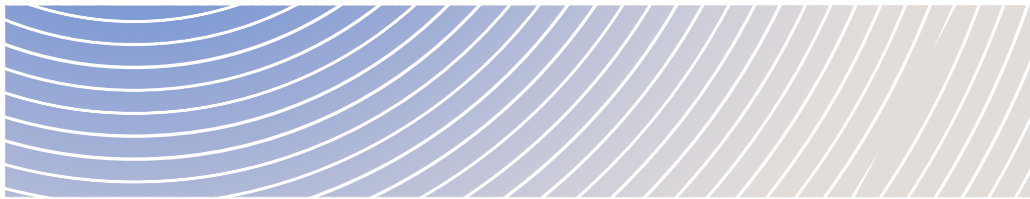


# Public Participation Plan



IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE SUNCOR BASE MINE  
EXTENSION PROJECT

Original Posting: May 31, 2021

Updated: December 18, 2024



Impact Assessment  
Agency of Canada

Agence d'évaluation  
d'impact du Canada

Canada



# Public Participation Plan

## SUNCOR BASE MINE EXTENSION PROJECT

December 18, 2024

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## 1. Introduction

Public participation is an essential part of an open, informed and meaningful impact assessment. The Government of Canada is committed to providing the public with the opportunity to participate meaningfully in the process and to provide the public with the information needed to participate in an informed way.

On August 7, 2020, the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (IAAC) determined that an impact assessment is required for the Suncor Base Mine Extension Project (the Project), pursuant to the *Impact Assessment Act* (the IAA). On January 28, 2021, IAAC announced that the impact assessment of the Project was referred to an independent review panel.

The IAA requires the development of a Public Participation Plan during the Planning Phase for all projects subject to an impact assessment. This Plan is developed by IAAC to set out opportunities for participation during the impact assessment process, and is designed to provide proponents and participants with certainty about how and when public participation will occur. It is also intended to be flexible and does not preclude IAAC or the Review Panel from making changes to the approaches described in this Plan in order to accommodate changes that may occur during the assessment.

For additional information about the implementation of meaningful public participation, please refer to the [Interim Policy Context for Public Participation in Impact Assessment](#) and [Guidance: Public Participation under the \*Impact Assessment Act\*](#).

A distinct and separate [Indigenous Engagement and Partnership Plan](#) is also available, outlining Indigenous engagement opportunities and approaches.

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## 2. Description of the proposed project

Suncor Energy Inc. (the proponent) is proposing to develop the Project to sustain the supply of bitumen to the existing upgraders at the proponent's Oil Sands Base Plant operation (Base Plant). The Project includes an open pit mining operation and associated infrastructure that is required to supply oil sands to new bitumen froth production facilities and deliver bitumen froth by pipeline to the existing Base Plant facilities where further processing occurs, including upgrading into various product blends for market. The Project would be located adjacent to existing Base Plant operations, approximately

three kilometres north of Fort McMurray, Alberta, within the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. The footprint is anticipated to be approximately 30,000 hectares.

For more information on the impact assessment of the Suncor Base Mine Extension Project or to view the information and comments received, visit the Canadian Impact Assessment Registry (the Public Registry) at <https://iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/proj/80521?culture=en-CA>.

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### 3. Objectives of the Public Participation Plan

The following objectives for public participation are proposed.

- Public participation is meaningful. This means that members of the public who want to take part in the impact assessment:
  - have the opportunity to do so,
  - have the information they need, and
  - have the capacity to participate in an informed manner.
- The public is engaged early and often, particularly at each key stage of the impact assessment process.
  - The public is involved in the development or revision of key documents, such as this plan, the Tailored Impact Statement Guidelines, the Review Panel's Terms of Reference and Joint Review Panel Agreement (if applicable), the proponent's Impact Statement, the potential conditions, and potential changes to the Decision Statement.
- Participation opportunities are designed to take into account diverse needs and interests of the public. Opportunities include but are not limited to: public comment periods, the public hearing, and in-person or virtual information sessions or consultation events at key phases of the process.
- Public views heard throughout the process are considered and inform decision making.

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### 4. Distribution list and participants

Throughout the impact assessment process, IAAC and/or the Review Panel's secretariat will develop and maintain a distribution list of participants in the impact assessment. Individuals and organizations on the distribution list will receive updates and notices about the Project's impact assessment as the process unfolds.

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*If you wish to be on the distribution list, please send an email to [basemine-minebase@jaac-aeic.gc.ca](mailto:basemine-minebase@jaac-aeic.gc.ca) with your full name and email address.*

*If you indicated that you would like to be added to the distribution list when you signed in to the online Public Registry or at an information session, you do not need to sign up again.*

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The following is a list of participants that have indicated an interest to date in participating in the impact assessment of the Project:

- Residents of Fort McMurray and Fort MacKay, Alberta and surrounding area
- Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo
- Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society – Northern Alberta Chapter
- Pembina Institute for Appropriate Development
- General public

Please consult the Indigenous Engagement and Partnership Plan for a list of the Indigenous communities that are identified for engagement and partnership as part of the impact assessment of the Project.

IAAC has received comments from Indigenous communities pertaining to the participation of the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board (the Board) in the impact assessment of the Project, and is in discussion with the Board to determine how the Board will be best engaged in the impact assessment.

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## 5. Public Participation Tools

In order to ensure meaningful public participation during the impact assessment process, the following communication and participation tools will be used:

- public notices posted on the Public Registry, published in newspapers and broadcast on the radio and news website ads;
- emails to the distribution list;
- social media updates;
- interactive community and information sessions (in-person or virtual presentations, with questions and answers);
- printed copies of key documents held in viewing centres, if requested;
- direct mailing;

- [training on the impact assessment process](#) and how to effectively participate, available by e-learning and on demand (if requested);
- public comment periods to gather participants' input on key documents;
- technical workshops;
- public hearing held by the Review Panel; and
- other tools based on input from the public during the impact assessment process, or as determined by the Review Panel.

IAAC will ensure that documents posted to the Public Registry will allow the content to be read aloud by a screen reader so that they are accessible to visually impaired people. IAAC will also encourage the Proponent to adopt this practice.

Participation opportunities and associated tools are explained in more detail in Table 1 below.

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## 6. Activities and public participation approaches

The following table provides a description of the main phases in the impact assessment process, and an outline of engagement opportunities in each phase, including events led by IAAC or the Review Panel. The table describes the objectives of each phase, the anticipated engagement activities, and applicable timelines.

The objectives of the Public Participation Plan will be considered for incorporation into the Review Panel's Terms of Reference. The Review Panel will select engagement activities that align with any rules or procedures it develops or adopts.

**Table 1. Public Participation Approaches and Activities**

Objectives of the Phase	Expected Activities	Public Participation Tools	Timelines
<b>Phase 1: Planning</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support understanding of the proposed Project.</li> <li>• Increase public awareness of the impact assessment process and how to meaningfully participate.</li> <li>• Gather public input and views on the draft Tailored Impact Statement Guidelines, the draft Indigenous Engagement and Partnership Plan and the draft Public Participation Plan, prior to finalizing these documents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From March 2 to May 1, 2020, IAAC <a href="#">invited comments</a> on the Initial Project Description. This period included a <a href="#">time limit suspension</a> to account for circumstances arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. Comments were used to prepare the <a href="#">Summary of Issues</a>, which was provided to Suncor Energy Inc. on May 11, 2020.</li> <li>• From February 26 to April 7, 2021, IAAC invited comments on the draft Tailored Impact Statement Guidelines, the draft Indigenous Engagement and Partnership Plan and the draft Public Participation Plan.</li> <li>• Virtual and interactive community meetings were held on March 16 and 18, 2021 to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ inform participants about the Project and the impact assessment process; and</li> <li>○ provide the opportunity to comment on the draft Tailored</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notices on the Public Registry, newspapers and radio, and social media updates</li> <li>• Online comment periods</li> <li>• Response to inquiries via email or phone</li> <li>• Emails to the distribution list</li> <li>• Virtual community meetings</li> <li>• Calls and meetings with interested stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Planning Phase is a maximum of 180 days, excluding any timeline suspension.</li> <li>• This Phase commenced on March 2, 2020 with the acceptance of the <a href="#">Initial Project Description</a>.</li> <li>• The planned 20-day comment period on the Initial Project Description was extended by 40 days.</li> <li>• The planned 40-day comment period on the draft Tailored Impact Statement Guidelines, the draft Indigenous Engagement and Partnership Plan and the draft Public Participation Plan was extended by 30 days until <a href="#">May 7, 2021</a>.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Virtual information sessions</a> were held on March 16 and 18, 2021.</li> </ul>

Objectives of the Phase	Expected Activities	Public Participation Tools	Timelines
	<p>Impact Statement Guidelines, the draft Indigenous Engagement and Partnership Plan and the draft Public Participation Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IAAC continues to respond to any inquiries received via the Public Registry, by email or phone.</li> <li>• IAAC continues to administer participant funding to support participation in the impact assessment process.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This Phase ended with the posting of the Notice of Commencement of the impact assessment and related documents.</li> </ul>
<b>Phase 2: Impact Statement</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase public awareness of the impact assessment process and how to meaningfully participate, especially in the Review Panel process and public hearing.</li> <li>• Notify participants of key steps in the process such as the receipt of the Impact Statement, the appointment of the Review Panel and the comment period on the Impact Statement.</li> <li>• Obtain the views of participants on whether the Impact Statement contains the required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IAAC will invite comments on the draft version of the Review Panel Terms of Reference and, if applicable, any agreement with Alberta pertaining to the establishment of a Joint Review Panel or coordination of assessment procedures.</li> <li>• The Impact Statement will be posted to the Public Registry and an email will be sent to the distribution list to notify participants.</li> <li>• IAAC will hold an online comment period on the Impact Statement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public notices announcing participation opportunities on the Public Registry, emails to the distribution list and updates on social media.</li> <li>• Emails to the distribution list informing participants of key steps in the process and posting of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Impact Statement Phase is a maximum of three years, unless IAAC grants an extension.</li> <li>• This Phase commences upon posting of the Notice of Commencement of the impact assessment and related documents.</li> <li>• Comment period of at least 60 days on the Impact Statement.</li> <li>• This Phase is completed when IAAC is satisfied</li> </ul>

Objectives of the Phase	Expected Activities	Public Participation Tools	Timelines
<p>information and studies, as outlined in the Tailored Impact Statement Guidelines.</p>	<p>The comments will assist in determining whether the Impact Statement contains all the information and studies requested in the Tailored Impact Statement Guidelines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IAAC will hold information sessions to explain the review panel process, and to provide an opportunity to comment on the Impact Statement.</li> </ul>	<p>documents relevant to the impact assessment and comments received on the Public Registry.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public comment period on the Proponent's Impact Statement.</li> <li>Virtual or in-person information sessions</li> </ul>	<p>that the proponent submitted all the information and studies required in the Tailored Impact Statement Guidelines.</p>
<p><b>Phase 3: Impact Assessment</b></p> <p><b>Part 1 – Immediately after IAAC issues the notice under s.19(4) of the Impact Assessment Act indicating that it is satisfied that the Proponent has submitted all necessary information and studies</b></p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase public awareness of the impact assessment process by a Review Panel, and promote participation in the process.</li> <li>Verify information in the Impact Statement and gather any additional information that the Review Panel needs to fulfill its Terms of Reference and write its report, including a summary of public comments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Review Panel may organize information sessions to explain activities and timelines related to the panel process.</li> <li>The Review Panel will be mandated to hold public hearings and to endeavour to hold the public hearing sessions in the communities most likely to be affected by the proposed Project.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In-person or virtual information sessions.</li> <li>Public hearing sessions to discuss the Project's potential effects, mitigation measures and follow-up program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The time limit for the Impact Assessment Phase is up to 600 days, unless IAAC determines additional time is required to cooperate with the AER.</li> <li>IAAC will establish the time limits for this phase, including the time limit for the submission of the</li> </ul>

Objectives of the Phase	Expected Activities	Public Participation Tools	Timelines
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Review Panel may hold additional public hearing sessions or provide additional participation opportunities, as required, to fulfil its Terms of Reference.</li> <li>• Following the close of the panel record, the Review Panel will prepare its report. The Review Panel's report will contain its rationale, conclusions and recommendations.</li> <li>• IAAC will post a notice and email the distribution list to notify participants when the Review Panel's report has been submitted to the Minister and is posted on the Public Registry.</li> <li>• IAAC will continue to administer funding to support participation in the impact assessment process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Virtual hearings will be considered should in-person events be prohibited. Remote participation in hearings will be made available in either case.</li> <li>• Written or oral submissions by participants during the public hearing</li> <li>• All documents posted on the Public Registry</li> <li>• Public notices of the participation opportunities, emails to the distribution list and updates on social media</li> <li>• IAAC-led invitations for applications for funding</li> </ul>	<p>Review Panel Report and for the posting of IAAC's recommendations on potential conditions on the Registry.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation timelines, dates, locations and duration for the public hearing will be determined by the Review Panel and will be announced in a Notice of Public Hearing.</li> <li>• Once the Panel record is closed, IAAC will continue to receive and post comments on the Registry but these comments will not be considered by the Panel and will not be part of the Panel record.</li> </ul>

**Part 2 – Following the submission of the Review Panel's impact assessment report**

Objectives of the Phase	Expected Activities	Public Participation Tools	Timelines
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Obtain comments from participants on the recommendations from IAAC regarding potential conditions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following the submission of the Review Panel report, IAAC will engage with the public on potential conditions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IAAC-led comment period on the draft potential conditions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The duration of the public comment period will be determined by IAAC and will be announced during the Impact Assessment phase.</li> </ul>
<b>Phase 4: Decision Making</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inform the proponent and the public about the Decision Statement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Posting of the Decision Statement, including any conditions associated with the Project and the rationale for the decision.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Posting on the Public Registry of the Decision Statement</li> <li>Public notices, email sent to the distribution list and updates on social media.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Decision-Making Phase is a maximum of 90 days, which starts following the posting of IAAC's recommendations on potential conditions.</li> </ul>
<b>Phase 5 – Post Decision</b> <i>If the Project is approved</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inform the public of follow-up and monitoring activities and results from follow-up program.</li> <li>Inform participants of potential amendments to the Decision Statement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IAAC posts follow-up and monitoring documents to the Public Registry.</li> <li>The proponent would need to obtain all other applicable regulatory approvals, including</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public notices, email sent to the distribution list and updates on social media.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Decision Statement will expire if the proponent does not substantially begin to carry out the project within a certain period. This period must be</li> </ul>

Objectives of the Phase	Expected Activities	Public Participation Tools	Timelines
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants may take part in follow-up and monitoring activities, and inform IAAC of potential non-compliance.</li> </ul>	<p>public participation opportunities led by other jurisdictions and federal authorities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IAAC posts a notice inviting public comment on draft amendments to the Decision Statement. The decision included in the statement cannot be changed. The comments would inform whether the Decision Statement is amended.</li> <li>The amended Decision Statement and reasons for amending would be posted on the Public Registry.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comment period on potential amendments to the Decision Statement.</li> </ul>	<p>established by the Minister considering views provided by the proponent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow-up documents are posted according to the schedule identified in the Decision Statement.</li> <li>The duration of the public comment period on potential amendments to the Decision Statement will be determined by IAAC and will be announced during the post-decision phase, on an as-needed basis.</li> </ul>



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## 7. Participant funding

Funding to support public participation is available. For information about the activities that are eligible for funding or to apply for funding please see the National Program Guidelines and application forms on the following page <https://www.canada.ca/en/impact-assessment-agency/services/public-participation/participant-funding-application-environmental-assessment.html>.

Please note that funding opportunities for subsequent phases will be advertised as they become available.

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## 8. Contact information

Until the Review Panel closes the record for the impact assessment, comments may be submitted at any time during the process by using the “Submit a comment” feature on the Project’s page on the Public Registry (reference number 80521, at <https://iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/proj/80521?culture=en-CA>). Attachments can be uploaded using this feature.

If you have any difficulties with the submission process, please contact IAAC or the Review Panel's secretariat (following the establishment of the Review Panel), using the contact information below. Comments may also be submitted by email to [basemine-minebase@iaac-aeic.gc.ca](mailto:basemine-minebase@iaac-aeic.gc.ca) or by regular mail.

Comments and other documents received by IAAC or Review Panel will form part of the Project record and will be posted on the Canadian Impact Assessment Registry website. The [IAAC's Submission Policy](#) determines what information can be shared publicly and what information should remain private. For more information on how we protect your privacy, please refer to the [IAAC's Privacy Notice](#). If you do not want your comment to be posted on the Public Registry, please contact IAAC before submitting your comment.

If you have questions or need information, please contact:

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