



Building Canada's Clean Future

A plan to modernize federal assessment and permitting processes to get clean growth projects built faster.









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Building Canada's Clean Future: A plan to modernize federal assessment and permitting processes to get clean growth projects built faster.

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Foreword

Accelerating major clean growth projects and infrastructure development are keys to the future of Canada's prosperity. Clean growth projects are those that reduce environmental impacts, and decrease the costs associated with mitigating greenhouse gas emissions across all sectors of the economy. These projects create and support jobs, grow our economy, and protect our natural environment for future generations. The global race to net-zero presents enormous opportunities for Canadians and investors in Canada that is without precedent.

Canada has a world-class regulatory system. Drawing on our abundance of natural resources, technological innovation and skilled workforce, we are building projects to produce clean electricity, hydrogen, biofuels, critical minerals, investing in sustainable supply chains, and more. Attracting investment and getting clean growth projects built are shared priorities with other orders of government, and leadership from all levels of government — federal, provincial, territorial and Indigenous — is critical to our collective success. Canada is increasingly a world leader in getting these projects done right—with strong environmental protections, robust labour standards and true partnerships with Indigenous Peoples. However, for Canada to continue to flourish, we must do more to ensure the right projects are built at a pace that matches the urgency of the energy transition. We need a regulatory system that is efficient and effective to support projects that will create opportunities and build up regional economies in all parts of the country, without compromising the integrity of our environmental protections or our duty to protect Indigenous Peoples' rights.

The Ministerial Working Group on Regulatory Efficiency for Clean Growth Projects was established in 2023 to coordinate Government of Canada efforts to grow the clean economy, create an efficient regulatory framework to support the development of clean growth projects, increase investor confidence, and positively contribute to broader government priorities, including net-zero commitments and advancing reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. Our goal is not to fundamentally change the regulatory system, but rather to find ways, working with our provincial and territorial partners, to improve it for the benefit of all Canadians.

We hit the ground running. We met regularly and conducted an extensive review of existing federal regulatory and permitting processes. We focused primarily on the impact assessment and permitting processes for major projects, requirements for Crown consultation, and partnerships with Indigenous Peoples to identify efficiencies that will help accelerate clean growth in Canada. We heard from internal and external stakeholders and industry experts, engaged with Indigenous leaders, and examined best practices in other jurisdictions. We heard about day-to-day challenges, and potential solutions, informed by their experiences with the current regulatory processes.

We listened. We heard that regulatory burden can be a major barrier to economic growth. We recognize that we must implement solutions in a way that works for Canada's unique circumstances and regulatory systems. We heard clearly from experts that our actions must be guided by the fundamental principles of protecting the environment and providing clarity, transparency and predictability for clean growth proponents, all while eliminating redundancies and duplication within the process. We also heard that Indigenous Peoples need to be actively involved in clean growth projects from the very beginning, so they can reap the full benefits of these projects, and any measures to improve regulatory efficiency must respect Indigenous Peoples and their rights. These principles will continue to guide our work.

We built on work already underway. The Government of Canada has already taken several steps to accelerate the assessment of mining, energy, and other clean growth projects. This includes \$1.3 billion in investment in 2022 for the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada, the Canada Energy Regulator, and the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, and ten other federal departments to continue to improve the efficiency of our regulatory system. We invested an additional \$10.6 million in 2022 for the renewal of the Critical Minerals Centre of Excellence to continue the ongoing development and implementation of the Canadian Critical Minerals Strategy, including an initiative to help critical mineral mining project proponents navigate federal regulatory processes. We invested a further \$40 million to advance Canada's northern and territorial critical minerals agenda by supporting regulatory dialogue, regional studies, land-use planning, impact assessments and Indigenous consultation.

In 2023, the Prime Minister announced the creation of a Clean Growth Office within the Privy Council Office to help coordinate and advance work across the federal government.



Later in the same year, the 2023 Fall Economic Statement announced the development of an Indigenous Loan Guarantee Program, with the Government of Canada determined to ensure that Indigenous Peoples can share in the benefits of major projects on their own territories.

We have a plan. To remain competitive and grow the economy so all Canadians can succeed, we need to create the conditions for industry to invest. We must do so while maintaining our robust environmental standards and upholding Indigenous Peoples' rights. We must be open to working with provincial and territorial governments and Indigenous Peoples in a spirit of collaboration and innovation. To get the right projects built in this country, we need a collective plan for regulatory permitting that gets projects moving while keeping our environment healthy. To unlock this potential, our worldclass federal regulatory system must evolve, and we have developed an ambitious and achievable plan to get us there.

Our plan identifies concrete actions under five broad themes that, taken together, will help good projects move forward expeditiously while supporting strong environmental protection and respecting Indigenous rights and interests. Within these five themes, some of the most significant new actions include:

- The creation of a new federal Permitting Coordinator, located within the Privy Council's Clean Growth Office
- Advancing Indigenous participation in major projects through an Indigenous Loan Guarantee Program, to provide Indigenous Peoples with more opportunities to benefit from these projects directly
- Working to establish a Crown Consultation Coordinator to ensure meaningful Crown consultation with Indigenous Peoples on the issuance of federal authorizations, to improve efficiency and reduce consultation fatigue. The government will consult First Nations, Inuit, Métis, and Modern Treaty and Self-Government Indigenous partners on the design and role of this Crown Consultation Coordinator.
- A new Federal Permitting Dashboard that reports on the status of clean growth projects that require federal decisions, to improve predictability for project proponents and increase the federal government's transparency and accountability to Canadians.
- New targets of five years to complete federal impact assessment and permitting processes, and two years or less for permitting of non-designated projects that do not require a federal impact assessment

- Issuing a Cabinet Directive that sets out clear federal roles and responsibilities across departments with the objective of getting projects built in a timely and predictable manner.
- To ensure we are prepared to assess and build clean growth projects in the North, we will discuss transformative changes to their unique project review processes, working with territorial and Indigenous governments who have a role in decision-making.

Our work is just beginning. As we turn our focus towards the action plan's implementation, we are grateful for the continued collaboration of partners across all jurisdictions. We will continue to meet to advance the work outlined in this action plan, engaging industry, provinces and territories, and Indigenous Peoples for their perspectives, and looking for new ways to improve the system. We remain passionate about progressing this work so Canada remains well-positioned to meet its ambitious economic and climate goals for success today and into the future.

The Hon. Seamus O'Regan Jr. Chair, Ministerial Working Group on Regulatory Efficiency for Clean Growth Projects

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The Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson Minister of Energy and Natural Resources

What Led Us Here

From coast to coast to coast, Canada is experiencing the effects and costs of the climate crisis. Canadians are concerned about climate change, but they also want good jobs and economic opportunities now and in the future. We have a collective responsibility to address the greatest threat of our time to protect our natural environment and safeguard the planet for generations to come.

Tackling climate change has long been a focus for the Government of Canada and remains one of our top priorities. Inaction is not an option: when it comes to keeping our air clean and protecting our planet, we cannot afford to lose momentum.

Fighting climate change and advancing the energy transition requires building projects to generate and distribute new sources of clean electricity and clean fuels, to store carbon emissions, to build new infrastructure, and to mine and process critical minerals needed in clean technologies. We need to advance clean growth projects across the country if we are to achieve our climate change objectives and to seize the enormous economic opportunities of the energy transition. The challenge of financing and building all of these projects requires Canada to have an effective and efficiency regulatory system.

Around the world, businesses, unions, and governments are racing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and seize the extraordinary economic opportunities that will come from the transition to a low-carbon future. Canada is at the forefront of this race, with the Government of Canada announcing an unprecedented suite of major economic investment tax credits, that will help attract investment through \$93 billion in incentives by 2034-35. These investments place Canada alongside other countries that are taking major steps to advance the net-zero transformation – this includes the United States who have invested in growing a clean economy through the Inflation Reduction Act, and the European Union, Japan and Australia who are putting in place strategies for accelerating clean industrial growth.

At the same time, countries are seeking a secure supply of critical mineral resources, and we are working to position Canada as a reliable supplier of critical mineral resources to our allies. Canada is attracting the investment needed to get projects built and realize the economic prosperity and job creation that clean growth can bring.



Clean growth offers a vision for how Canada can prosper and thrive while addressing climate change. It links our efforts to combat climate change with Canada's economic and societal goals including GDP growth, job creation, affordable living, and a strong social safety net.

Building clean growth projects means more jobs, in all regions of Canada, means more opportunities for the next generation of workers. The Royal Bank of Canada estimates the net-zero transition could create up to 400,000 new jobs in Canada by the end of this decade alone. Investments and improvements to assessment and regulatory processes will help position workers across Canada for success in the jobs of today and tomorrow.

In recognition of Indigenous stewardship of the lands and waters since time immemorial, Canada's economic transition must fully include Indigenous Peoples and be built on our commitments to reconciliation and Indigenous self-determination. Partnering with Indigenous Peoples from the earliest stages of clean growth projects offers vast opportunities. Indigenous governments must be able to set and implement priorities that respect their communities, lands, and resources. Indigenous Peoples, businesses, and communities must have the opportunity to fully participate in the clean growth economy and seize opportunities for themselves and future generations in the ways they see fit, consistent with their constitutionally protected rights.

The government is committed to advancing clean growth projects in a way that will strengthen relationships with Indigenous Peoples and contribute to economic reconciliation while also ensuring the measures are aligned with the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*.

The long-term benefits of economic growth from clean growth projects will flow to all communities in this country. The future economy is a clean economy: as global competitiveness intensifies, Canada's clean industry advantage will position us for success in the global economy.



Clean Growth Investment in Canada

Achieving Canada's climate targets and the economic opportunities presented by the transition to netzero will require leadership from all orders of government, Indigenous Peoples and the private sector. In addition to financial support, the Government of Canada is taking action to ensure clean growth projects are built in a timely and prudent manner.

Since 2015, the Government of Canada has committed over \$160 billion in investments to support our green economy in every province and territory through clean growth projects, including:

- Clean Growth Investment Tax Credits, including for Carbon Capture and Storage, Clean Technology, Clean Hydrogen and Clean Electricity
- Strategic Innovation Fund Net Zero Accelerator
- Smart Renewables and Electrification Pathways Program
- The Critical Minerals Infrastructure Fund and the Critical Minerals Research Development and Demonstration Program
- Low Carbon Economy Fund
- Clean Fuels Fund
- Zero Emissions Vehicle (ZEV) Infrastructure program
- The Green Shipping Corridor Program

These investments build on a suite of supports that are attracting new investments to Canada and creating goodpaying jobs for all Canadians. This includes ensuring Indigenous Peoples, women, youth and non-binary people have equitable opportunities to benefit from the transition to a sustainable, low-carbon economy. And a robust and efficient regulatory system is key to getting projects built and unlocking these opportunities.

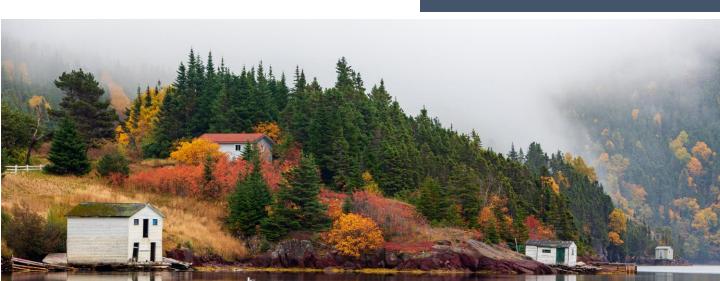
As of 2023, there were 233 energy and forestry clean technology projects planned or under construction in Canada, representing \$159 billion in potential investment.

One in three are hydro projects, accounting for one quarter of the potential capital value of clean growth projects (78 projects valued at \$38.9 billion).

The remaining projects are primarily biomass/biofuel projects (42 projects valued at \$13.8 billion), wind projects (31 projects valued at \$12.3 billion), solar projects (31 projects valued at \$6.2 billion), and 28 projects classified as "other" worth \$22.6 billion (e.g., hydrogen projects and battery storage projects).

There are also 63 mining projects planned or under construction that will process or extract some form of critical minerals – another key ingredient in our clean growth future. These represent an additional \$60.9 billion in potential investment.

(Source: NRCan, Major Projects Inventory)



Canada's Impact Assessment and Regulatory System: An Overview

An efficient and effective review process for clean energy, critical minerals, transportation, and other major projects is essential, and a key advantage for Canada. Regulatory efficiency helps keep our economy competitive and creates good, well-paying jobs. Having processes that are straightforward, transparent and predictable, helps get clean growth projects built, and it creates more opportunities and builds up regional economies in rural and remote parts of the country.

Canada is already home to a rigorous, world-class regulatory system protects Canadians and their environment. Depending on the nature of a project, its location and potential impacts on the environment, permits, licenses or approvals may be required under federal legislation. These processes include measures for transparency, Indigenous engagement and consultation, public participation and sound decision-making based on evidence.

For those involved in the development of a clean growth project – including proponents, Indigenous Peoples, and Canadians – navigating the different assessment and regulatory processes can feel duplicative, confusing and lead to uncertain timelines. Efficiency does not change the rigour of these processes but will focus our efforts where they can make the most impact and can help make the process more predictable for all involved.

Across most of Canada, the *Impact Assessment*Act guides federal impact assessment. An impact assessment is a planning and decision-making tool to assess the potential positive and negative effects of proposed projects. It considers environmental, social, health and economic factors within the scope of assessments, contributes to fostering sustainability and ensures respect for the rights of Indigenous Peoples. Clean growth projects are subject to a regulatory environment that is shared with our provincial and territorial partners, and all provinces and territories also have their own environmental assessment systems in place to assess impacts within their jurisdiction.

In some cases, potential projects require an assessment under provincial regimes, or both the federal and provincial regimes.

The Government of Canada continues to support other planning processes that encourage dialogue between stakeholders and partners in advance of an impact assessment. For example, Marine Spatial Planning led by Fisheries and Oceans. Canada relies on a broad network of stakeholders, including federal departments, provincial and territorial governments, aboriginal governments, industry, environmental non-governmental organizations and local communities

In general, the *Impact Assessment Act* does not apply in the territories. Instead, northern assessment processes are rooted in modern treaties that provide clarity and predictability with respect to land rights, ownership and regulatory responsibility. In many cases, regulatory processes in the North are led by co-management boards that can, in some cases, make final decisions. These boards are made up of members nominated and appointed by federal, territorial and Indigenous governments. The regimes provide for inclusive and participatory assessment and permitting processes. The legislation incorporates the use and value of traditional knowledge and culture in decision-making and are models of reconciliation in action. Federal coordination in the North is currently provided by the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency (CanNor).

Clean growth projects may also be federally regulated by the Canada Energy Regulator and the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission. These organizations operate at armslength from the Government of Canada, and they offer a unique perspective, overseeing international and interprovincial pipelines, international power lines and nuclear projects at all stages of the project lifecycle, from planning, to construction, to operation and decommissioning. Each of these organizations has an important role to play in advancing Canada's net-zero economy and ensuring regulatory efficiency.

Only a handful of clean growth projects require a federal impact assessment under the Impact Assessment Act each year. Whether an impact assessment is required or not, clean growth projects may require other federal decisions, such as those taken under the Fisheries Act (including the Metal and Diamond Mining Effluent Regulations), the Species at Risk Act, the Canadian Navigable Waters Act, the Explosives Act, the Disposal at Sea Regulations, and the Migratory Birds Regulations. Each of these laws and regulations are designed to address specific concerns within federal jurisdiction, with their own processes, timelines and requirements. Provinces and territories may also issue their own permits for issues within their jurisdiction. The nature and process for each of these will depend on the local jurisdiction and the type of project.

Taken together, all these processes create a multifaceted and sometimes complex regulatory landscape for clean growth projects in Canada, and there are opportunities to improve efficiency and collaboration. The recently completed impact assessment process for the Cedar LNG project provides an excellent example of what can be achieved when Indigenous, provincial and federal actors take a problem-solving attitude to get projects done.

Cedar LNG is a proposed floating liquid natural gas (LNG) facility in Kitimat, British Columbia, within the traditional territory of the Haisla Nation. The project leverages Canada's abundant natural gas supply and the province's growing LNG infrastructure to produce industry-leading, low-carbon, cost-competitive Canadian LNG for overseas markets. Cedar LNG is the world's first Indigenous majority-owned LNG project and expects to have one of the cleanest environmental profiles in the world and providing unprecedented opportunities for the Haisla Nation and the region.

There is no reason to have duplicative review processes if one is sufficient. Recognizing this, the federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change and British Columbia agreed to one assessment – the provincial process – to get the project moving forward. Because of this, the project was assessed and approved in just 3.5 years.

This example provides one model for cooperation. We recognize that other models of cooperation are possible and look forward to working in a spirit of pragmatic problem solving with all provinces and territories.



Improving Canada's World-Class Regulatory System

The Government of Canada is taking action to improve federal impact assessment, regulatory and permitting processes to make them more efficient, transparent, and predictable without cutting corners. This will advance other national priorities such as: accelerating Canada's most promising sectors and opportunities for a net-zero economy; producing the abundant clean energy needed to power our net-zero future; and advancing meaningful Indigenous engagement and participation.

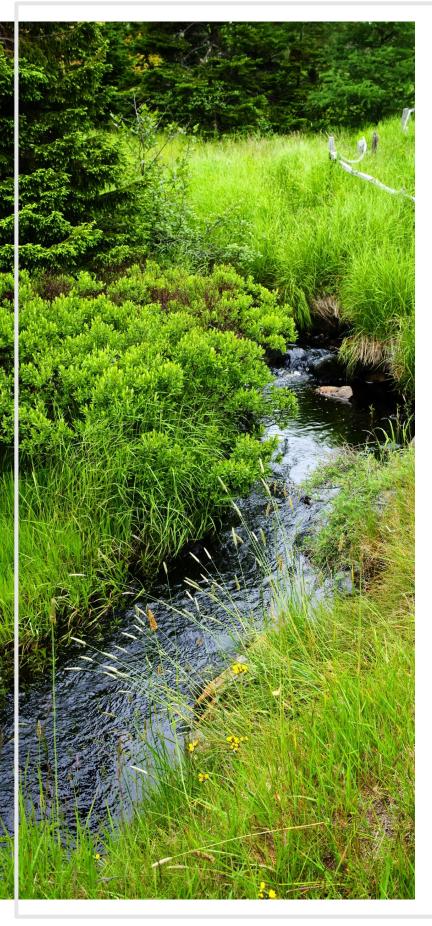
This important work involves several federal departments and agencies with authorities over regulatory and permitting processes for projects: Impact Assessment Agency of Canada, Environment and Climate Change Canada, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, the Canada Energy Regulator, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Transport Canada, Natural Resources Canada, and the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission.

Budget 2023 announced the intention to develop a plan to improve the efficiency of the impact assessment and permitting processes for major projects, including clarifying and reducing timelines, mitigating inefficiencies, and improving engagement and partnerships. This work is being led by the Ministerial Working Group on Regulatory Efficiency for Clean Growth Projects.

Our regulatory system must support the deployment of clean growth projects to position Canada for success today, tomorrow and into the future. To achieve this, the Ministerial Working Group on Regulatory Efficiency for Clean Growth Projects looked at concrete ways to improve the Impact Assessment Act, by ensuring it is constitutionally sound and facilitates efficient project reviews to advance Canada's clean growth agenda and protect the environment; enhance Indigenous partnerships and accommodations; increase collaboration with provincial, territorial governments and Indigenous Peoples; and increase coordination among federal departments in the regulatory approval process – including federal coordination of Crown consultation processes.

Budget 2024 included several new measures for Getting Major Projects Done, including the creation of a new Federal Permitting Coordinator within the Privy Council Office, setting new targets of five years or less to complete impact assessments and permitting processes, and developing a new Cabinet Directive for Clean Growth Projects. Budget 2024 also committed to facilitating Indigenous equity ownership in major projects through a new Indigenous Loan Guarantee Program. These activities are based on the work of the Ministerial Working Group on Regulatory Efficiency for Clean Growth Projects and lay the groundwork for more changes and new initiatives to come.

The measures presented in Budget 2024 focus on areas of federal responsibility. Recognizing that most projects are regulated by provinces and territories, we are actively finding new ways to collaborate with other orders of government to achieve our shared goal of getting good, clean growth projects built. For example, the government is committed to working collaboratively with provinces and territories to ensure that impact assessments are done as efficiently as possible towards the goal of "one project, one assessment", while also maintaining best practices and honouring obligations and commitments to Indigenous Peoples.



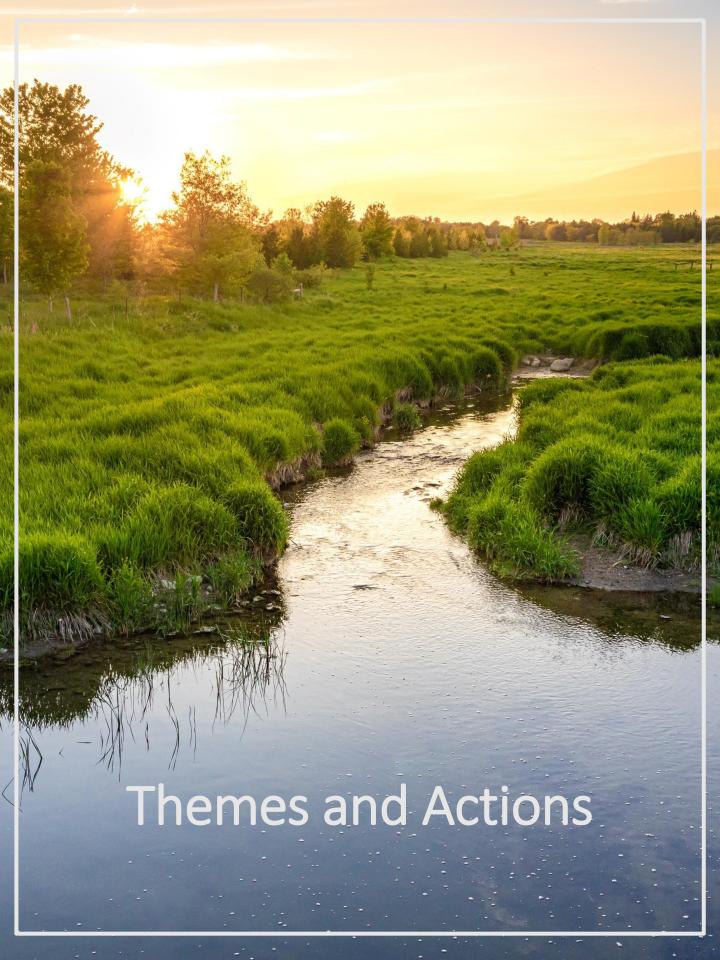
The Ministerial Working Group has identified five priority areas to modernize Canada's regulatory system:

- Advancing reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples
- 2. Reducing duplication with provinces and territories
- Increasing impact assessment and permitting efficiency for clean growth proponents
- 4. Improving Regulatory Efficiency North of 60
- 5. Clean Growth Leadership by Federal Lifecycle Regulators

Details on each of these priority areas are outlined in this action plan.

Together, these measures will provide a roadmap to improve the efficiency of Canada's impact assessment and regulatory processes.

We are at a critical juncture in the fight against climate change, and we are working to implement these changes now so that we can get clean growth projects built today and into the future.



Theme 1: Advancing Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples

The Government of Canada is committed to advancing reconciliation across this country. Indigenous consultation and participation must be at the heart of what we do as all paths to net zero require the full participation of Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous Peoples and industry alike have indicated that mutually beneficial partnerships are critical in advancing successful clean growth projects, promoting self-determination and advancing economic reconciliation, as well as ensuring better outcomes.

Canada's success is tied to the active participation of Indigenous Peoples, integrating diverse Indigenous perspectives through ongoing engagement, collaboration, and benefits-sharing. As clean growth projects are built, we must ensure that long-term benefits flow to Indigenous Peoples. We cannot lose sight of the importance of foundational programs for skills development and critical infrastructure in Indigenous communities.

We support programs such as the Critical Minerals Infrastructure Fund, Wah-ila-toos and the Smart Renewables and Electrification Pathways Program, which support infrastructure and clean energy projects that can have cascading benefits for communities. Recognizing and integrating Indigenous knowledge into decision making, respecting Indigenous rights and interests, honouring commitments from treaties, and furthering economic opportunities for mutually beneficial partnerships leads to positive outcomes.

Strategic Objective:

Ensure that Indigenous
Peoples are fully
involved in clean
growth projects from
the start, including
recognition of
Indigenous leadership
and decision-making
in this domain



	ACTIONS	2024-25	LONG-TERM
Theme 1: Advancing Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples	1.1 Advance economic reconciliation Lead Department: NRCan, Finance	 Implement the Indigenous Loan Guarantee Program announced in Budget 2024, to provide more opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to benefit from the significant number of natural resource and energy projects proposed to take place in their territories. Additional details regarding the launch of the Indigenous Loan Guarantee Program will be announced in due course, including an application portal for interested proponents to submit their proposals. 	 Support regional capacity and initiatives that can advance Indigenous Peoples' priorities in foundational ways and set the stage for readiness to engage on clean growth projects. Prioritize, wherever possible, the advancement of other proposed policy, programs and funding for Indigenous Peoples that will benefit the clean growth agenda. Renewed guidelines for Consultation and Accommodation will be published by the
	1.2 Establish a Crown Consultation Coordinator Lead Department: CIRNAC, CanNor	 Establish a Crown Consultation Coordinator to reduce consultation fatigue on the issuance of federal regulatory permits for projects that do not undergo federal impact assessments. The Government will engage First Nations, Inuit, Métis, and Modern Treaty and Self-Governing Indigenous Peoples on the design of the Crown Consultation Coordinator. The Impact Assessment Agency of Canada will continue to be the Crown consultation body for projects undergoing a federal impact assessment. Northern-specific approaches will be taken for regulatory coordination under northern statues, and CanNor will continue to coordinate federal Crown consultation processes for projects under northern impact assessment legislation. 	
	1.3 Indigenous Participation Lead Department: IAAC	 Continue to recognize Indigenous rights and incorporate Indigenous knowledge into project assessments at every phase of federal impact assessments – this continues to be a paramount objective of the amended Impact Assessment Act. 	
	1.4 Regulatory Framework Improvements Lead Department: IAAC, CER	 Work with Indigenous Peoples on developing Indigenous Co-administration Regulations, to reflect a commitment to enhancing Indigenous participation and leadership in project assessments under the Impact Assessment Act and develop Indigenous Ministerial Arrangement Regulations under the Canadian Energy Regulator Act to include Indigenous governing bodies in a meaningful way throughout the project lifecycle. Northern-specific approaches will be taken for regulatory coordination under northern statues and will be led by CIRNAC and CanNor. 	end of 2026.

	ACTIONS	2024-25	LONG-TERM
1: Advancing Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples	1.5 Empower Indigenous Communities Lead Department: CIRNAC, NRCan	 Enhance capacity to support Indigenous participation in regulatory processes from the start – leading to better informed decision-making, transparency, and a mutual understanding of perspectives between all parties. We will enhance capacity by: Co-developing and implementing consultation protocol agreements and resource centres, led by Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada. Working with First Nations, Inuit, Métis, and Modern Treaty and Self-Governing Indigenous Peoples to develop culturally based planning tools and provide funding support to ensure that Indigenous Peoples have access to the development of their own planning tools. 	
g Reconciliation v	1.6 Develop a Framework for Clean Growth Projects Lead Department: NRCan	 Collaborate with Indigenous Peoples to develop a framework for clean growth projects that specifically recognizes the importance of relationship building, improves the coordination of consultation and engagement to reduce duplication and fatigue, and enhances capacity to meaningfully include Indigenous Peoples in decision-making. 	
Theme 1: Advancin	1.7 Renewed Consultation and Accommodation guidelines Lead Department: CIRNAC	 Renew the Government's Consultation and Accommodation guidelines favouring a partner-based approach to support economic reconciliation, including initiatives advancing the transition to net-zero. This includes on-going engagement with First Nations, Inuit, Métis people and Modern Treaty and Self Governing Indigenous across the country to ensure Indigenous perspectives are reflected in the guidelines. 	

Theme 2: Reducing Duplication with Provinces and Territories

Getting the right projects built faster is a shared Canadian priority. Commitment and leadership from all jurisdictions in Canada are what it will take to come up with the practical approaches to improve assessment and permitting efficiency. Major clean growth projects yield benefits locally, nationally and internationally. Although some projects fall exclusively within provincial and territorial jurisdiction, in many cases, proponents are often required to work with multiple orders of government to secure necessary project approvals and financing throughout the life of their projects. Navigating these different federal and provincial processes can be duplicative and burdensome.

The Government of Canada is taking action to improve the efficiency of its own processes, but having a truly nimble and responsive regulatory system requires a "Team Canada" approach, with all orders of government working closely to advance shared economic and climate priorities. Where the federal government does have impact assessment or regulatory responsibilities for major clean growth projects, our goal is to work with provincial governments and Indigenous Peoples to create a single process that is simple, effective, and efficient for project proponents to navigate.

Provinces and territories are also working to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of their own processes. We will continue to look for opportunities to collaborate across jurisdictions using tools such as Ministerial Cooperation Agreements and forums such as the Energy and Mines Ministers' Conference. We will continue learning from provincial expertise and legislative frameworks to assess the impacts of major clean growth projects, while ensuring the Constitutional duty to consult Indigenous Peoples is respected.

Strategic Objective:

Improve cooperation and coordination with
provincial and
territorial partners
to reduce
duplicative
processes for
proponents,
Indigenous
Peoples, and
Canadians



	ACTIONS	2024-25	LONG-TERM
Theme 1: Advancing Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples	2.1 Amend the Impact Assessment Act Lead Department: IAAC	• Amend the Impact Assessment Act through the Budget Implementation Act No. 1, 2024, in response to the October 2023 Supreme Court of Canada opinion that found that elements of the Act are unconstitutional, to restore certainty for proponents, Indigenous Peoples and the public. The amended Act will include increased flexibility in substitution of assessments to allow for greater collaboration and avoid interjurisdictional duplication; clarify the ability for provinces to participate in integrated panels with the Impact Assessment Agency and the Canada Energy Regulator, or the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission; and allow for earlier Agency screening decisions on the requirement for a full impact assessment after consideration of other processes to address the effects of the project, including provincial processes.	 Increase the number of federally designated projects subject to a single impact assessment process, either through provincial processes, or working collaboratively through a single harmonized process, as appropriate. Put in place new Ministerial Co-operation Agreements to facilitate substitution, joint review panels or other cooperative approaches to ensure a single harmonized assessment process between all orders of government. Work with other jurisdictions to explore new permitting pilots for improved regulatory
	2.2 Enhance coordination across orders of government Lead Department: IAAC	Using the range of tools available under the Impact Assessment Act and permitting coordination mechanisms, reduce duplication and minimize the burden of regulatory processes on project proponents and Indigenous Peoples.	 coordination, based on the model currently being explored in British Columbia. Finalize a plan to improve the identification and management of cumulative effects that includes Indigenous perspectives and Indigenous Knowledge. Completed regional studies and cumulative effects/baseline studies in northern priority regions will inform northern impact assessment and permitting processes – helping to improve project efficiency and to support good decisions.

	ACTIONS	2024-25	LONG-TERM
Theme 1: Advancing Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples	2.3 Pilot New Ways of Working Lead Department: NRCan	 The Government of Canada, will continue to meet with provinces, territories and Indigenous Peoples through existing governance fora such as the Regional Energy and Resource Tables led by Natural Resources Canada, and will use these tables to explore measures for regulatory efficiency. Continue the Joint Regulatory Efficiency pilot, led by Natural Resources Canada in partnership with the Government of British Columbia, to identify and implement measures for permitting efficiency. Work through existing governance tables, including the Regional Energy and Resource Tables, to test permitting efficiencies pilots in other jurisdictions, and find new and creative ways of working together to better co-ordinate permitting activities. 	 Increase the number of federally designated projects subject to a single impact assessment process, either through provincial processes, or working collaboratively through a single harmonized process, as appropriate. Put in place new Ministerial Co-operation Agreements to facilitate substitution, joint review panels or other cooperative approaches to ensure a single harmonized assessment process between all orders of government. Work with other jurisdictions to explore new permitting pilots for improved regulatory coordination, based on the model currently being explored in British Columbia.
	2.4 Improve Cumulative Effects Identification and Management Lead Departments: ECCC, CIRNAC	 Improve the identification and management of cumulative effects with the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives and Indigenous Knowledge and seek specific opportunities to engage with other levels of government to ensure coordination and collaboration on this issue. Advance regional studies on cumulative effects and baseline initiatives across the North, under the Northern Regulatory Initiative of the Critical Minerals Strategy led by CIRNAC. 	 Finalize a plan to improve the identification and management of cumulative effects that includes Indigenous perspectives and Indigenous Knowledge. Completed regional studies and cumulative effects/baseline studies in northern priority regions will inform northern impact assessment and permitting processes – helping to improve project efficiency and to support good decisions.

Co-operation mechanisms under the amended *Impact Assessment Act*

Federal-provincial-territorial collaboration is critical to the success of Canada's regulatory approach to major projects. We need to work together to advance cooperation on assessments, including a harmonized approach that would rely on provincial and territorial processes to the extent possible and ensure that federal impact assessments are focused squarely on the prevention of adverse effects in areas of federal jurisdiction.

Formalizing a federal-provincial approach to cooperation on assessments through cooperation agreements would signal a renewed approach and demonstrate a healthy Canadian investment climate. Cooperation agreements provide transparency and certainty for investors, the public and Indigenous Peoples, as to how governments will work together when an assessment is required by more than one jurisdiction.

Co-operation approaches

Ministerial or other co-operation agreements

(May include any elements listed below. Without overarching agreement, cooperation approaches are determined on a project-by-project basis)

Coordinated Assessments

- Jurisdictions coordinate activities during the Planning phase and assessment process, and, where possible, timelines and documents
- Each completes its respective assessment process
- Most common approach to cooperation
- Can reduce duplication but does not always achieve a single process

Substitution

- The Minister can substitute a process, in whole or in part, to another jurisdiction
- Two options:
- Full: other jurisdiction responsible for all IAA requirements
- Harmonized: co-developed process; best placed jurisdiction takes specific elements of assessment.

 Agreement required
- Each jurisdiction makes its own decision based on a single assessment report
- · Creates a single process

Delegation

- Any part of the assessment and/or preparation of the report can be undertaken by other jurisdiction
- IAAC remains responsible for the overall process on IAA timelines
- Potential to eliminate
 duplication
- Single process possible

Joint Review Panels

- Jurisdictions jointly appoint panel members and agree on terms of reference for an independent panel to conduct the impact assessment, hold public hearings and write report
- Experience in several jurisdictions
- Jurisdictions can participate in integrated review panels to assess nuclear and pipeline projects
- Creates a single process

^{*} Cooperative approaches proposed in amendments to the IAA

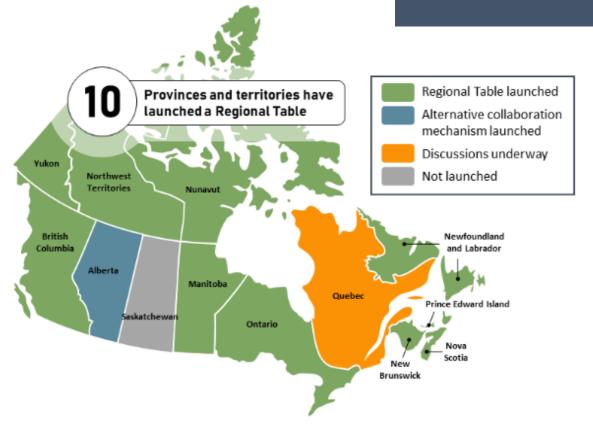
The Regional Energy and Resource Tables: A forum for regulatory efficiency

The Regional Energy and Resource Tables are joint partnerships between the federal government and individual provinces and territories in collaboration with Indigenous partners — and with input from key stakeholders — to identify and accelerate shared economic priorities for a low-carbon future in the energy and resource sectors. By aligning resources and timelines and better coordinating regulatory and permitting processes, each region can turn its individual strengths and unique mix of natural resources into a comparative advantage for the global, low-carbon economy.

Regional Tables have been launched in ten provinces and territories, including British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland, Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut. Discussions are underway with Quebec, and we hope to have a Regional Table established in the near future. An alternative mechanism for collaboration has also been established in Alberta, with the Canada-Alberta Working Group.

Under the Regional Energy and Resource Table, Canada and British Columbia are working together to improve the efficiency of decision-making on major clean growth projects. There is recognition that intergovernmental cooperation, collaboration and information sharing leads to greater certainty, predictability, transparency, efficiency, and accountability of government action which promotes industry and public confidence in government processes. Our governments have committed to working cooperatively together with First Nations and industry, to pilot process innovations in the key clean growth sectors. These pilots would look to accelerate projects through the regulatory and permitting process by enhancing engagement and partnerships with Indigenous Peoples, sharing information and minimizing duplication.

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Theme 3: Increasing impact assessment and permitting efficiency for clean growth proponents

Many clean growth projects will require federal permitting decisions, such as those issued under the *Fisheries Act* (including the *Metal and Diamond Mining Effluent Regulations*), the *Species at Risk Act*, the *Canadian Navigable Waters Act*, the *Explosives Act*, the *Disposal at Sea Regulations*, and the *Migratory Birds Regulations*. While individual permits address different areas of federal jurisdiction, proponents may be asked to submit their project details multiple times to different regulators, and Indigenous Peoples may be consulted by multiple departments for the same project, creating duplication of effort. This duplication and the lack of co-ordination amongst federal regulators is a source of inefficiency in the current system, and an opportunity for immediate improvement.

We are recommending system-wide improvements that will increase departmental co-ordination, transparency and accountability. These enhancements will provide predictability for clean growth proponents, while offering benefits for all Canadians – for example, the new Federal Permitting Dashboard will provide a snapshot where anyone can check the status of a project as it moves through the regulatory process, from start to finish. By tracking and reporting on trends, the Federal Permitting Coordinator will be able to identify trends and any sticking points. These enhancements will allow us to address the unique challenges faced by different types of projects – such as critical minerals mining and processing, clean infrastructure projects and new energy projects - and focus on continuous improvement.

Strategic Objective:

Improve service delivery to project proponents, and increase the coordination of federal permitting processes across the Government of Canada



	ACTIONS	2024-25	LONG-TERM	
iciency	3.1 Establish a new Federal Permitting Coordinator Lead Department: Privy Council Office	 A new Federal Permitting Coordinator has been established within the Privy Council Office's Clean Growth Office. The Federal Permitting Coordinator will coordinate clean growth projects. The Impact Assessment Agency of Canada will continue to coordinate projects undergoing a federal impact assessment, and the Northern Projects Management Office will provide support for northern projects. 	Develop standardized public reporting on the status of clean growth projects as they advance through the regulatory	
Theme 3: Increasing Impact Assessment and Permitting Efficiency for Clean Growth Proponents	3.2 Set targets to complete federal impact assessment and permitting processes Lead Department: Privy Council Office 3.3 Issue a Cabinet Directive for clean growth projects Lead Department: Privy Council Office	 A target of five years or less will apply to federally designated projects under the <i>Impact Assessment Act</i>, and a two-years or less target will apply to permitting of nonfederally designated projects, subject to certain preconditions. A new Cabinet Directive for Clean Growth Projects will be issued and made public, with the objective of getting clean growth projects built in a timely and predictable manner. The Directive will support a culture shift across departments issuing federal assessment and regulatory decisions for clean growth projects within and across departments with the objective of getting clean growth projects built in a timely and predictable manner. The Cabinet Directive will include: Roles and responsibilities for all federal departments, including the mandate of the new Federal Permitting Coordinator within the Clean Growth Office; A formal commitment to the two-year and five-year service standards for project decisions; A governance framework to oversee the implementation of the Directive; Requirements for public reporting, through a project dashboard for clean growth projects; and Considerations related to meaningful Indigenous partnerships, in respect of the United Nations Declaration Act, and section 35 Aboriginal or Treaty rights and modern treaty commitments. 	regulatory system, to increase predictability for proponents, Indigenous Peoples and the public. • Annual reporting on trends in information requirements across departments, to identify opportunities for improvement to increase consistency and predictability.	

	ACTIONS	2024-25	LONG-TERM
I Permitting Efficiency for ents	3.4 Publish a Federal Permitting Dashboard Lead Departments: Privy Council Office, IAAC	 Publish and keep up to date a Federal Permitting Dashboard that reports on the status of clean growth projects which require federal assessment and permitting decisions, to improve predictability for project proponents, and increase the federal government's transparency and accountability to Canadians. 	The Government of Canada will review existing laws and regulations that apply to federal decision-making on projects, to determine whether changes are needed and to ensure their timelines are well-positioned to support the two-year and five-year service
Theme 3: Increasing Impact Assessment and Permitting Efficiency for Clean Growth Proponents	3.5 Update Departmental Guidance Lead Departments: NRCan, ECCC, TC, DFO	Effective immediately, regulatory departments are undertaking a review of their current external guidance for project proponents and internal guidance for permit application reviewers, focused on increasing predictability for proponents at each stage of the process. This exercise will be completed March 2025.	targets are consistently met.

Theme 4: Improving Regulatory Efficiency North of 60

There is tremendous potential for clean growth projects North of 60 in Canada as we transition off diesel to clean energy sources and realize significant untapped mineral potential. However, the North also presents unique and discrete challenges to getting these projects built: the environment is vast and remote, and proponents face a high cost of business, complicated by supply chain uncertainty, sensitive environments, and lack of infrastructure, such as roads and transmission lines.

In much of the North, the *Impact Assessment* Act does not apply, and northern regulatory regimes are different by design; they implement commitments from modern treaties and involve co-management boards with members nominated or appointed by Indigenous Peoples, territorial, and federal governments. These boards lead inclusive and participatory impact assessment and permitting processes, and in some instances, have final decision-making authority. The legislation incorporates the use and value of Indigenous knowledge and culture in decision-making and provides for holistic approaches to resource management. These regimes are models of reconciliation in action and can help to obtain the social license needed to successfully advance projects.

Strategic Objective:

Build on the strength of unique Northern regulatory processes, while addressing known challenges



	ACTIONS	2024-25	LONG-TERM
Theme 4: Improving Regulatory Efficiency North of 60	4.1 Engage Northern Premiers, Indigenous governments, industry, and other partners Lead Departments: CIRNAC, CanNor	 Discuss transformative changes to unique Northern project review frameworks, and ensure the North is prepared to assess and build clean growth projects. This involves working with territorial and Indigenous governments who also have a role in decision-making. Leverage the Arctic and Northern Policy Framework (ANPF) tables to advance common regulatory discussions and planning with northern leaders. Continue discussions on regulatory priorities in all three territories as part of its regulatory dialogue initiative under the Northern Regulatory Initiative of the Canadian Critical Minerals Strategy, and work to action common priorities. This will inform future legislative and other regulatory initiatives. Work with resource co-management boards, territorial and Indigenous governments and partners on actions to support regulatory efficiency (such as targets) that align with northern legislation and modern treaty commitments. 	 Continued engagement leveraging ANPF and regulatory dialogue tables to work with Indigenous and territorial governments, resource comanagement boards, and stakeholders on regulatory challenges and opportunities. These tables will support the identification, design, and implementation of actions to advance northern regulatory priorities. Assess regional information (including baseline and cumulative effects data) available to inform project development, leading to more informed and supported decisions and more efficient regulatory processes. Continue to support initiatives that promote northern regulatory efficiency, such as the federal coordination role of CanNor in impact assessments, Crown consultation, and permitting processes.

	ACTIONS	2024-25	LONG-TERM
Theme 4: Improving Regulatory Efficiency North of 60	4.2 Accelerate the Northern Regulatory Initiative Lead Departments: CIRNAC, CanNor	 Accelerate work through the Northern Regulatory Initiative under the Canadian Critical Minerals Strategy to support holistic and inclusive regulatory processes, including regional studies and cumulative effects baseline studies that will help to successfully advance clean energy projects and associated infrastructure and critical mineral development. Strengthen CanNor-led federal coordination approach for assessment and permitting processes, to improve clarity and efficiency of regulatory processes. Clarify and coordinate Crown consultation processes across the North such as project-specific consultation protocols and cooperation agreements. Support participation of otherwise unfunded Indigenous governments and organizations in land use planning and impact assessment processes. 	 The development of new project-specific consultation protocols and cooperation agreements that will help inform consultation, accommodation, and coordination actions. The Government of Canada will work with territorial and Indigenous governments and partners to identify what is needed to meet northern challenges, to ensure that major clean growth projects that address regional needs and opportunities can be advanced and built.
Theme 4: Impro	4.3 Support research and development Lead Departments: NRCan, CanNor	Support fundamental research and development for commercialization and deployment of clean energy technologies in Canada's North.	

Theme 5: Clean Growth Leadership by Federal Lifecycle Regulators

Lifecycle regulators like the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission and Canada Energy Regulator have an important role to play in enabling clean growth projects. Both regulators operate independently and at arm's length from the Government of Canada, and although they work in different sectors, they share many similarities – for example, both are responsible for licensing clean growth projects that do not require a federal impact assessment. Where a federal impact assessment is required, the regulators work with the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada through an Integrated Review Panel process under the *Impact Assessment Act*. Through each of these regulatory processes, lifecycle regulators are taking action to support regulatory efficiency for clean growth projects within their respective sectors.

The Canada Energy Regulator is responsible for the regulation of federal pipelines, energy development and trade in the Canadian public interest. Pipelines and power lines that lie completely within the borders of a single province are regulated by that province's regulatory body. The Canada Energy Regulator is also currently responsible for the regulation of offshore renewable projects that are increasingly important in coastal regions.

Strategic Objective:

Support
regulatory
efficiency for
nuclear projects,
a key sector in
Canada's clean
growth future



The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission regulates the use of nuclear energy and materials in Canada, and expanded use of low-emitting nuclear energy is key to achieving our climate ambitions and reaching net-zero emissions by 2050. This includes proven Canadian technology like the CANDU, as well as small modular reactors (SMRs). The Government of Canada has introduced a suite of tools to drive the deployment of nuclear energy and we are working to ensure a predictable and efficient regulatory framework for nuclear energy projects. The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) is working with the Impact Assessment Agency and provinces to ensure Canada is ready to support emerging technologies and provide a seamless experience for proponents of these projects.

Several provinces, including Ontario, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and New Brunswick, have indicated significant interest in new large scale and small modular reactor deployment. The Government of Canada needs to ensure that processes for such deployments are efficient such that these provinces — and particularly those with more limited experience with nuclear power, can move forward in an environmentally sustainable manner but also within timeframes that meet the need for decarbonization of electricity grids. The recommendations in this section of this Action Plan are direct responses to the expressed desires and concerns of these provinces.



	ACTIONS	2024-25	LONG-TERM
l Lifecycle Regulators	5.1 Set a three- year target for nuclear project reviews Lead Departments: IAAC, CNSC	 Publish an updated Memorandum of Understanding between the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission and the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada, committing to a seamless experience for nuclear proponents subject to a federal impact assessment, including a target of three years to complete project reviews. This represents an "end-to-end" timeline, from the start of the planning phase through to decision-making. While the maximum overall timeline for an integrated impact assessment is approximately 4.5 years, we believe the three-year timeline is feasible provided proponent's efforts are adequate with respect to: meaningful Indigenous engagement; early identification and resolution of issues; and preparation of timely, quality submissions with the required information and studies. 	Alignment of federal, provincial and industry resources to ensure nuclear energy remains a strategic asset to Canada now and into the future.
rowth Leadership by Federal Lifecycle Regulators	5.2 Efficient reviews for nuclear projects Lead Departments: NRCan, IAAC, CNSC	 The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission and the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada are ensuring their processes are well aligned to reduce duplication between the two agencies. As part of the review of <i>Physical Activities Regulations</i> to be undertaken later in 2024, the Impact Assessment Agency will review the current thresholds for designating nuclear projects, to enable new nuclear projects as part of Canada's clean growth agenda. 	
Theme 5: Clean Growth	5.3 Facilitate construction of new nuclear energy projects Lead Departments: NRCan, CNSC	 Support the construction of new nuclear energy projects through efficient regulatory frameworks, including predictable licensing by the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission. This work will build on significant work to date by the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada and the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission to ensure the impact assessments of proposed nuclear projects designated under the Impact Assessment Act can proceed as soon as quality submissions are received. 	
	Lead Departments: Privy Council Office, CNSC, CER	 Engage the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission and Canada Energy Regulator in the governance forums established by the Federal Permitting Coordinator, as appropriate, to ensure these agencies can benefit from information-sharing and co-operation tools. 	

Next Steps

This action plan outlines the Government of Canada's roadmap to improve the efficiency of our regulatory system and accelerate clean growth projects.

Our work is not done. We acknowledge that improving regulatory efficiency is not a small task, and our plan must be implemented well to make sure we are getting to project decisions faster. The Ministerial Working Group for Regulatory Efficiency of Clean Growth projects continues to meet regularly to ensure we are driving progress. We are proceeding with implementation of the Action Plan immediately, starting with the upcoming launch of a Cabinet Directive on Clean Growth Projects that will provide more details on expectations of federal officials. This will be followed by the release of a public reporting dashboard, to increase transparency and predictability as projects move through the regulatory system. These actions will help set the foundation for improved coordination within the federal government and represent the first steps to getting more clean growth projects built.

We cannot do it alone. We need to continue building bridges and finding new and innovative ways to work with our partners — including industry, investors, Indigenous Peoples, provinces and territories, and Canadians. We are ready to work with provinces, territories and Indigenous Peoples to reduce duplication and maximize efficiencies, while recognizing our respective roles and jurisdictions. As the amended *Impact Assessment Act* comes into force, we invite provinces to negotiate new Ministerial Co-operation Agreements so that projects may undergo a single impact assessment process, where appropriate.

We have more to learn. Our commitment to getting decisions on projects faster will not be at the expense of sound decisions. Project proponents must continue to work with regulators to submit complete information in a timely manner, to support early and meaningful engagement and consultation with Indigenous Peoples. As we work to improve the regulatory system, we are testing different approaches to find what works well. We invite all orders of government, Indigenous Peoples and proponents to seize the opportunity to test new approaches with us -by negotiating new Ministerial Cooperation Agreements, exploring ways to reduce regulatory duplication through the Regional Energy and Resource Tables and the Canada-Alberta Working Group, or completing permitting work during the impact assessment process.

We welcome your feedback. We will be engaging with partners directly as we advance the actions in this plan, and we welcome your views.

We are at a critical juncture in the fight against climate change and protecting our natural environment. To maintain and grow Canada's competitive advantage, we must seize the moment to implement these changes quickly and effectively. All of this will contribute to regulatory excellence, to ensure Canada's clean growth agenda remains on track, so that we can be best positioned to meet our economic and climate goals, today and into the future.

Additional Resources

Aboriginal Consultation and Accommodation - Updated Guidelines for Federal Officials to Fulfill the Duty to Consult: https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1100100014664/1609421824729

Arctic and Northern Policy Framework: https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1560523306861/1560523330587

The Canada Energy Regulator: https://www.cer-rec.gc.ca/en/

Canada's Small Modular Reactor Action Plan: https://smractionplan.ca/

The Canadian Critical Minerals Strategy: https://www.canada.ca/en/campaign/critical-minerals-in-canada/canadian-critical-minerals-strategy.html

The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission: https://www.cnsc-ccsn.gc.ca/eng/

Impact Assessment 101: https://www.canada.ca/en/impact-assessment-assessment-assessments.html

Interim Statement from the Chair of the Ministerial Working Group on Regulatory Efficiency for Clean Growth Projects: https://www.canada.ca/en/privy-council/news/2024/02/chair-of-ministerial-working-group-on-regulatory-efficiency-for-clean-growth-projects-issues-statement.html

Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board: https://reviewboard.ca/

Mining Effluent: https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/managing-pollution/sources-industry/mining-effluent.html

Navigation Protection Program: https://tc.canada.ca/en/programs/navigation-protection-program

Northern Projects Management Office (NPMO): https://www.cannor.gc.ca/eng/1370267347392/1370267428255

Nunavut Environmental Impact Review Board: https://www.nirb.ca/nunavut-regulatory-system

Projects near water: https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/pnw-ppe/index-eng.html

Regional Energy and Resource Tables: https://natural-resources.canada.ca/climate-change/regional-energy-and-resource-tables/24356

Species at Risk: https://www.canada.ca/en/services/environment/wildlife-plants-species/species-risk.html

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act action plan: https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/declaration/ap-pa/index.html

Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board: https://yesab.ca/

