



Saskatchewan  
Environment  
and Resource  
Management

# **The Saskatchewan Environmental Assessment Act Guide to Proposal Development -**

## **Oil and Natural Gas Projects**

November 2000



## Introduction

Requests for review of oil and natural gas projects under *The Environmental Assessment Act* in Saskatchewan are to be provided to the appropriate regional office of Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management (SERM) as follows:

- ! all seismic projects whether on Crown or private land;
- ! all drilling (including exploratory and strat test wells) flowline/pipeline projects, access routes and production facilities on **all** Crown land and on **private land** as outlined in SERM's **Checklist for Activity (Excluding Seismic) on Private Land in Saskatchewan**; and
- ! any project that has the potential to meet the definition of "development" under *The Environmental Assessment Act*.

The information described in this guide is required to complete reviews necessary under *The Environmental Assessment Act*. **Decisions made in relation to that Act do not convey any authority to enter onto the land to complete work.** Leases/approvals to enter onto land administered by **Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food (SAF) must be obtained from the appropriate SAF regional office.** Approval to enter onto Crown land administered by any other provincial Crown agency must be obtained from the agency responsible for the land where the work is to occur. Approval to enter onto private land must be obtained from the land owner.

## Proposal Development

Proposals for oil and natural gas projects *must* include the information described on pages 3-5 that is applicable to the project being planned, with the exception of:

- ! Proposals for **seismic exploration**, which may be submitted as: 3 copies of 1:50,000 NTS series maps or equivalent, accompanied by a *properly completed* Notice of Intent, a list of land locations to be crossed- by quarter section (listing a half or full section is fine if all quarters will be impacted) and an indication of land tenure (that is: Sask Ag and Food, SERM, privately owned, etc. There is no need to list individual names where land is privately owned.) Proponents should also provide Conservation Data Centre information on rare and endangered species (both plant and animal) that may be encountered in the vicinity of seismic projects undertaken south of the north boundary of Township 30, between April 1 and July 31 annually. It should also be noted that if work is proposed in a **sensitive area** or is **extensive** or **intensive** (such as some 3D projects) additional information may be requested. Contacting the appropriate SERM regional office to discuss a project during planning, will help companies prepare complete information and may speed up the review process.

**Proponents should contact the SERM regional office early in the planning process to ensure that concerns with the project are identified and that appropriate information is provided.**

The requested information will be used by SERM for two purposes:

- ! to determine if a more detailed formal review [environmental protection plan (EPP) or environmental impact assessment (EIA)] will be required under *The Environmental Assessment Act*; and
- ! to enable SERM to determine if there are any site-specific environmental concerns with the project and whether plans to deal with those concerns are acceptable.

The proposal should provide enough information to allow SERM to understand what the project is about and whether or not there is the *potential* for significant environmental impacts. It should focus on project and site-specific details, and will be less detailed than an EPP.

When **SAF administered land** is involved, developers must also provide SAF with a Restoration Plan as per SAF's publication, *Restoration of Saskatchewan's Agricultural Crown Rangelands - Guidelines and Procedures for Developers*. In those situations, preparing information as outlined here will satisfy the requirements of both SAF and SERM.

The following information is required in proposals. Items in *italics* represent the information to be provided. Information listed following those points is intended to assist in assembling the information package by providing additional information/clarification.

## 1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

*Describe proposed access roads; well sites and type of well (including exploratory and strat test) flowline / pipeline routes; battery sites and compressor stations; existing oil / gas wells; tie-in points and relationship to other existing facilities.*

T proposal should include a paragraph that describes / summarizes the project (ie., its scope / scale and key features).

### (a) Maps / Photographs

3 copies of 1:50,000 NTS series maps or equivalent detailing locations of:

- " *proposed linear features such as: seismic lines; access roads; power lines; pipelines/flowlines;*
- " *borrow pits; locations of temporary work camps (if on Crown land) and other infrastructure*
- " *extra working space requirements, including proposed additional right-of-way width*

T proponents should submit required information as listed

T maps must be clear and 1:50,000 scale at a minimum

T air photos and photographs may be required in some instances

### (b) Route / Site Selection

" *rationale for choosing proposed routes and any alternatives that were considered*

" *pre-development contour plans for well sites, battery or compressor sites, where lease leveling is proposed*

" *proposed/possible permanent access, and flowline/pipeline routes if tie-in is proposed*

T the proposal should explain why the proposed route / site was selected, any alternatives considered and why the selected route was chosen

T if *immediate* tie-in is proposed, flowlines and permanent access routes must be shown on maps and development and mitigation plans outlined; however, if tie-in will not occur for some time and final route selections have not been made, the proposal may indicate that plans have not been finalized and a separate proposal outlining the routes will follow

T in those cases *where immediate tie-in is not anticipated*, the proposal should contain at a minimum, *conceptual routing* of flowlines and permanent access routes, based on the proponent's best available information or projections at the time.

T proposals should clearly differentiate between flowline and permanent access routes which are conceptual and those which are intended to be part of the development work to be reviewed

T permanent access (if different than drilling access)

**NOTE:** On Crown land administered by **SAF**, it is a requirement that agricultural lessees be contacted to ensure lessee interests are taken into consideration.

### (c) *Legal Surveys*

*of: well sites; compressor stations; battery sites; flowlines/pipelines; access roads; etc.*

- T if surveys of flowlines, pipelines and roads are not available upon initial submission, they can follow at a later date.
- T SERM may not require surveys for *linear* developments not on SERM administered land as maps may be adequate (however the Crown agency responsible for the land will require surveys). contact the appropriate SERM office for clarification
- T surveys should include information as per the *Survey Guidelines Saskatchewan Crown Agriculture and Resource Land* (see reference material).

## 2. PROJECT EVALUATION

*Describe how the development plans relate to environmental considerations in the area including: sensitive areas (e.g. steep slopes, riparian areas, wetlands, highly erodible soils) lands designated in **The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act**, other important wildlife habitat , etc.*

### (a) *Potential Impacts and Protection / Mitigation Measures*

- “ *consider potential site specific impacts on wildlife, aquatic resources, riparian areas and wetlands, vegetation, soils, rare and endangered species and unique features and outline measures to mitigate impacts*
- “ *describe the measures you will take to minimize surface disturbance (timing, equipment and construction methods, use of existing routes, seismic lines, natural openings, etc.)*
- “ *some field work may be required for these evaluations*

- T the proposal should describe the sources of environmental impacts that could result from the project and proposed methods of avoiding or minimizing those impacts. For example, considerations should include impacts of:
  - N new access
  - N blading or other access upgrades
  - N stripping lease, flowline/pipeline route, etc
  - N effects on slopes (cut and fill)
  - N stream crossings
  - N impacts on wetlands, riparian areas
  - N tree/brush removal
- T alternately, the proposal may confirm that such sources of impact will not be an issue and provide supporting rationale
- T the proposal should estimate the potential to affect rare species based on historical or habitat information. Field evaluation of development sites for rare and endangered species will be required if historical or habitat information indicates potential occurrence and if project timing is appropriate. Contact the SERM regional office for information on particular locations.

### (b) Reclamation Plan

*Describe reclamation plans including: timing; re-contouring; re-vegetation methods (seed mixtures, tree/shrub planting, etc.) and fencing, erosion protection and other protection measures.*

- T the proposal should indicate when reclamation will be done, how it will be done and how often it will be checked to ensure that it was effective
- T proponents should refer to the SAF Development/Restoration Plan Guidelines (Appendix A- in *Restoration of Saskatchewan's Agricultural Crown Rangelands - Guidelines and Procedures for Developers*) for projects on lands under SAF administration.

### (c) Timber Salvage

- " *Estimate volume to be removed and average d.b.h. (diameter at breast height) where applicable*
- " *Outline timber salvage plans*

- T proponents should discuss salvage requirements and plans with the appropriate SERM EcoRegion early in the planning stages of any project in timbered areas.

## 3. WASTE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

*Describe proposed waste management handling and disposal practices for this project*

- T it is sufficient to state that waste handling will be consistent with the *Waste Management Guidelines for the Saskatchewan Upstream Oil and Gas Industry* (developed by the Saskatchewan Petroleum Industry / Government Environment Committee) if you intend to follow those guidelines.
- T proponents should provide information on any aspect of the project where plans for waste handling are not consistent with those guidelines or SEM requirements.

## 4. ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING

*Describe your monitoring commitments in regard to:*

- " *the stages of the development which will be monitored*
- " *who will do the monitoring*
- " *the frequency at which monitoring will be done, both*
  - S *during construction to ensure minimal impact and*
  - S *following construction to ensure reclamation measures are effective*

- T the proposal should indicate whether a monitor will be present and if so, who the monitor will be and what his/her qualifications are. For what aspects of the project will the monitor be present?
- T what type of monitoring will be done following completion of work to ensure mitigation and reclamation efforts have been successful? What will be the frequency of checks and for how long following completion of the work will they continue?
- T what follow-up reporting is planned?

## Heritage Resources

Heritage Branch, Saskatchewan Municipal Affairs, Culture and Housing, should be contacted early in the planning process to ensure that potential heritage conflicts are identified and avoided.

Phone: (306) 787-5772

## Reference Material

! *Oil and Gas Development Survey Guidelines Saskatchewan Crown Agriculture and Resource Land;*

! *Waste Management Guidelines for the Saskatchewan Upstream Oil and Gas Industry;*

! *Restoration of Saskatchewan's Agricultural Crown Rangelands- Guidelines and Procedures for Developers* (Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food) on the Internet at

**<http://www.agr.gov.sk.ca/saf/>**

! Information regarding rare and endangered species (both flora and fauna) in Saskatchewan can be obtained by contacting SERM's regional offices or by contacting the Conservation Data Centre at (306) 787-7196 on the Internet at:

**<http://www.biodiversity.sk.ca>**

! This guide and related information will be posted on SERM's website at:

**<http://www.serm.gov.sk.ca/environment/assessment/oilandgas/>**