



COMPENDIUM OF CANADA'S ENGAGEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS AND INSTRUMENTS

UNECE Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention)

SUBJECT CATEGORY:

Environmental Cooperation

TYPE OF AGREEMENT / INSTRUMENT:

Multilateral

FORM:

Legally-binding treaty

STATUS:

- Signed by Canada: February 26, 1991
- Ratified by Canada: May 13, 1998
- In force in Canada: August 11, 1998
- In force internationally: September 10, 1997
- First and Second Amendments ratified by Canada April 26, 2018.
- The commitments related to this agreement are ongoing.

LEAD & PARTNER DEPARTMENTS:

Lead: Impact Assessment Agency of Canada

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:**Web Links:**

- [Espoo Convention](#) home page
- [Text of Espoo Convention](#)
- [Text of First Amendment to the Espoo Convention](#)
- [Text of the Second Amendment to the Espoo Convention](#)

Contacts:

[IAAC Inquiry Centre](#)

COMPENDIUM EDITION:

January 2020

PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY

The Espoo Convention sets out the obligations of the Parties to assess the potential environmental effects of certain projects and to notify and consult with other States before decisions are made.

The Convention was an innovative international instrument that was developed at a time when the concept of environmental impact assessment was relatively new. Its elements remain sound today. The Convention has influenced the development of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) processes in many countries as well as other international agreements related to environmental protection and public participation.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of the Espoo Convention is to extend assessments across borders between Parties of the Convention when a planned activity may cause significant adverse transboundary impacts.

KEY ELEMENTS

The Espoo Convention requires that Parties assess the environmental impacts of certain activities at an early stage of planning; provide to the government and public of an affected country an opportunity to participate in the assessment; and ensure that the results of the assessment are taken into account in the final decision about the project.

EXPECTED RESULTS

This agreement is expected to:

- minimize significant adverse transboundary environmental impacts of certain projects; and
- enhance international cooperation in assessing environmental impacts in a transboundary context.

CANADA'S INVOLVEMENT

Canada played a key role during the development of the Espoo Convention and continues to be an advocate for strengthening international transboundary notification and environmental impact assessment processes.

Canada would use its existing federal impact assessment processes to implement the requirements of the Espoo Convention if a project had the potential for transboundary impacts for other Parties to the Convention.

RESULTS / PROGRESS

Activities

No projects subject to the Espoo Convention have been identified to date. The Convention currently has limited application in Canada since the only neighbouring countries that are Parties to the Convention are Denmark (Greenland) and France (St. Pierre and Miquelon).

Reports

The Impact Assessment Agency of Canada has provided tri-annual reports to the Secretary of the Espoo Convention. The tri-annual reports submitted by the Parties to the Espoo Convention are used as the basis to prepare the Review of Implementation report. The Canadian questionnaires and the Review of Implementation reports can be found at the following website:

http://www.unece.org/env/eia/implementation/review_implementation.html