



## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

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### *Introduction*

When exploring and developing the province's oil and gas resources, proponents must seek ways to minimize interference with other owners and users of the land. The underlying objective of public engagement is to **identify and share rights and responsibilities** and to build **respectful relationships** among the parties involved.

Proponents and applicants are expected to involve the affected public in oil and gas operational planning by developing and implementing a public engagement plan. Proponents are also encouraged to share information with a wide range of interested public and provide opportunities for input to help foster a climate of trust and open communication.

### *Public Engagement Planning*

The **public engagement plan** provides a framework for information sharing and relationship building and shows how the applicant will:

- Identify the affected public who are directly affected by the project
- Notify and inform the affected public by describing the project and the public engagement plan in plain language
- Listen and learn from each other about issues and concerns by designing and holding meetings and other activities to engage the affected public
- Solve problems by using early enhanced negotiations and early appropriate dispute resolution
- Demonstrate engagement efforts by tracking and preparing reports on actions taken throughout each phase.

### *Appropriate Dispute Resolution (ADR)*

Should a conflict arise during the public engagement process, the OGC has developed an Appropriate Dispute Resolution Process that can help the parties resolve the dispute. (See ADR Information Sheet 10.)

As an objective third party, the OGC seeks to strike a balance between meaningful public input and effective conflict management. This leads to enhanced relationships and co-operation. Early and effective public involvement reduces the need for ADR and improves the quality of the ADR should it be required.

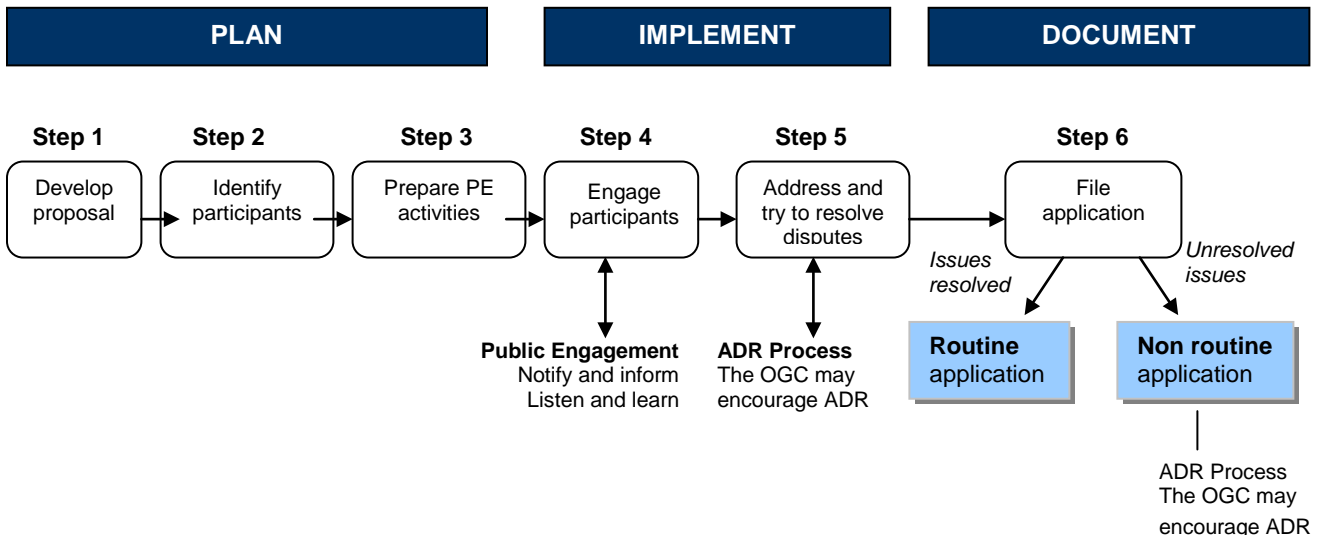
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### Public Engagement Steps

There are six steps in the pre-application public engagement process:

1. Develop the Proposal
2. Identify participants
3. Prepare Public Engagement Plan
4. Engage participants
5. Address and try to resolve Disputes (OGC may encourage ADR)
6. File application

Figure 1 Pre-Application Responsibilities in Public Engagement



### Planning, Implementing and Documenting Public Engagement

The OGC supports a three phased “best practices” approach to public engagement:

**Planning** Identification of whose rights are affected, development of open, two-way communication processes and how concerns are to be addressed and communicated.

**Implementation** Provision of clear, open accurate and timely information, focus on mutual understanding of issues and concerns, discussions with Groups and individuals as required, focus on interests and not positions, development of options and approaches for enhanced interest based negotiations and preliminary dispute resolution.

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**Documentation** Records who was notified/consulted, who is directly and adversely affected by the proposed project, which best practices tools were used, details of all issues and mitigative options proposed, a description of agreements addressing issues; and which concerns remain unresolved

In each phase, proponents must **Notify and Inform** participants, **Listen and Learn** from each other and **Problem Solve**.

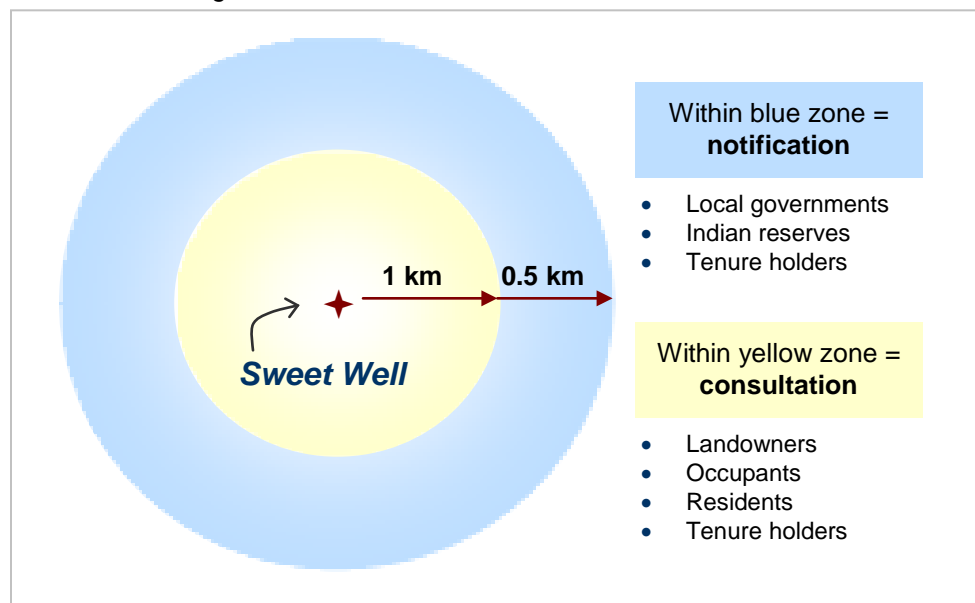
### *Who Could Potentially be Directly and Adversely Affected?*

Landowners	First Nations
Occupants	Industry other than the applicant
Nearby residents	Other tenure holders
Applicant/proponents	Local government authorities

### **Minimum Distance Information for Consultation and Notification**

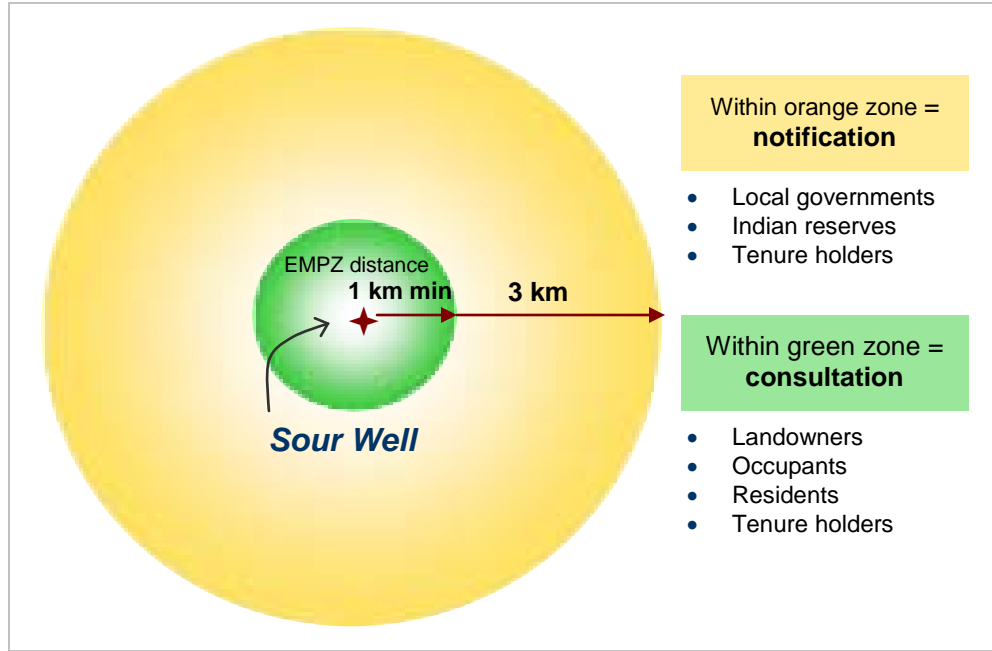
The OGC has set minimum distances for oil and gas companies to consult with or notify the affected public based on the proposed activities. These distances vary according to each activity and local circumstances may suggest that a greater distance is warranted. (See OGC's *A Guide to Public Engagement and Appropriate Dispute Resolution* p.10.)

Figure 2 Consultation Zones for Sweet Wells



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Figure 3 Consultation Zones for Sour Wells



### ***Emergency Response Planning***

Public Engagement and Emergency Response Planning are designed and implemented under different requirements. For more information regarding emergency planning please see Emergency Response Plans fact sheet #12.

### ***Tenure Conflicts***

The OGC works with affected parties to define a framework of best practices and procedures for consultation and conflict resolution for tenure holders. Tenure holders are either consulted or notified based on their granted tenure and specified rights.

### ***Addressing Issues***

Public input is important to OGC decisions on oil and gas applications. It is factored into practical recommendations for each project. Applications are often revised and approvals often contain conditions to address issues identified during the public engagement and application review process. If there are unresolved concerns, the OGC may encourage Appropriate Dispute Resolution (See ADR fact sheet)

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### *Mitigative Measures*

The OGC often applies conditions on the applicant to mitigate concerns of the affected public. Examples of public concerns that could result in mitigative measures are:

- Noise of oil and gas machinery
- Air pollution
- Concern for health and safety
- Water quality
- Visual quality

### *Implementation of Agreements*

Proponents are encouraged to communicate with affected public on how they will implement the commitments and agreements arising from public consultation

### *Definitions*

**Affected Public** Any stakeholders (landowners, residents and tenure holders) whose rights are directly and adversely affected by oil and gas operations.

**Best Practices in Public Engagement** Guidelines, principles and behaviors that lead to effective engagement.

**Consultation** The two-way exchange of information between companies and the parties impacted by the oil and gas project i.e. making a personal home visit and following up by telephone.

**Directly and Adversely Affected** A person's rights if they are affected in a different way, or to a greater degree than other members of the public, or if the person can show a connection between the proposed oil and gas activity and the rights and interest that may be affected, or their complaint relates to a property right or other economic interest.

**Notification** the supply of appropriate written information to the public about a proposed activity, e.g. conducting open houses, placing ads in local newspapers or sending an information letter in the mail to the affected person. Notification may lead to consultation if a member of the public identifies an interest that might be affected by the activity.

### *Information*

**OGC Guide to Public Engagement and Appropriate Dispute Resolution:**  
[https://www.ogc.gov.bc.ca/documents/guidelines/ADR\\_Guide.pdf](https://www.ogc.gov.bc.ca/documents/guidelines/ADR_Guide.pdf)