



Scoping

Who:

The Review Board, the developer, interested organizations and members of the public.

What:

Scoping is the first step in an environmental assessment. This is when the Review Board asks groups and members of the public to share their views on what the Review Board should focus on throughout the environmental assessment.

Scoping helps the Review Board:

- identify and prioritize the key issues;
- provide an opportunity for everyone to share their views about the proposed development and its potential impacts;
- gather evidence of potential adverse impacts;
- gauge the amount of public concern; and
- decide if the proposed development should stay in environmental assessment or be referred to environmental impact review.

By knowing early in the environmental assessment process what the most important issues are, the Review Board can develop a focused Terms of Reference for the assessment, which allows everyone to dedicate their limited resources and time to the most important issues while making a solid environmental impact assessment decision at the end.



Tools

Information about scoping meetings can be found on the Review Board public registry. Go to reviewboard.ca/registry/ and fill out the developer, project and select scoping stage in the search engine fields.



Scoping sessions and hearings

Who:

The Review Board, developer, interested groups and members of the public.

What:

There are two types of scoping meetings that are often used by the Review Board; issues scoping sessions and scoping hearings.

Issues scoping sessions are different from scoping hearings because the Review Board members are not present and the sessions are less formal. For instance, you do not need to register to present. However, the goal of the scoping session is still to find out what people think is important to focus on and how to best assess the issues.

In these sessions, interested groups and the public make presentations and engage in discussions about the issues that they are concerned about and give advice on how the environmental assessment can be run so that it addresses their concerns. Groups, the developer and the public ask questions of each other in this more informal setting. Although, it is not mandatory to respond to questions that people or organizations might be unprepared for, the Review Board staff will make note that more information on those topics may be needed at later points in the assessment.

Scoping hearings are much more formal and are an early public hearing in the process. These hearings allow the Review Board members to hear directly from the developer,

interested organizations and members of the public on what should be examined during the environmental assessment. The Review Board invites interested groups and the public to make presentations about the issues that they are concerned about and give advice on how the environmental assessment can be run so that it addresses their concerns. In scoping hearings, the Review Board may ask participants to list their issues in order of importance. This ranking helps to focus the Review Board's attention on the issues that matter most.

Scoping hearings offer some time for interested organizations to ask questions of each other and the developer. However, this questioning is not the main focus of this type of hearing. It is not mandatory to respond to questions that people or organizations might be unprepared for. The Review Board may request that a person or group respond to a question in writing later if the matter is important for defining the scope of the assessment.

Tools

The scoping meeting information can be found on the Review Board public registry. Go to reviewboard.ca/registry/ and fill out the developer, project fields and scoping stage or public hearing stage in the search engine fields.