

# Implementing Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Kathy Wilson, Agri-Environmental Policy Bureau  
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Agriculture and  
Agri-Food Canada

Agriculture et  
Agroalimentaire Canada

Canada

# ***Presentation Overview***

- AAFC's Framework for SEA
- AAFC's Organizational Structure
- Key Departmental Stakeholders
- Departmental Working Group on SEA
- Responsibilities of the SEA Coordinator
- Responsibilities of the Team Lead
- AAFC's SEA Guidance Material
- Preliminary Scans and Detailed SEAs
- AAFC's SEA Approval Process
- Public Statements on Detailed SEAs
- Conclusion

# *AAFC's Framework for SEA*

- The Department's action plan to integrate SEA into development and approval processes for new and revised policies, plans and programs
- SEA Coordinator discussed departmental roles and responsibilities with key participants in the process
- Two steps in the SEA process: preliminary scan and detailed SEA

# *AAFC's Organizational Structure*

- In 2001, the Department restructured the way it operates to deliver on the priorities of Canada's national agriculture policy framework
- Horizontal Teams based on the priorities of the Agricultural Policy Framework (APF)
- Enabling Teams consolidated corporate support functions to provide an integrated approach to Horizontal Teams
- AAFC's Framework for SEA builds upon this departmental team approach



# ***Key Departmental Stakeholders***

- Cabinet Affairs
- Finance and Resource Management Group
- Team Secretaries
- SEA Coordinator
- Team representatives on AAFC's Departmental Working Group on SEA



## *Departmental Working Group on SEA*

- Knowledge-sharing on SEA
- Members remain up-to-date on SEA-related developments in the federal community and internationally and share this information, as appropriate, with members of their team
- Provide support to their respective teams, in addition to the SEA Coordinator
- Comment on AAFC guidance material

# ***Responsibilities of the SEA Coordinator***

- Monitor upcoming department proposals
- Provide guidance on conducting a preliminary scan or detailed SEA
- Assist in the drafting of SEA summary statements for proposals
- Review completed SEAs
- Maintain departmental inventory



## ***Responsibilities of the Team Lead***

- Team drafting the proposal is responsible for conducting the SEA with guidance from the SEA Coordinator
- Incorporate comments from the SEA Coordinator
- Draft summary statements on the results of the SEA to be reported on in the proposal
- Obtain required approval





# ***AAFC's SEA Guidance Material***

- *Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Guide on the Environmental Assessment of Policy Plan and Program Proposals – Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEAs)*
- AAFC's preliminary scan template
- AAFC's SEA website:  
[http://www.agr.gc.ca/env/sea-ees/sea\\_e.php](http://www.agr.gc.ca/env/sea-ees/sea_e.php)

# *AAFC's Preliminary Scan Template*

- Brief description of the proposal
- Policy Context
- Direct and indirect outcomes associated with implementing the proposal
- Forecasting Project Environmental Assessment
- Cumulative Effects
- Conclusion
- Summary statement to be included in proposal



# ***Preliminary Scans and Detailed SEAs***

## ***Environmental Impact/Mitigation***

- Potential direct and indirect outcomes
- Interactions with the environment
- Scope and nature of these environmental interactions
- Mitigation of adverse environmental effects/Enhancement of positive environmental effects
- Overall potential environmental effect of the proposal after mitigation
- Potential impacts of not going forward with proposal
- Alternatives and their potential environmental impacts
- Time lines - short or long term

# ***AAFC's SEA Approval Process***

- Approval from the officer drafting the proposal, SEA Coordinator and their respective Directors
- If it is not clear that an SEA has been conducted, Cabinet Affairs and the Finance and Resource Management Group will ask for proof of a proper SEA
- The SEA Coordinator will confirm whether the SEA requirement was met

## *Public Statements on Detailed SEAs*

- Amendments to the Cabinet Directive in January 2004 require departments to make public statements of environmental effects when a detailed SEA is conducted
- AAFC public statements are posted on AAFC's SEA website: [http://www.agr.gc.ca/env/sea-ees/sea\\_e.php](http://www.agr.gc.ca/env/sea-ees/sea_e.php)
- The associated press release announcing the policy or program is also available

# *Conclusion*

- AAFC's Framework for SEA
- Key Departmental Stakeholders
- AAFC's Guidance Material
- AAFC's SEA Approval Process
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