

Bulletin#2: The Integrated Resource Management Context for the Cumulative Effects Framework

Bulletin Purpose: To convey critical linkages between the Cumulative Effects Framework (CEF) and government’s broader approach and toolkit for adaptive, integrated resource management that the CEF is intended to support.

The Cumulative Effects Framework (CEF) is part of British Columbia’s overall integrated approach to managing natural resources. At its highest level, resource management is directed by legislation, policy, plans and resource management objectives that drive management decisions and authorizations for land and resource use. The CEF does not supersede or direct this existing legislation and policy, rather it informs decisions through directing:

- 1) the development of strategic-level assessments on the conditions of values that British Columbians care about; and,
- 2) the cross-sector governance to coordinate management when needed.

In other words, the CEF was designed to complement and enhance existing resource stewardship with strategic-scale forward looking assessment information that is considered consistently across the natural resource sector.

Resource management in BC follows the basic adaptive management process, as depicted in the simplified graphic below (Figure 1). The information generated by CEF assessments may inform new objective setting processes, more detailed or targeted assessments or monitoring activities, as well as management decisions (statutory and non-statutory) within a cycle of continuous improvement. The CEF is or may be integrated within each of these activities:

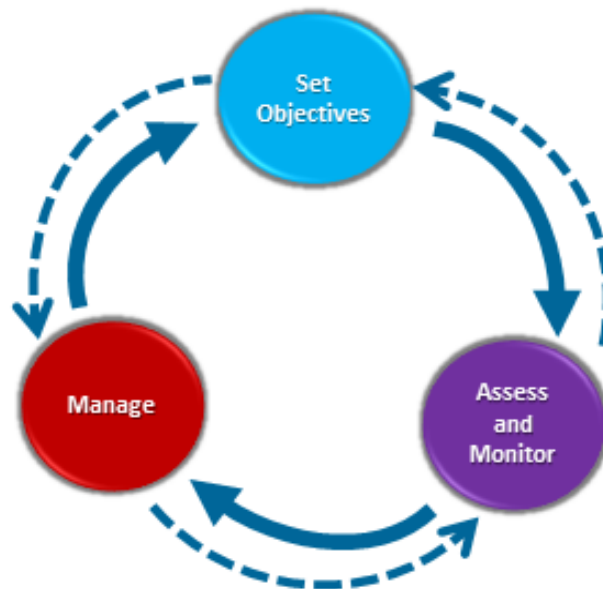


Figure 1: Core Elements of Adaptive Resource Management

1. Setting Objectives

Legal and policy objectives are a primary mechanism used to set direction and expectations for the outcomes of resource use in BC. Objectives are used to define a desired condition for resource values or resource uses for a specified area, and may be accompanied by specific strategies or measures to support their achievement. Establishing objectives, through policy or legislation, is governed by multiple statutes and government process. For example, the province has objectives established through various Acts, Regulations and orders, government to government agreements, and Cabinet direction.

The results of cumulative effects assessment will inform the evaluation of existing objectives; therefore, managers and policy makers will have a better understanding about the effectiveness of the existing management regime. Where gaps or concerns are identified the assessments can inform new objectives or amendments to existing objectives through the processes noted above.

2. Monitoring and Assessment

Monitoring and assessment are key activities that help answer the questions “what do we want” (inform objectives)”, “what should we do” (informs management) and “how are we doing” (links back from management). Monitoring results and the assessment of potential future conditions/impacts and risks may be undertaken at multiple scales.

Government has established monitoring programs (e.g., Forest and Range Evaluation Program, Fish and Wildlife Monitoring and Inventory) and is expanding its monitoring framework, including the commitment to landscape-scale current condition assessments through the CEF. Collectively, interpretation of monitoring and assessment information helps resource managers, decision makers and resource professionals in assessing impacts, supporting decision-making, informing professional recommendations, and enhancing resource management.

3. Management

Management decisions in the Natural Resource Sector are both statutory and non-statutory (e.g., program investments). The flexibility and multi-scale nature of the CE assessments, will inform a multitude of these decision contexts. Further the CEF policy provides responsibilities across multiple levels of natural resource sector governance, from regional inter-agency management teams to the Natural Resource Board (Deputy Ministers’ Committee). This governance structure allows government to better align its policies and initiatives across the natural resource sector to address potential cumulative effects issues through consistent consideration of information and the coordination of management actions.

For More Information: please email cumulativeeffects@gov.bc.ca