

MEANINGFUL PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

What is Impact Assessment (IA)?

Impact Assessment is a process that helps evaluate the potential consequences—both positive and negative—of a proposed project before it moves forward. The goal is to make informed, evidence-based decisions that minimize harm and maximize positive outcomes. This includes proposing mitigation strategies and follow-up measures to ensure the project's impacts are managed effectively.

Why is Meaningful Public Participation in IA processes important?

Your participation in the impact assessment process can help everyone understand the impacts of a proposed development. Public participation improves transparency and accountability. When public feedback is used in the decision-making process, people will have more confidence in the project and the government who approved it.

Meaningful public participation improves impact assessment processes by:

- **strengthening relationships** between stakeholders,
- increasing access to **local and traditional knowledge** from diverse sources,
- facilitating **problem-solving** and **social learning**, and
- **broadening the range of solutions** considered by decision-makers.



DID YOU KNOW?

Manitoba has an [Environmental Assessment and Licensing Public Registry](#) that contains public comments, reports, and other types of compliance information.



Check It Out Here

HOW CAN MANITOBANS PARTICIPATE IN IA?

Guaranteed Opportunities

- **Written Comments** can be submitted after an Environment Act Proposal (EAP) is published in the Public Registry. The EAP provides a description of the proposed project, among other required information. All public comments submitted are added to the Public Registry.

Optional Opportunities

- **Public Hearing** - The Minister can require a public hearing be held by the Clean Environment Commission to help with the assessment of any project. If so, members of the public can participate in the hearing at different levels of intensity and commitment.



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BEST PRACTICES FOR MEANINGFUL PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There are many ways the government can ensure the public is meaningfully involved in impact assessment processes, including:

- **Early and Ongoing Participation:** The public must be included in all phases of the IA process, from the planning to monitoring and follow-up.
- **Providing a Range of Opportunities for Public Involvement:** IA should include all interested organizations and individuals. A range of different approaches must be used, including both written (e.g., written comments) and face-to-face (e.g., workshops and public hearings) options.
- **Adequate Notice:** Public notice given in as many ways possible, including print, broadcast, websites, email, and social media. Public notices should (at a minimum) include a deadline, details about the proposed project, identify where more information can be found, and indicate where the public can send their input.
- **Access to Information:** Easy public access to all of the information and comments from other participants, in both electronic and hard copy formats. The more complex the information, the more time the public should have to review and provide feedback.
- **Participant Assistance:** Participant assistance (often provided through funding) must be available for all participation opportunities, not just public hearings.
- **Open and Transparent Process:** Requires all information provided and considered during the IA to be made publicly available on a searchable registry. The legal framework should establish decision-making criteria and reporting requirements.
- **Decision Impact:** The input provided by the public has to actually influence the decisions made during the impact assessment process. Public input should not be treated as advisory, and a written and reasoned decision should be provided to indicate how public input was utilized.



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WANT TO LEARN MORE?



For more info, use this QR code to visit the [Project page](#) on the Manitoba Eco-Network website.

