

# Suncor Base Mine Extension Project Impact Assessment

INFORMATION SESSIONS

MARCH 2021



Impact Assessment  
Agency of Canada

Agence d'évaluation  
d'impact du Canada

Canada 

# Session objectives

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1. Introduction to Federal Impact Assessment
2. Proposed Project and the Review Panel Process
3. How to participate in the impact assessment



# Introduction to Impact Assessment

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*IMPACT ASSESSMENT ACT*



# Introduction to the Federal Impact Assessment

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## About us...

### ***The Impact Assessment Agency of Canada***

- Created under the *Impact Assessment Act* (August 28, 2019) and previously known as the “Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency”.
- Responsible for conducting impact assessments of major projects, listed under the *Physical Activities Regulations*.
- Centre of expertise for impact assessment within the Government of Canada.
- Cooperates with other agencies and jurisdictions, such as provincial and territorial governments.



# Introduction to the Federal Impact Assessment

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## ***Crown Consultation***

- The *Impact Assessment Act* recognizes the special Constitutional relationship between the Crown and Indigenous peoples, their rights, and the particular perspectives and interests they bring to the process.
- The Agency leads the consultation process, serving as the one point of contact for the whole-of-government to address issues or concerns raised by Indigenous groups during the assessment.
- The Agency collaborates with Indigenous groups during consultations to identify options to avoid, mitigate or accommodate issues or concerns related to the project on potential adverse impacts to Indigenous rights.



# Introduction to the Federal Impact Assessment

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## ***What do we mean by “impact assessment”***

- Process by which potential effects of a project are reviewed in accordance with the *Impact Assessment Act* (IAA).
- Potential effects consist of the changes due to a proposed project to environmental, health, social and economic conditions, and the positive and negative consequences of those changes. The assessment includes potential effects on Indigenous peoples and impacts on Indigenous rights.
- The assessment must consider several factors, e.g. need and purpose, alternative means of carrying out the project, accidents and malfunctions, cumulative effects, Indigenous and community knowledge.
- The impact assessment can be conducted by the Agency or referred to a review panel.



# Proposed Project and Review Panel Process

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SUNCOR BMX

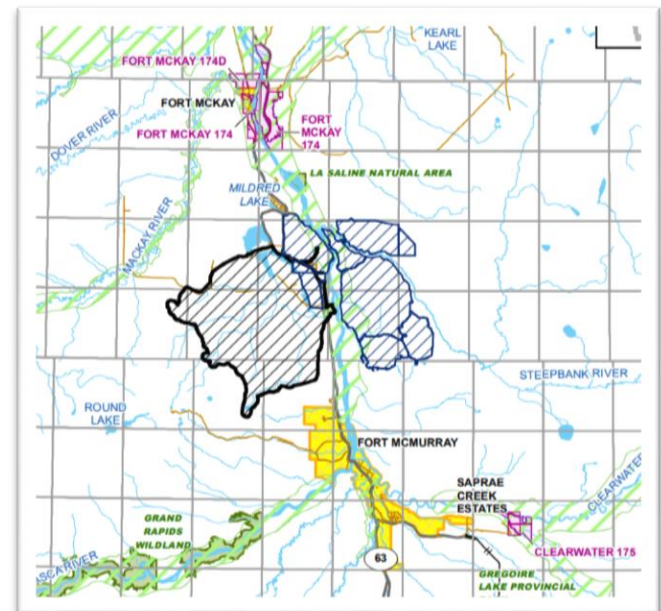




# Proposed Project

- Suncor Energy Inc. proposes the Base Mine Extension project to sustain the supply of bitumen to upgraders at Suncor's Base Plant. The project is located approximately 3 km north of Fort McMurray, Alberta.
- Includes open-pit mining operations and associated infrastructure to supply bitumen to new froth production facilities, and existing facilities at Base Plant.
- Suncor Energy Inc. plans to start construction in 2026 and production in 2030, for a project life of 25 years. The footprint would be approximately 30,000 hectares.
- 'Designated project' under the *Impact Assessment Act* and requires an environmental impact assessment under the Alberta's *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act*.

For further information see the [Detailed Project Description](#)





# Proposed Project and the Review Panel Process

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## *Referral to an assessment by a review panel*

- Reasons include potential for adverse effects within federal jurisdiction, potential impacts to Indigenous peoples and their rights, and the possibility to cooperate with Alberta.

## ***What is a Review Panel?***

- A review panel is a group of independent experts appointed by the Minister to conduct an impact assessment (i.e. collect information, conduct hearings, write the report).
- Members must have knowledge or experience relevant to the project's anticipated effects or have knowledge of the interests and concerns of the Indigenous peoples of Canada that are relevant to the assessment. Members must be unbiased and free from any conflict of interest relative to the project.



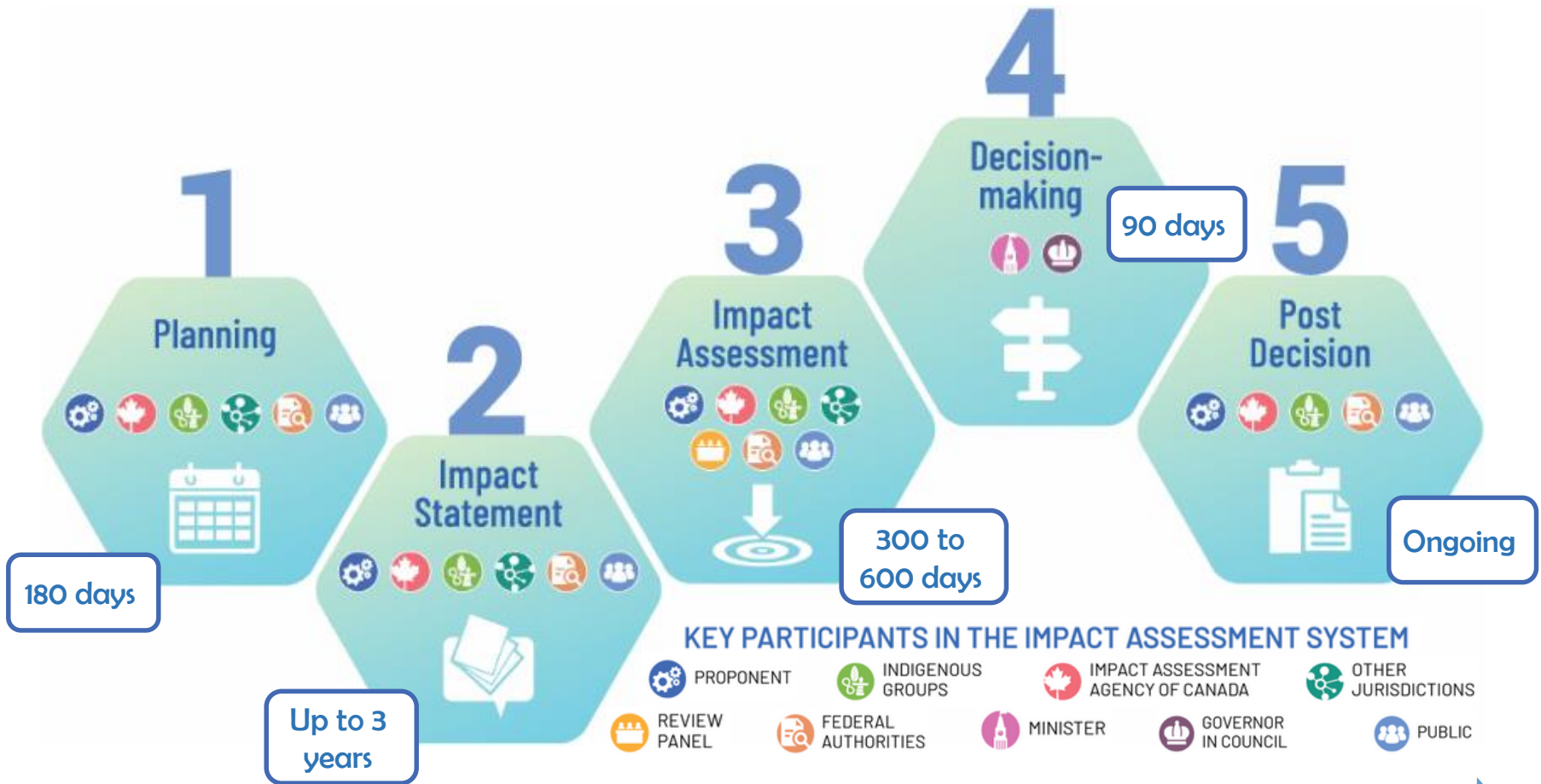
# Cooperation with the Alberta Energy Regulator

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- The *Impact Assessment Act* provides for cooperation with other jurisdictions in the conduct of the impact assessment.
- Several options for cooperation will be explored with the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER), in order to align with both federal and provincial legislative obligations.
- Mechanisms of cooperation may include coordinating activities, harmonizing timelines where possible, and sharing expertise.
- The AER may send the review of the project to public hearings. In this case, the Agency would explore a Joint Review Panel with the AER.
- The Agency's cooperation approach is outlined in the Cooperation Plan.



# Impact assessment process

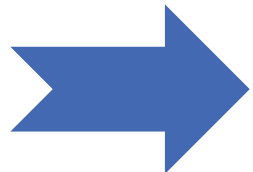


The Agency conducts Indigenous consultations throughout the process.

# 1 – Planning Phase

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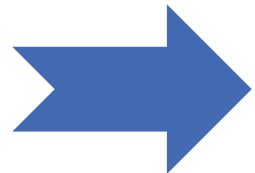
- New phase for early engagement and identification of issues.
- The Agency must prepare Tailored Impact Statement Guidelines, a Public Participation Plan, an Indigenous Engagement and Partnership Plan, a Permitting Plan and a Cooperation Plan.
- Key steps and milestones:
  - Receipt of Project Description: March 2, 2020
  - Summary of Issues (following public consultation): May 11, 2020
  - Receipt of Detailed Project Description: July 23, 2020
  - Impact Assessment Decision: August 7, 2020
  - Notice of referral to Review Panel: January 28, 2021
  - Draft Guidelines and Public Participation Plan for comments: [February 26 – April 7, 2021](#)
  - Final Guidelines and plans: [May 3, 2021 \(day 180\)](#)



## 2 - Impact statement phase

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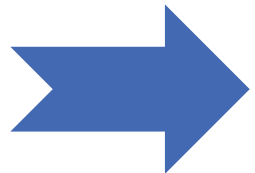
- Starts with the Notice of Commencement. Maximum duration of 3 years.
- The proponent prepares the impact statement and submits it to the Agency.
- The Agency verifies the impact statement and may require additional information to satisfy the requirements of the guidelines. Includes a public comment period on the impact statement.
- The Agency publishes a notice once it is satisfied that all the information and studies required have been provided, which completes the impact statement phase.
- The Agency consults on the review panel's terms of reference. If the review panel is appointed prior to the impact assessment phase, it may support the Agency's review of the impact statement.



# 3 - Impact Assessment Phase (by Review Panel)

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- Maximum of 600 days. The time limits will be established in the review panel's terms of reference.
- Key steps for the Review Panel:
  - Analysis of the impact statement and information received from participants.
  - May require clarifications from the proponent or participants to comply with its terms of reference.
  - Hold public hearings.
  - Prepare a report containing its rationale, conclusions and recommendations – to be submitted to the Minister.
- Key steps for the Agency:
  - Draft potential conditions and public engagement – to be submitted to the Minister.

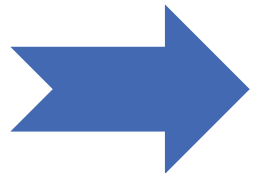




# 4 – Decision-making Phase

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- The Minister refers the public interest determination to the Governor in Council. The public interest decision is based on the report and the following factors:
  - Project's contribution to sustainability
  - Extent to which adverse effects within federal jurisdiction and the adverse direct or incidental effects are significant
  - Associated mitigation measures
  - Impacts on Indigenous groups and adverse impacts on rights
  - Extent to which effects hinder or contribute to Canada's environmental obligations and climate change commitments
- The decision statement is published on the Registry. It includes the reasons for the determination of public interest. If the effects are deemed in the public interest, the Minister establishes the applicable conditions.



# 5 - Post-Decision Phase

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If the project is approved...

- Other authorities may make permitting decisions under both federal and provincial legislation.
- The Agency would promote and ensure compliance with the Act and Decision Statement.
  - Follow-up to verify the accuracy of predictions and effectiveness of mitigation measures
  - Provide opportunities for Indigenous peoples and the public to participate in monitoring
  - Encourage continuous improvements to impact assessments





# Participation

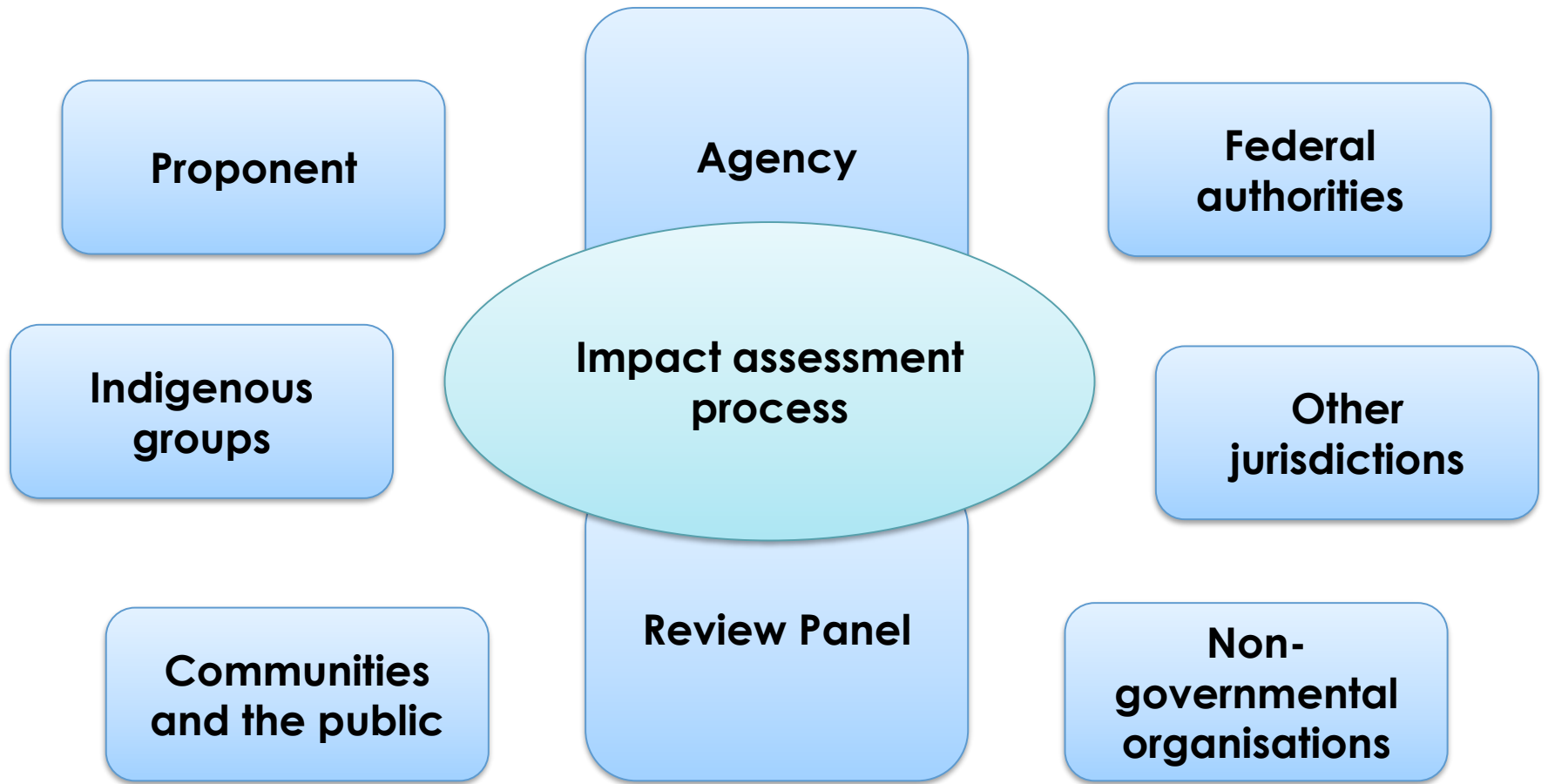
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OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE



# Participants in the impact assessment

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# How to participate

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- By providing comments on key documents using:
  - “Submit a Comment” available on the Registry at <https://iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/proj/80521>
  - mail or email:

Suncor Base Mine Extension Project  
Impact Assessment Agency of Canada  
160 Elgin St, 22<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0H3

[IAAC.BaseMine-MineBase.AEIC@canada.ca](mailto:IAAC.BaseMine-MineBase.AEIC@canada.ca)
- Attending events organized by the Agency or the Review Panel
- Consulting the Canadian Impact Assessment Registry
- Registering to the distribution list for updates and notices



# Participant Funding Program (PFP)

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- Promotes the involvement of the public and Indigenous peoples in participation activities.
- Eligible costs include travel, professional services, report preparation, research, and information analysis.
- Criteria to meet in order to qualify for funding:
  - have a direct and local interest in the project;
  - have local knowledge or Indigenous knowledge that may be relevant to the impact assessment;
  - have specialist information with respect to the project's anticipated effects;
  - have an interest in how the project may affect treaty lands, settlement lands, or traditional territories.





# Draft Public Participation Plan

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This document describes the objectives of public participation, ways to participate, and all opportunities for participation in each phase of the impact assessment process.

Please consider the following when drafting your comments. For example, tell us:

- Your preferences, as well as your suggestions for communication and participation tools that could facilitate your participation.
- Challenges you or your community face that may prevent you from accessing participation opportunities for this project (e.g. languages, costs, technical or other).



# Draft Tailored Impact Statement Guidelines

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- Provide clear and detailed requirements for the information and studies necessary for the review panel to conduct the impact assessment.
- The impact statement must be informed by reliable scientific data, Indigenous knowledge and community knowledge.
- The guidelines present guidance on impact assessment methodology, as well as requirements pertaining to baseline information, assessment of effects, identification of mitigation measures, follow-up and other factors that the proponent must discuss as part of the impact statement.
- Comment period on the guidelines ends April 30, 2021.



# How are the Guidelines tailored?

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- Based on the [Agency's template](#)
- Considers information from:
  - All comments received to date from the public and Indigenous groups
  - [Summary of Issues](#)
  - [Detailed Project Description](#)
  - Advice from federal authorities
  - [Suncor's proposed Terms of Reference](#) for the provincial environmental impact assessment



# Guidelines - Comments

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Please consider the following when drafting your comments. For example, tell us:

- What type of effects on environmental, health, social or economic conditions, either positive or negative, are important to you or your community?
- What areas of particular importance to you might be affected by the project?
- Other important issues you would like to see addressed in the final version of the Guidelines.

The Agency will consider all comments.



# Contact us

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- **General Information**

Suncor Base Mine Extension Project  
Impact Assessment Agency of Canada  
160 Elgin St, 22<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0H3

343-549-5813 / [IAAC.BaseMine-MineBase.AEIC@canada.ca](mailto:IAAC.BaseMine-MineBase.AEIC@canada.ca)

- **Media Relations:**

Impact Assessment Agency of Canada  
343-549-3870 / [iaac.media.aeic@canada.ca](mailto:iaac.media.aeic@canada.ca)

- **Participant Funding Program:**

1-866-582-1884 / [iaac.FP-PAF.aeic@canada.ca](mailto:iaac.FP-PAF.aeic@canada.ca)



# References

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- **Information session materials:** <https://iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/document/138362>
- **Comment period:** <https://iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/document/135998>
- **Suncor BMX Project Registry:** <https://iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/proj/80521>
- **Agency Website – Processes, policies and guidance:** <https://www.canada.ca/en/impact-assessment-agency/services/policy-guidance.html>







Thank you!

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Questions?

