
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PROCESS FOR WIND POWER PROJECTS

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OAIA Conference



HISTORY OF WIND

Although it is relatively new to North America wind power has been used for centuries.

Wind in Ontario

- Still in the infancy stage.
- 3 broad policy priorities: preference for renewable sources of energy, creation of a conservation culture, and replacement of coal-fired generation for environmental and health reasons.
- Ontario is now the leader in wind power development, with a total wind energy capacity of 673 MW.

BENEFITS OF WIND

- Clean
- Abundant and reliable
- Affordable
- Proven
- Creates jobs
- Tourism
- Popular

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

BASICS

An environmental assessment (EA) is a process of identifying, predicting, evaluating and mitigating the environmental effects of a proposed project prior to making irreversible project decisions and commitments (International Association for Impact Assessment, 1999).

There are 2 key environmental approvals that must be sought by a potential wind power developer.

1. Ontario Environmental Assessment Act (OEAA)

2. Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA)

THE PROCESS

For wind power projects the EA process is a proponent driven, self-assessment process.

Advantage

- Able to determine the appropriate level of evaluation specific to proposed project sites.

Disadvantage

- Creates a level of uncertainty for requirements that must be met.
- Promotes an uneven playing field.



A TYPICAL WIND PROJECT



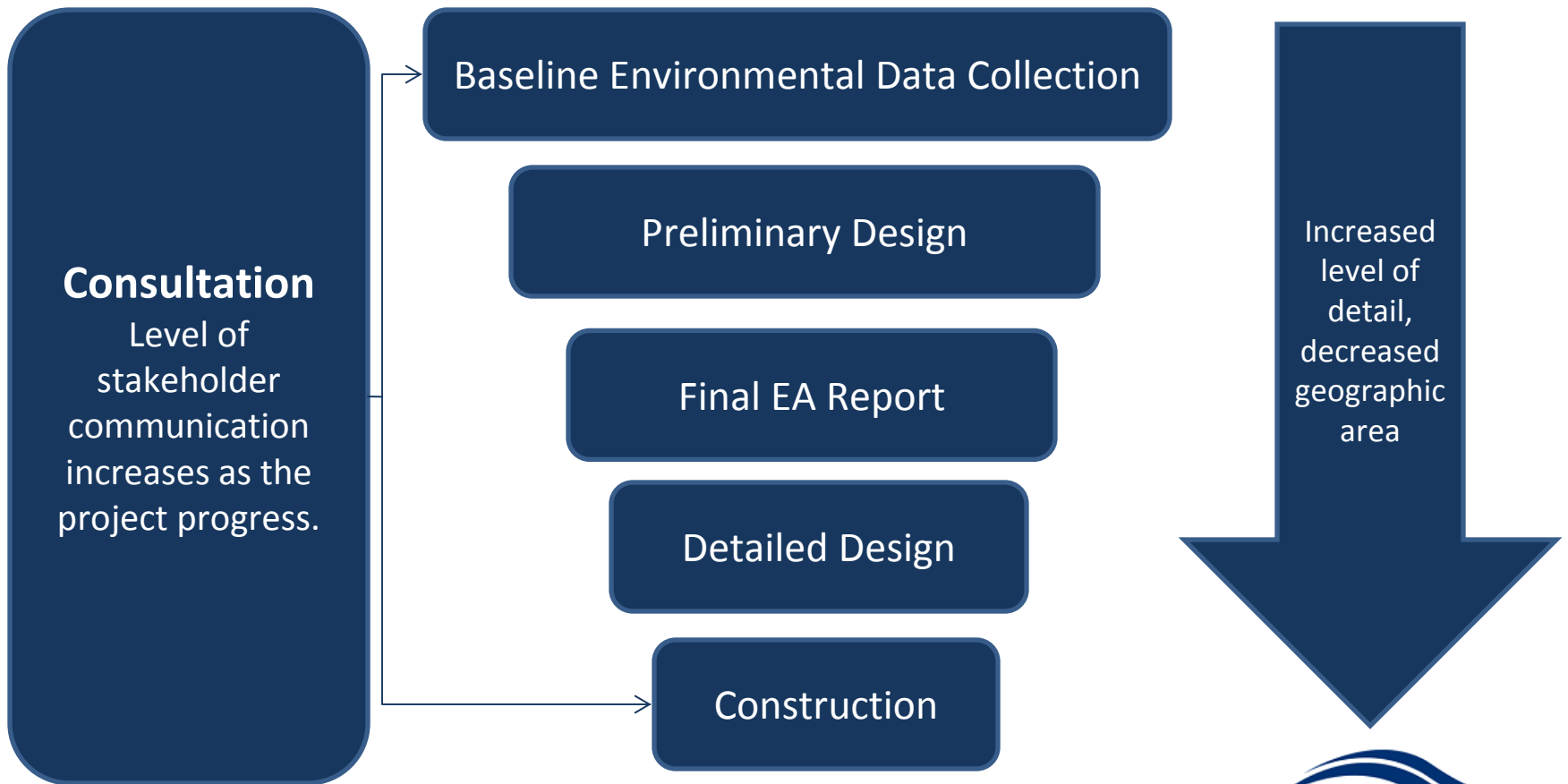
ISSUES

The main concerns surrounding the development of a wind farm can be categorized into 3 main topics.

- Social (Property values, health, community cohesion)
- Communication (open & transparent)
- Environment (Birds & bats)

The purpose of an EA is to identify, understand and mitigate these concerns.

MOVING THROUGH THE PROCESS



CHALLENGES

There are 4 main challenges for a developer moving through the EA process:

- Regulatory requirement vs best practice/good neighbour.
- Unexpected obstacles.
- Duplication of processes.
- Project delays.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Development of the Green Energy Act.
- Streamline the approval process.
- Avoid duplication at the Municipal level.
- Streamline the Ontario Municipal Board appeals process.

THANK YOU

Questions or Comments

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