, construction, maintenance, and decommissioning activities.
 - Intermediate-term effect – occurs over most or all of the life of the Project.
 - The most common intermediate-term effects are related to Project operations.
 - Long-term effects – occurs beyond the life of the Project.
 - Effects cannot be mitigated and persist beyond any reasonable rehabilitation effort after decommissioning.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT DEFINITIONS

- **Physical Bounds:**

- Spatial Bounds:
 - Project Site – defined by area of physical work or activities.
 - Local Area – defined by area of measurable influence of the physical work or activities.
 - o This area will vary, depending on the component being evaluated, e.g., it may be the area of response to noise for wildlife, but for socio-economic environment it may be the recruitment area the workforce and where earned salaries are spent.
 - Regional – defined by the administrative districts used to manage the potentially affected environmental component.
 - o For terrestrial wildlife ecodistricts, major basins and watersheds for aquatic organisms, and political boundaries including Rural Municipalities regarding socio-economic parameters.
 - Global Area – defined as the world.

- **Magnitude of Effect:**

- Low – effects are anticipated to be within the range of natural variability and therefore cannot be quantified.
- Moderate – effects exceed natural variability and could be quantified with a well-designed monitoring program.
- High – effects are obvious and can be easily observed and described.

- **Ecological/Sociological Context:**

Defined as highly valued features (culturally significant, historic resources, protected areas, unique areas, etc.), listed species (SARA, MESA, etc.) or other valued species or components (hunting, trapping, air quality, fish habitat, etc.) considered for special management actions.

- Yes – Project affects valued feature(s) or species.
- No – Project does not affect valued feature(s) or species.
- Threshold – an established regulatory value or objective (i.e., disturbance of critical habitat of a listed species, fish habitat HADD, etc., international agreements/national objectives on greenhouse gas emissions, etc.) or in the absence of such a value, an unacceptable or unjustifiable degree of effect given its specific nature.
- Cumulative effect– defined as a Project-related effect that is the same effect as from a non-Project-related physical works or activities.
 - Short-term effects by definition are reversible and short-lived and therefore will not have a cumulative effect either spatially or temporally.
 - Intermediate-term temporal effects, applicable to the effects of other physical works and activities known to be planned or occurring over the Project's life including the residual effects of physical works and activities that occurred before the Project.
 - For long-term temporal effects, applicable to all historic, Project-related and hypothetical future physical works and activities.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT DEFINITIONS

- **Uncertainty:**

The overall effect is unknown or not definable.

- Acceptable – a hypothetical range of potential effects can be defined and used in the assessment.
- Unacceptable – a hypothetical range of effects cannot be quantified (estimated) or defined sufficiently for use in the assessment.

- **Determination of Significance:**

The manner to which these terms are used within the context of the evaluation of significance of effects is outlined in Section 7.0, as illustrated in Figures 7-1 and 7-2.