



Canadian Council
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KEY ELEMENTS TO GUIDE GOVERNANCE FOR CUMULATIVE EFFECTS ASSESSMENT, MONITORING AND MANAGEMENT

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NOTE TO READER

The Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME) is the primary minister-led intergovernmental forum for collective action on environmental issues of national and international concern.

This document was developed by CCME's Cumulative Effects Working Group (CEWG). CEWG has representation from each province, territory, and the federal government. It represents lessons learned and advice from cumulative effects professionals, and identifies opportunities to support coherent approaches to assessing, monitoring and managing cumulative effects. CCME would like to thank ESSA Technologies Ltd. for its assistance in developing this document.

While this document provides guidance for federal, provincial and territorial governments, it could be used by any interested group undertaking cumulative effects (CE) activities.

INTRODUCTION

Cumulative effects assessment, monitoring and management (CEAMM) is an essential part of understanding how valued components and ecosystems change in response to multiple interactions among human activities and natural processes that accumulate across space and time. Provincial, territorial and federal governments have a range of expertise and capacity available for CEAMM. This range of approaches can make cross-border collaborations challenging and result in missed opportunities to leverage lessons learned across Canadian jurisdictions.

This document outlines key elements of CEAMM governance, which federal, provincial and territorial governments could consider in the development and delivery of effective CEAMM approaches.

Federal, provincial and territorial governments play lead roles in effective CEAMM. CCME recognizes that regardless of the lead agency or scale of the approach, all aspects of CEAMM benefit from the knowledge, experience and connection to the land of Indigenous communities. Establishing meaningful relationships with Indigenous governments and organizations and respectful consideration of Indigenous knowledge in addition to scientific knowledge strengthens actions to understand and address CE and should occur when conducting the key elements of effective CEAMM.

The key elements were identified through a jurisdictional review process to identify common elements among effective CEAMM approaches; they are based on experience, recent practical examples and best practices. The descriptions and examples of key elements provide guidance for new and existing CEAMM programs and support clarity and alignment between jurisdictions.

Jurisdictions can use the results of CEAMM to inform them as they put a suite of management approaches in place (e.g., regulation and planning), and identify priorities for additional research or data collection and adaptive management as needed, thus tipping the scale from reactive to proactive.

KEY ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE CUMULATIVE EFFECTS ASSESSMENT, MONITORING AND MANAGEMENT

Key Elements	Description
Strategic direction	<p>Strategic direction (e.g., from ministers or senior management) provides vision, commitment, and clarifies roles and responsibilities. Strategic direction provides clear connections between policy, planning, and program objectives to enable achievement of CEAMM actions.</p> <p>Enabling authorities (e.g., legislation, regulations and policies) can demonstrate a commitment to and facilitate the success and implementation of CEAMM initiatives.</p> <p>CEAMM initiatives may require dedicated funding and human capacity and/or the integration and leveraging of existing management and monitoring programs.</p>
Clear objectives	<p>The identification of clear objectives helps ensure that CEAMM initiatives will inform decisions.</p> <p>Objectives should reflect that CEAMM requires a place-based approach that considers multiple activities for a defined area over time.</p> <p>The process of defining clear objectives should consider existing information for the area of interest, including valued components, baseline data and thresholds.</p>
Valued component focus	<p>CEAMM looks at multiple stressors within a specific timeframe on one or more valued components (e.g., caribou, water quality, and heritage). Considering effects at the valued component scale generally results in broader scale assessments that consider multiple activities.</p> <p>Federal, provincial and territorial governments play role in collecting and analyzing information on valued components to support CEAMM decisions. When appropriate, governments may choose to set objectives for valued components to inform CEAMM activities.</p> <p>Information generated through CEAMM can facilitate an understanding of how valued components and ecosystems change in response to multiple interactions of human activities and natural processes that accumulate over space and time.</p>
Coordination	<p>CEAMM may require coordination within and across jurisdictions, and with Indigenous communities, environmental non-governmental organizations, academics, proponents and the public.</p> <p>Coordination helps ensure that CEAMM initiatives take into account different mandates, experience and expertise. Advice, perspectives, knowledge and information should be reflected in the options and alternatives provided to decision makers.</p> <p>Through partnership, collaboration and coordination, jurisdictions are able to take a comprehensive approach, identify gaps in data and other information, and develop priorities and objectives to better understand and manage CE.</p>

Key Elements	Description
Engagement and relationship building	CEAMM initiatives provide opportunities to foster meaningful relationships (e.g., between orders of government, with Indigenous communities, and with proponents). Engagement should be early and ongoing, taking care to ensure all voices are provided an opportunity to be heard.
Transparency	CEAMM initiatives should be transparent and clear about their objectives, methodology and application. CEAMM results, including monitoring data and CE assessment or management actions, should be publicly accessible. Transparency can be further achieved through concise, periodic plain-language public reporting.
Evaluation	<p>Evaluation provides a feedback loop to ensure that CEAMM initiatives are delivering on objectives.</p> <p>For example, undertaking a performance evaluation of a cumulative effects monitoring initiative would inform management decisions by reporting on whether the objectives for the monitoring initiative are being met and identifying whether additional action is required.</p>

CONCLUSION

The importance of CEAMM is increasingly recognized across Canada. As jurisdictions learn more about CEAMM and the discipline expands, it will be important to consider these agreed-upon key elements of CEAMM governance to advance evidence and practices. The above key elements are intended to support collaboration in the delivery of CEAMM programs across the country.