



Environmental impact assessment stages

Environmental impact assessment overview

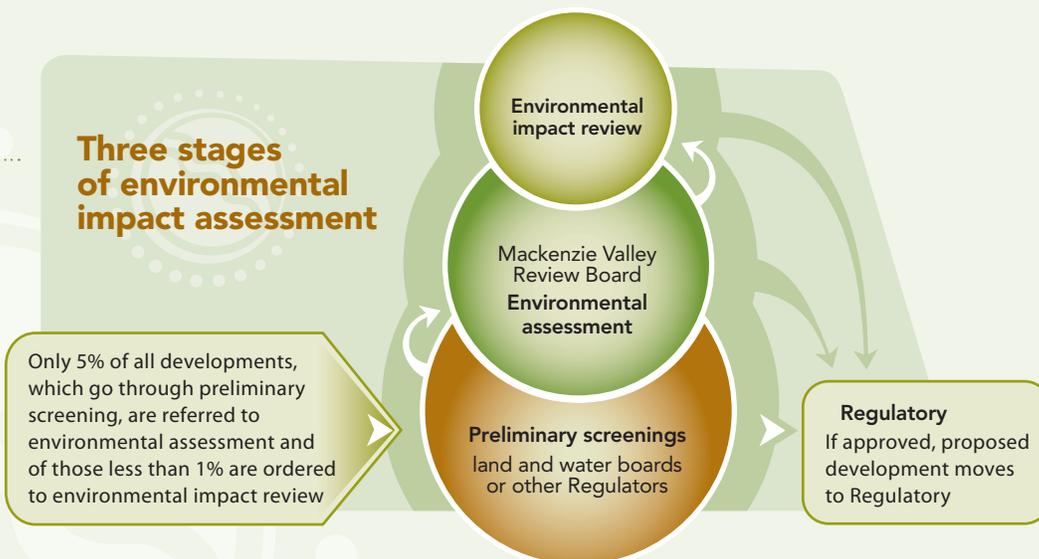
Before a proposed development, such as an oil and gas well or a mine can be built, the developer usually must apply for licenses, permits and authorizations. In the application, the developer must demonstrate that the proposed development will not cause a significant adverse impact on the environment or on the economic, cultural and social well-being of Mackenzie Valley residents. The developer must also demonstrate that the proposed development will not cause public concern. The environmental impact assessment process is a public process and designed in a way to ensure that the concerns of Aboriginal people and other members of the public are considered before making decisions on whether the project should go ahead or not.

There are three stages an application may have to go through in evaluating whether those

impacts and public concern will exist. Whether or not an application will have to go through all three stages before going to the regulatory process depends on the complexity of the issues.

Stage 1: Preliminary screening

All proposed developments that require a license, permit, or other authorization must apply and go through a preliminary screening. A land and water board or other regulating authority runs this process. This stage is a quick review of a proposed development's application to decide if the development might have significant adverse impacts on the environment, or might cause public concern. If so, the application is referred to the second stage - environmental assessment. If not, then the application can be sent to the regulator for permitting and licensing.





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Stage 2: Environmental assessment

Only a small number of proposed developments must go through an environmental assessment. The Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board conducts environmental assessments. This stage is a more thorough study of a proposed development's application to decide if the development is likely to have significant adverse impacts on the environment, or likely to cause public concern. If so, the Review Board may recommend to the federal Minister the project can proceed to regulatory permitting and licensing provided some measures are in place or the project should be rejected. Alternatively, the Review Board decide the project can proceed to regulatory permitting and licensing as is, in which case the Minister has 10 days following the Review Board's decision to refer the development

to environmental impact review. Or the final option is the Review Board may order an environmental impact review for a more detailed review by an independent panel.

Stage 3: Environmental impact review

An environmental impact review follows an environmental assessment when the Review Board deems a more comprehensive examination of a proposed development is needed. The review is conducted by an independent panel, which may consist of both Review Board members and non-Review Board members. All members of the panel are appointed by the Review Board. The environmental impact review provides a more focused study of the issues raised during the environmental assessment.



These steps are unique to the Mackenzie Valley, which is the area inside the NWT stretching from the Alberta border up to the border with the Inuvialuit settlement region, excluding Wood Buffalo National Park.

