

After the Assessment: Where's the Value and What Happened in the End?

From IA to Reality:

Surviving Implementation



Tara Oak

*Senior Environmental Specialist / Stantec
Canada*

<https://www.stantec.com/en>



Cross-sector Perspective

Writing commitments that work '*for the assessment*' is not the hard part

On the ground? That's a different story.

- Consulting
- Government
- Industry
- Planning → Construction → Operations

Why This Matters

IA is often our finish line

Implementation is where commitments are tested.

Literally Different Language!

HAZOP

PEA

PFS

FS

HAZID

Economic Viability

Contractor Management

- We spend years producing assessments
- Then hand them off to a completely different world
- Construction & operations have different pressures, priorities, languages
- Without active translation, the gap grows over time

The Pattern – The Gap

Commitments exist

But they may not be usable, owned, or embedded

- Project descriptions
- Assessment and mitigation development
- EMPs, procedures, contract clauses
- Construction, commissioning, operation

Writing for a World We May Not Understand

- High level project descriptions
- Fragmented discipline inputs
- Future activities we may never see
- Operational realities: fast, adaptive, imperfect

A Golden Opportunity

- Mitigations are typically reviewed (vetoed) for cost or feasibility
- Rarely 'dug into' for usability or operational clarity
- People implementing them are often absent from development
- Collaborative mitigation design?

Make Commitments Useable

- Specific yet flexible
- Clarify who acts, what happens, and when
- Build in verification and adaptability
- Operational clarity matters

Write for Extraction and Implementation

- Mitigations make their way into EMPs, EPPs, and contract clauses
- Language must survive handoffs
- Structure matters as much as wording
- Summaries, call-outs, implementation-focused formatting
- Remain involved as long as possible

The Real Shift

- Not just defensible commitments
- Commitments that survive pressure and handoffs
- Commitments that guide real decisions
- To make them useable, we first need to understand

IA Creates Value Over Time

- Not at approval
- But during implementation
- In moments of pressure
- When decisions matter most



Let's continue the conversation!

Message me your questions or comments in the IAIA26 app.

Tara Oak

*Senior Environmental Scientist / Stantec
Canada*

#iaia26

<https://www.stantec.com/en>