

Regional Assessment Goals, Outcomes, Uses: IA Participants' Perspectives



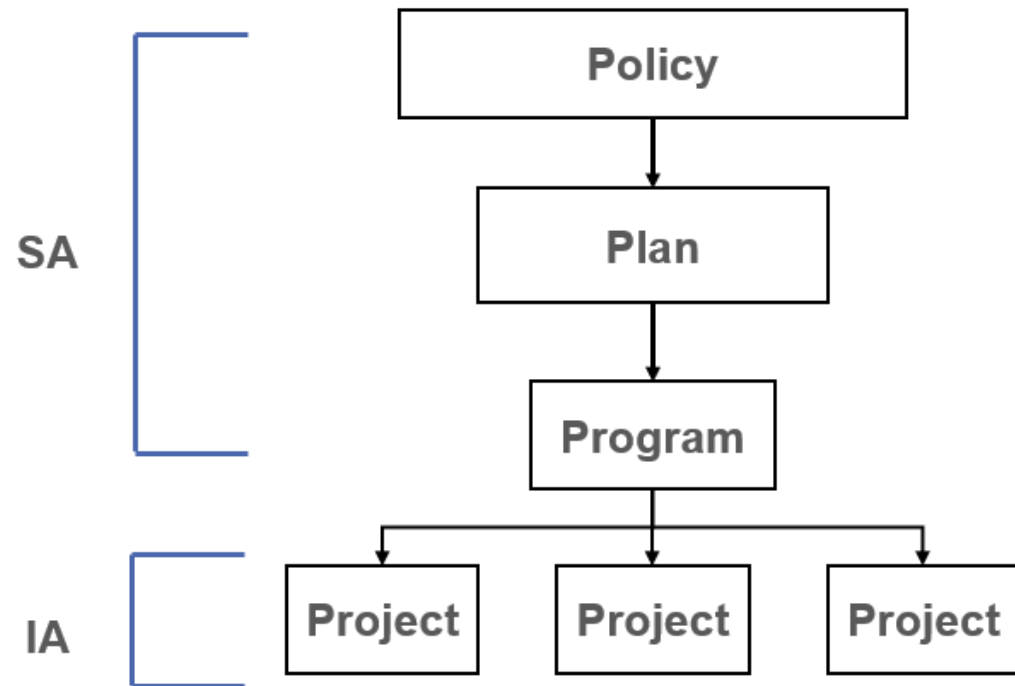
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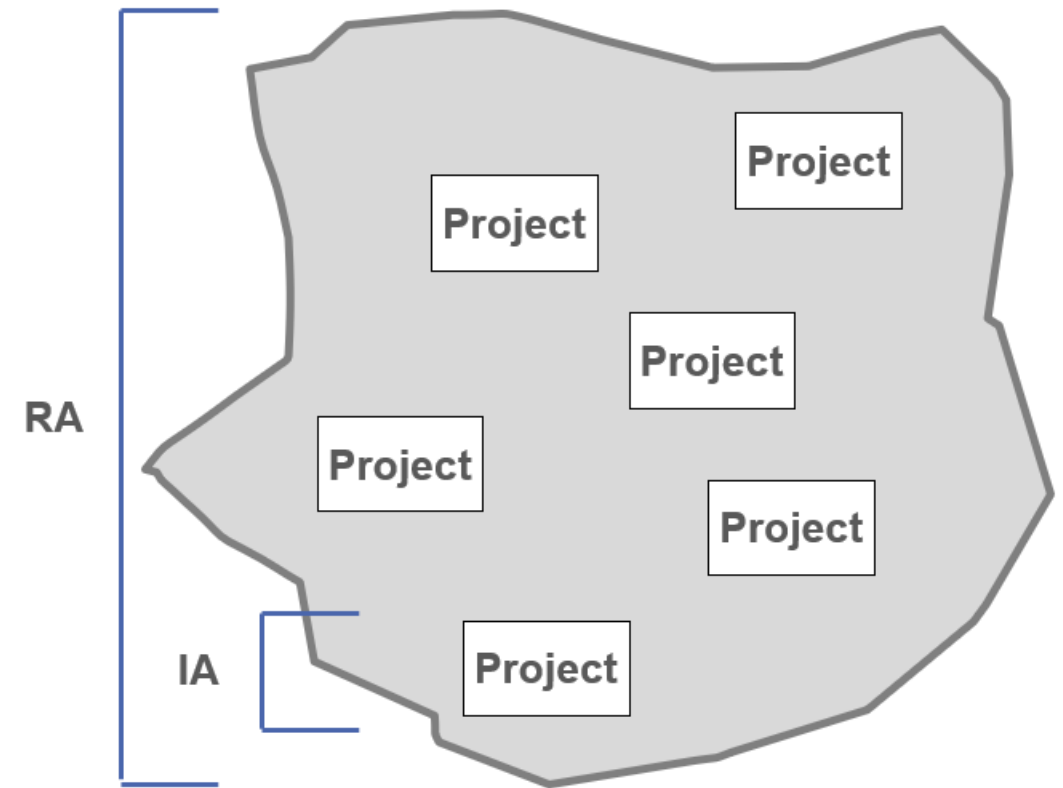


Strategic and Regional Assessments

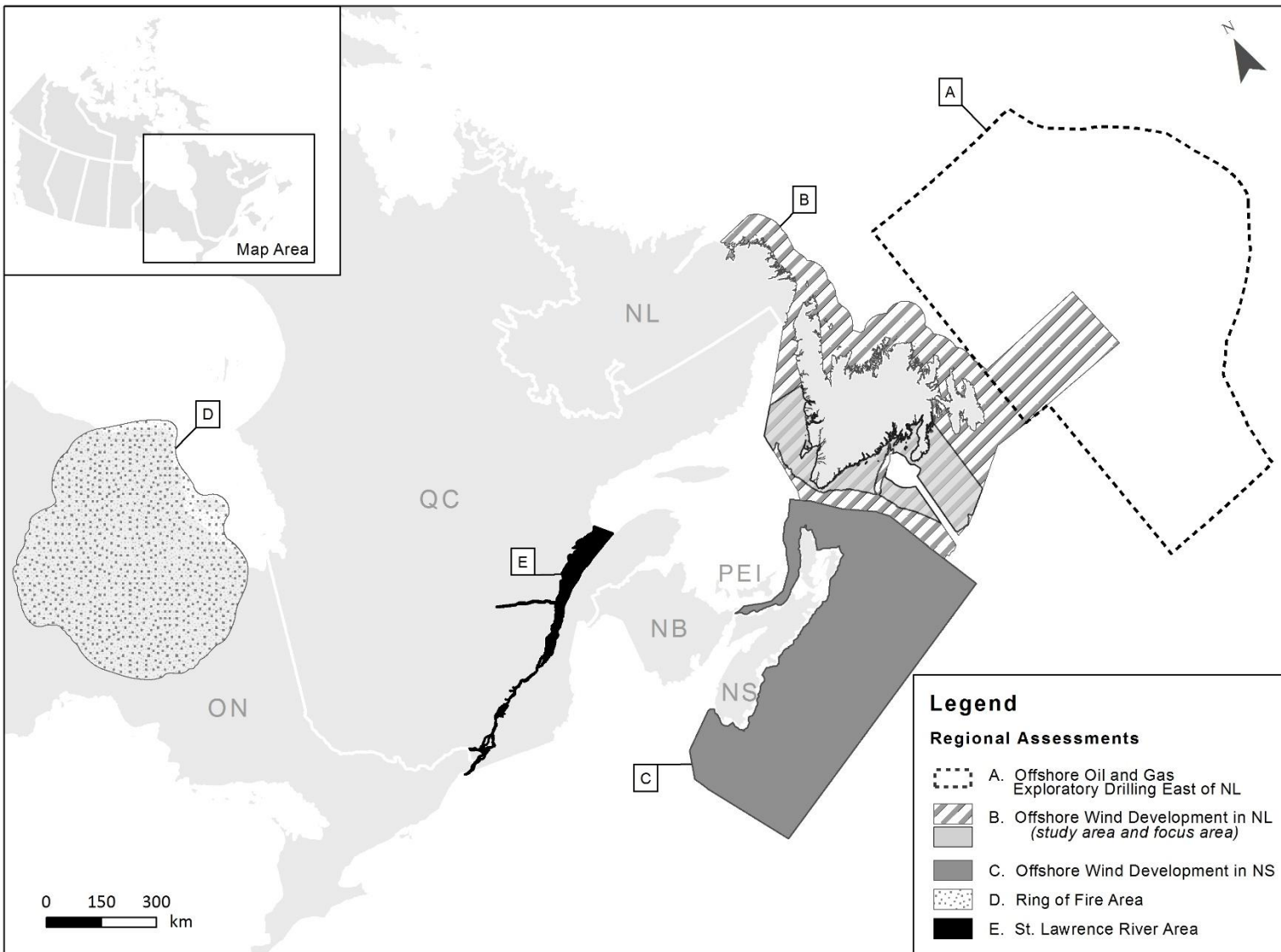
Strategic Assessment



Regional Assessment



Regional Assessments under the IAA



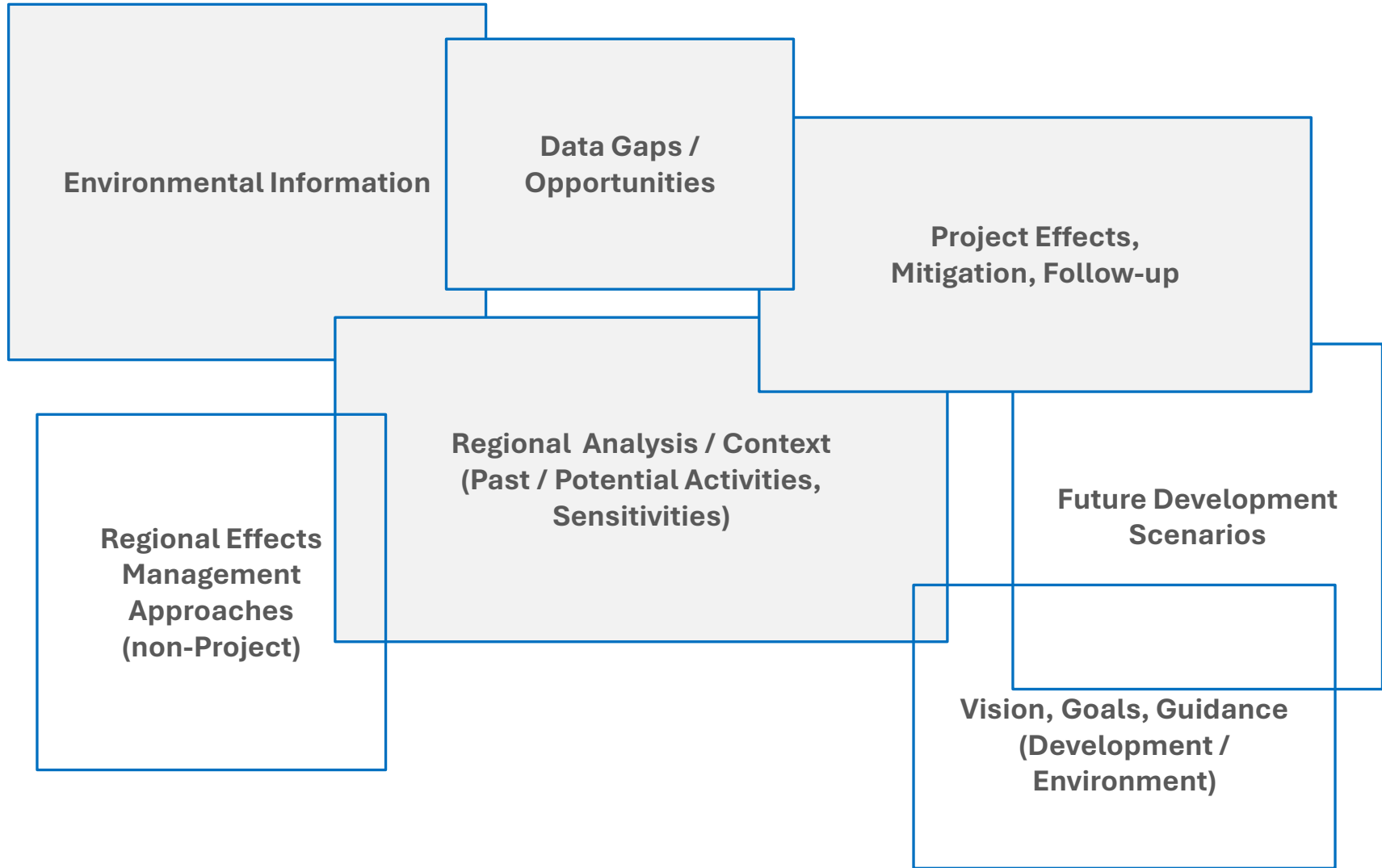
“...the central objective of regional assessments under the IAA is to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of future federal impact assessment processes and decisions”

Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (2025). Policy Framework for Regional Assessment under the *Impact Assessment Act*

Regional Assessments

Key Objectives and Outputs (Informing Project IAs)

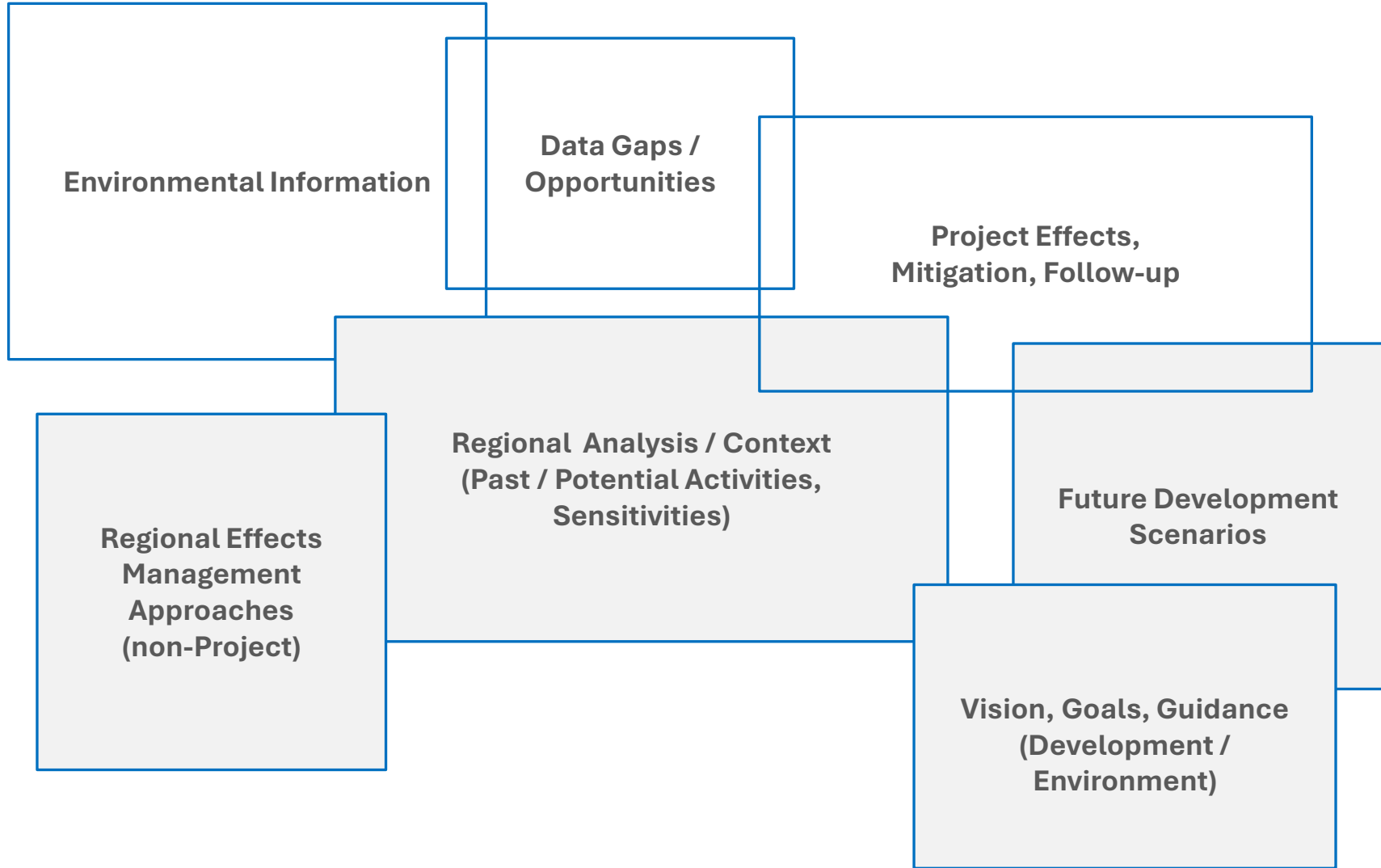
“Direct” Transfers



Regional Assessments

Key Objectives and Outputs (Informing Project IAs)

“Indirect” Influences



Regional Assessments → Project IAs

- These RA outcomes / influences are largely untested in practice
- No specific / prescriptive requirements on how RA outputs are to be used at project level
- Attitudes and behaviors of IA participants therefore likely to be a key determinant

1) Regulators: IA Scoping

- On-line survey of Canadian IA regulators
 - April – August 2025
 - 460 invitees (f-t-p)
 - 64 responses
- Workshops with Atlantic Canada IA regulators and FAs
 - Oct / Nov 2025
 - 78 participants

2) Practitioners: IA Conduct

- On-line survey of Canadian IA consultants
 - June – September 2025
 - Direct email invitations
 - Other distribution (IAIA affiliates, CIAPN)
 - 500 invites / 5 largest env consultancies
 - 113 responses

3) Public: RA Goals / Design

- Review of all (> 700) public comments submitted as part of RAs initiated or requested under the IAA to date (IAAC Registry)
- Highlight areas of general alignment and matters of debate regarding RA definition and design

Views on RA / SA objectives re project IAs
Rate utility of 11 RA / SA outputs for project IAs

Regional Assessments → Project IAs

Recurring views that:

- RA information can be useful as a starting point and for context, but not likely to address / streamline project IA requirements due to “issues of scale / resolution”
- Any influence on project IA effectiveness / efficiency likely to be more “indirect and nuanced” than direct transfer of information / analysis / mitigation to future projects:
 - RAs should focus more on dealing with larger / complex issues that project IAs cannot meaningfully address
 - Public information / education in new and emerging sectors - prior to project IAs - is key
 - RA outputs and recommendations need to be specific, and clearly responded to / actioned by the appropriate responsible authorities



- 1) **Bonnell S. 2025. Regional assessments under the Canadian *Impact Assessment Act*: Objectives, outcomes and lessons so far. *Environmental Management*. 75(11), 2994-3009.**
 - 2) **Bonnell S. 2026. Strategic and regional assessments: Their potential influence on the scope and conduct of subsequent project assessments. *Environmental Management*. 76(3): 86-95.**
 - 3) **Bonnell S. 2026. Project IA scoping following a regional or strategic assessment: Workshop perspectives from Canadian federal IA regulators and authorities. *Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal*. Published online: 05 May 2026**
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- 4) **Bonnell S, MacLaren M and H Longley. (*Under Review*). Defining and designing Regional Assessments under the Canadian *Impact Assessment Act*: An analysis of the public discourse.**
 - 5) **Bonnell S and M Chewinski. (*Under Review*). The role of experiential learning in shaping IA regulator and practitioner views about strategic and regional assessments and their utility in subsequent project IAs.**



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Let's continue the conversation!

Message me your questions or comments in the IAIA26 app.

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