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## Baseline Assessment

An environmental baseline assessment documents the pre-project environmental conditions and is a key component in the [environmental impact assessment](#). In the case of oil sands developments, it is a record of environmental conditions such as water quality and fish species diversity *before* any project activities have taken place on the site (CEAA 2007a).

It is important to properly assess the baseline condition before the project takes place, so as to understand which phenomena existed before project implementation and which could be impacts from project activities. The baseline assessment can also be used to reassure the public and decision makers that key environmental issues have been identified and will be monitored during project implementation.

In the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act, section 49: Contents of environmental impact assessment report, stipulates that *(c) an identification of existing baseline environmental conditions and areas of major concern that should be considered must be included* (Queen's Printer 2007a).



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