



Rethinking Impact Studies for Greater Effectiveness

*34th Annual Conference of the International
Association for Impact Assessment*

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Louise Fecteau, ASC, M.Sc.
Chairman of the Board

With the collaboration of
Myriam Vallière et Jean-Yves Lalande



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Source : Hydro-Québec

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Questions while planning the annual conference

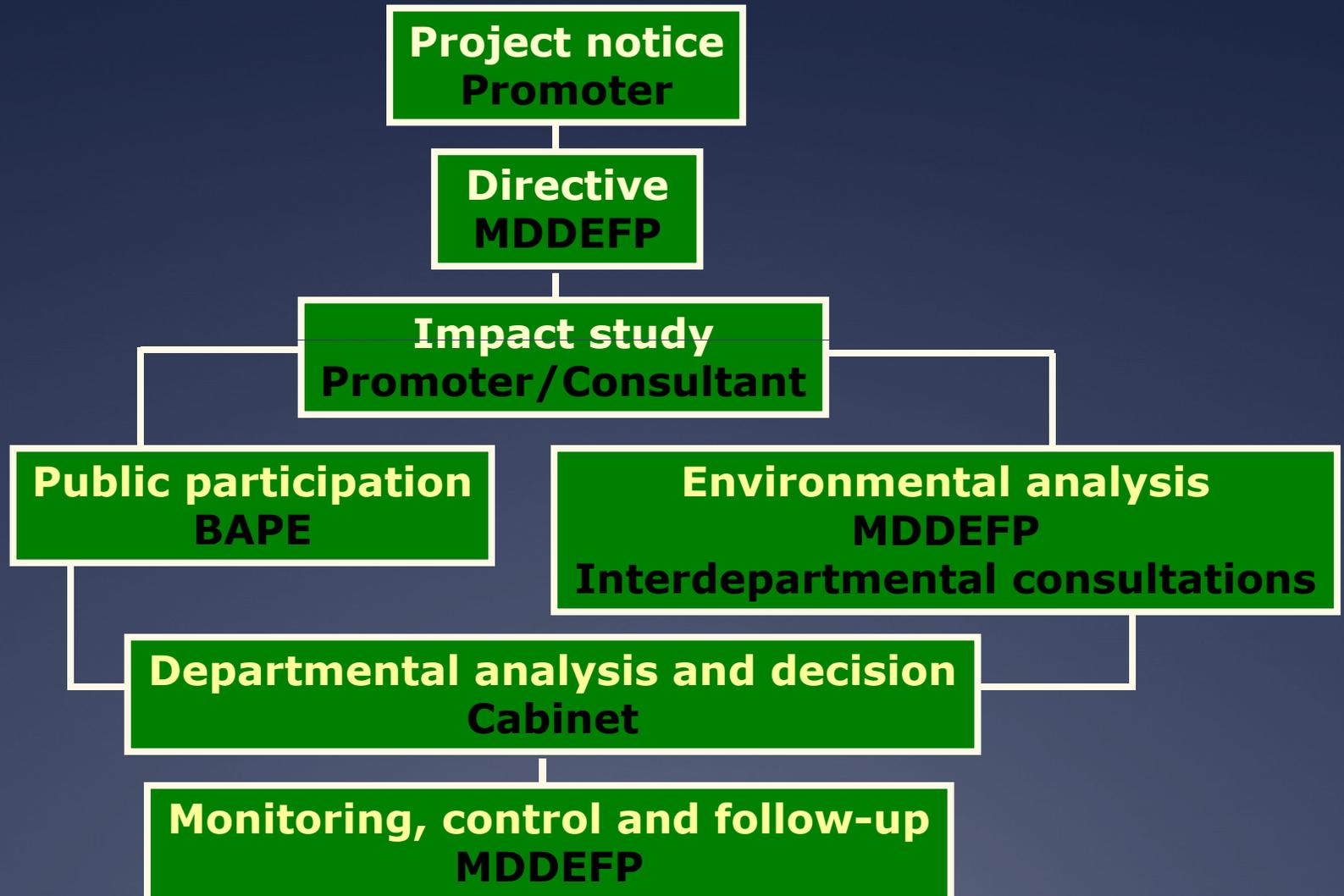
How could impact studies:

- be made more relevant and credible, both scientifically and socially?
- be slimmed down without sacrificing quality of analysis?

22^e AQÉI conference

- February 2014
- Theme : Rethinking EIS for better effectiveness and credibility
- Approach
 - ❖ Preparatory poll (93 respondents)
 - ❖ Plenary on limitations and issues
 - ❖ Government presentations
 - ❖ Success stories
 - ✓ Innovation and rationalization in EIS
 - ✓ Credibility and citizen participation
 - ❖ Workshops
- Record attendance with 220 participants

EIA Procedure in Québec



Pre-conference poll

**To improve the credibility and/or scientific rigor of EIS,
the following measures would be...**

| Measure | Useful/ Very useful | Useless/ Somewhat useful | Don't know |
|--|---------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------|
| More SEAs | 88 | 11 | 1 |
| Focus more on valued components of the environment | 84 | 12 | 4 |
| Enhance skills | 81 | 18 | 1 |
| Integrate social and environmental mangement plans into EIS | 81 | 10 | 9 |
| More public participation in studies | 80 | 18 | 2 |
| Develop standardized mitigation measures | 66 | 31 | 3 |
| Reduce governmental delays | 59 | 38 | 3 |

Pre-conference poll

Do you agree with the following statements?

| | Yes | No | Don't know |
|--|-----|----|------------|
| Public well-informed about EIS | 18 | 82 | 0 |
| Form and content of EIS facilitate appropriation by the public | 14 | 85 | 1 |
| Treatment of issues too complex | 48 | 50 | 2 |
| EIS have become too voluminous | 75 | 25 | 0 |
| Could be shortened without affecting quality or credibility | 72 | 27 | 1 |

Opening Plenary - Issues

EIS... For whom?

- Regulators : more and more questions, topics to cover
- Citizens : more and more concerns to document

Expectations : always higher, often contradictory

Opening Plenary - Issues

- EIS reports more and more voluminous
- Increase of EIS processes duration
- Loss of credibility of consultants and EIS processes

At the end, EIS is for better decision-making

Must be well understood by politicians

Workshops and Closing Plenary Solutions to be Implemented at the start of the EIA Process

Transparency, openness and participation

- Publication of a project notice
 - ✓ The public is informed
- Study implementation plan and information processing based on issues instead of a list of components treated in linear way
 - ✓ Validation by consultation

Workshops and Closing Plenary Solutions During the EIA Process

- Close cooperation between department and promoter
- Computer tools (GIS, databases) that can be queried at will
- Refer to good practices guides instead of describing every measure
- Environment description : Use what has been done already, if known to be valid (reuse of monitoring data, which should be published)

Workshops and Closing Plenary

Challenges to be Addressed when Tabling the EIA Reports

- More readable texts (revised by a science communicator)
- More analysis, integration of information
- Open doors
- Better use of the Net : report made available in sections, interactive elements



**Then... at the
end of the
project I can,
or not,
continue to go
fishing in my
lake ?**



Merci!

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The AQÉI: 260 decision makers, promoters, managers, consultants, practitioners, departments of government, researchers and students, etc.

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