Alberta Energy Regulator

Frequently Asked Questions
Integrated Decision Approach – Industry Information Sessions

March 7, 2017

Background

Between February 14 and March 7, 2017, the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) hosted information sessions on the Integrated Decision Approach. At these sessions the AER committed to posting the questions and answers that were raised during the sessions. The answers below reflect the AER's knowledge at the time of the sessions. Details are subject to change.

General

Q1. **I have an issue with a current requirement (in a directive or one of the acts). Will this new process address that?**

A1. The Integrated Decision Approach is being implemented by enhancing existing process, not by changing requirements. Any changes to existing rules, requirements, directives, or legislation will be minimal.

Q2. **Will OneStop improve current application turnaround times?**

A2. The intent is that average turnaround times will be improved. The AER will not be creating new baseline turnaround times until we understand how applicants are using the system, including how integration is being used. Once we have some baseline information we will look at setting new standards

Integration

Q3. **Will companies be required to integrate their applications?**

A3. Integration will not be mandatory at this time. We recognize that there are many factors feeding in to each application, and industry must be given the choice to integrate or not, given the specifics of their project. We hope that industry sees the benefit of an integrated application and starts to apply that way. We will work with industry to learn how the system is used before making any decisions on minimum integration.

Q4.   What does the AER mean by minimum integration? When will this happen?

A4.   At some point the AER may decide that all applications must meet a minimum standard of integration. This could be as simple as ensuring that the application contains requests for both the land and licence (e.g., a single pipeline and its associated land), or it may be more complex, asking for associated assets (e.g., a well application could also require the pipeline, access road, and water permits).

We have not yet made a decision on this. We will be working with industry to learn how they use the system and to determine what makes the most sense for everyone.

Q5.   You mentioned that companies can apply as a project. What does this mean?

A5.   The system will allow you to assign a project name to your development. You will be able to link applications and existing approvals to this project name as you see fit, and you can later search using that project name.

As we implement the Integrated Decision Approach further, things like well, pipeline and facility approvals, notifications, and reclamation certificates can all be linked to a project name. The project name allows you to tie things together as you choose; the project name and how you link your development is totally up to you.

At this time, we do not anticipate there will be any project-associated mandatory requirements.

Q6.   What will a single approval look like?

A6.   It will include all of the terms and conditions for your public land disposition and your energy licence in a single document.

Q7.   Will the OneStop system include any of the following?

- *Water Act* **applications and temporary diversion licences**
- **Applications requiring an** *EPEA* **approval**
- **Wells**
- **Facilities**
- **Notifications and reporting**
- **Temporary field authorizations**
- *D013* **variances**

A7.   The intent is that OneStop will eventually incorporate all of the business the AER does. Full implementation may take years.

Q8. **Will I be able to apply for a well and a pipeline at the same time?**

A8. Upon the completion of the Integrated Pipeline Application Project you will be able to apply for pipeline licences and all land dispositions within the AER's jurisdiction.

Future projects will incorporate well and facility licensing; at that time you will have the ability to apply for an integrated application that includes both wells and pipelines.

Technology

Q9. **Is the intent that OneStop will replace DDS?**

A9. Yes, but full implementation will take years.

Q10. **I currently have staff in different areas working on different applications. Are they all required to work on the same application now? How do land brokers or consultants use the system?**

A10. OneStop is built so different people can work on the same application at the same time; employees and consultants can work collaboratively. Companies will have to determine who has access to do what tasks and will have to set up security permissions for OneStop users.

Q11. **Can I amend old licences or dispositions, or is this process for new pipeline activity only?**

A11. We are working to ensure that all existing data will be brought into OneStop. You will be able to access and amend all of your existing pipelines.

You will use OneStop to submit all of your applications – new and amendments.

Q12. **Historically the AER has closed many applications due to data entry errors or inconsistencies on the survey plan. How are you planning on making that better?**

A12. The new system allows you to withdraw your application to your draft workspace and make changes without it being closed.

We are working on rules around this. Things to consider would be how to withdraw the application when it is already under review and whether your application would maintain its place in line if it were withdrawn and resubmitted.

Q13. **Will the system validate applications, letting the applicant know about any deficiencies prior to submission?**

A13. Yes, the system will validate all applications; submission will not be allowed until the application is complete. You will continue to follow all existing rules and requirements.

Q14.   **How long will drafts remain in my workspace?**

A14.   Drafts will remain in the workspace for as long as you need; they no longer expire.

Q15.   **I understand that OneStop is GIS based and will incorporate much more spatial information than before. Does this mean we will be submitting our pipeline information spatially and will no longer need to use base plan maps?**

A15.   Yes. This system will no longer require the use of base plan maps.

Q16.   **How much spatial data is in the system? Will you have all of the same information AEP has?**

A16.   We will have all of the same spatial information that AEP currently uses.

Q17.   **Will we be able to download all of your spatial layers?**

A17.   You will be able to download some of our spatial layers, but not all. Some layers are not owned by the AER and have restrictions on downloading.

Q18.   **Will there be user guides, training, and support for OneStop?**

A18.   Yes, we will provide training and support.

Q19.   **Do approvals disappear after 30 days?**

A19.   No, they will remain publicly available in the system.

Q20.   **Will original application files be available when a licence or disposition is transferred?**

A20.   Yes, everything associated with the asset will be linked and available for the duration of its life.

Other Government Agencies

Q21.   **With the release of OneStop, will the AER be linking more closely with other government agencies?**

A21.   No, the scope of this project is for AER processes only.

Q22.   **Has the AER been working with AEP on the Integrated Decision Approach?**

A22.   Yes, the AER has been working to keep AEP informed on the progress of the Integrated Decision Approach. We are also working closely with AEP on the Integrated Pipeline Application Project and will continue to work with them on future implementation projects.

Q23. **Will there be a change to Aboriginal Consultation Office (ACO) processes as a result of the Integrated Decision Approach?**

A23. No, there will be no change to ACO processes at this time. We are working closely to improve information sharing between the two agencies.

Q24. **Is there a plan to incorporate non-energy-related AEP applications (like power lines and gravel pits) into the same system?**

A24. At this time, industry must continue to use EDS to apply for non-energy related land dispositions. While we recognize the need for further collaboration with AEP, and we will continue to work closely with them, this is out of scope for this project.

Risk

Q25. **What criteria is the AER using for risk-informed decision making?**

A25. We are following the ISO 31000 standard, along with the AER common risk framework. We are assessing the controls that are in place and seeing if those controls are sufficient or if we require more oversight.

Q26. **Is a company's enforcement history part of risk-informed decision making in the Integrated Decision Approach?**

A26. We will eventually be including operator performance as part of the risk-informed decision approach. A process for incorporating operator performance has not yet been determined.

Switchover Plan

Q27. **What assurances can the AER make that there will be minimal disruption to industry as this new process and system is rolled out?**

A27. We are working closely with industry focus groups to ensure that industry impacts are minimal. We do not want to impact business or create additional application backlogs.

Q28. **Is the AER open to maintaining both systems while it switches to OneStop?**

A28. We are working closely with our industry focus group on a robust plan that minimizes impacts. We would prefer not to run two systems if at all possible.

Q29. **How will the AER deal with applications that are already submitted, but not yet approved?**

A29.   We are working closely with our industry focus group on a robust plan that minimizes impacts. A process for managing previously submitted applications has not yet been determined.