

# STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

MAY 2021



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# Stakeholder Engagement Framework Context

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To ensure a growing economy and improved quality of life for all Ontarians, the OEB must have the trust of the regulated community, the consumers it serves and the elected representatives to which it is accountable. In particular, sector stakeholders and intervenors make a significant contribution to the work of the OEB through ongoing adjudicative and policy consultation processes and established advisory committees.

This **Stakeholder Engagement Framework (SEF)** is a guide for the OEB's go-forward approach, and a response to recommendations from the 2018 OEB Modernization Review Panel Report, the 2020 Mandate Letters issued to the OEB by the Ministry of Energy, Northern Development and Mines, the OEB's 2020 Ipsos Stakeholder Survey and the OEB's 2021 Top Quartile Regulator Report. Each of these documents recommends the OEB develop its work through transparent and inclusive consultation processes.

The SEF is designed to align programs and activities with OEB priorities, promote transparency and accountability in policy making, consider and manage stakeholder fatigue and deliver value for money for the people of Ontario.

## OEB Stakeholder Engagement Commitment

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The OEB's stakeholder engagement framework will ensure accessible and fair participation that is transparent, well-planned and efficiently coordinated. The OEB will provide clear objectives, opportunities for meaningful input, and will listen, hear and incorporate feedback into its work. Furthermore, the OEB will seek feedback on its engagement approaches to refine and continuously improve.

## OEB Stakeholder Engagement Purpose

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The OEB engages with stakeholders to build mutually beneficial, enduring and trusted relationships with those affected by its work. Engagement is an integral part of the OEB's ability to execute its mandate, gain insights and deliver sound policy decisions that support sector sustainability and innovation, Ontario's economy and to protect consumers and provide public value.

The implementation of the SEF will bring good governance, better coordination, implementation of enhanced tools and improved coordination to the OEB's engagement approach.

Governance	Coordination	Tools	Communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide enterprise-wide governance on OEB's approach to stakeholder engagement</li> <li>• Evaluate practices for continual improvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better ensure coordination of efforts, reduce burden and find efficiencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement tools to determine which stakeholders need to be involved based on potential impacts to their priorities and values, ensure fairness and manage fatigue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve communication with stakeholders regarding status of processes that can be challenging due to lengthy and uncertain timelines</li> </ul>

## Who does the OEB engage with?

Engaging with stakeholders is an important part of what we do in performing our mandate. As depicted in the below, our stakeholder universe is broad as we engage with a wide variety of interests.

**Figure 1: Engagement Partners**

<b>Consumers</b>	As customers
<b>Governments</b>	Federal, Provincial, Municipal, Indigenous
<b>Intervenors/ Associations/ Interest Groups</b>	Energy/Special interests, Opinion Leaders & Academics Communities (Municipal; Provincial, Shareholders)
<b>Regulated Entities Partners</b>	Electricity and Gas Distributors, Generators, Transmitters, Electricity Storage, Retailers, Marketers, Unit Sub-Meter Providers, IESO

The OEB recognizes that not every stakeholder may want or will be able to input at each point but the OEB will make every effort to enable broad-based participation that is as diverse as Ontario and its energy sector.

## Key Points of Engagement

Stakeholder engagement provides a positive contribution at every stage of the OEB’s work, from strategic planning to supporting the individual consumer. While engagement will often be project-based, the OEB aims to have an ongoing dialogue with its stakeholders. Figure 2 illustrates that the scope of the SEF is broad and comprehensive. It will be applied to all of these areas.

**Figure 2: Key Points of OEB Engagement**



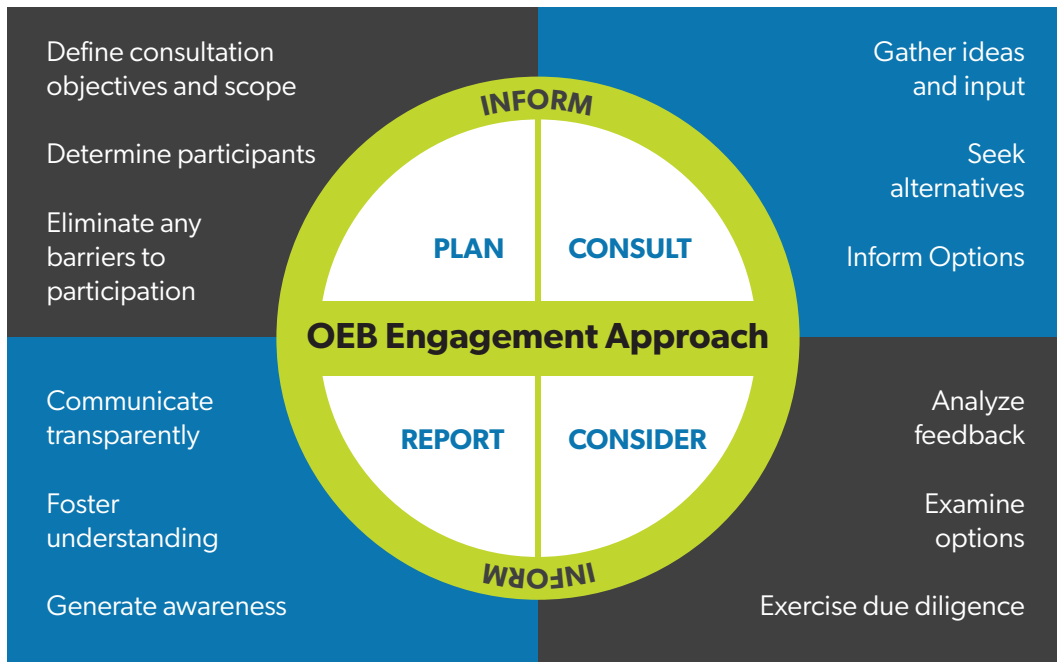
The SEF serves to consider stakeholder input consistently, transparently, and meaningfully across the OEB’s work.

## Engagement Approach

The OEB’s stakeholder engagement approach shows the different types of engagement that may be used depending on a particular project or decision, and the different methods that may accompany each approach. The engagement approach will be determined by what the OEB is trying to achieve.

Consistent engagement is essential, as the OEB aims to have an ongoing dialogue with its stakeholders. Figure 3 illustrates how each point of engagement reinforces a point of communication with stakeholders, from a purely informational perspective to a more in-depth consultation seeking deliberate input and recommendations to guide OEB decisions.

**Figure 3: OEB Engagement Approach**



**To communicate in a clear, accurate and timely way, the OEB will:**

- Use plain language to assist stakeholders to understand issues and make informed contributions.
- Have clear and realistic timeframes for input.
- Engage through the whole lifecycle, from planning to consultation through implementation and closure, seeking views as early as possible, ensuring clarity of the OEB’s expectations from those being engaged, as well as certainty on the work to take place and predictability as to the OEB’s actions.

**To be accessible, proactive, and inclusive, the OEB will:**

- Be flexible and tailor engagement and communication to meet different participant’s needs.
- Take steps where needed to build knowledge and capacity to help stakeholders to engage.
- Consider the time and resources needed by stakeholders to engage effectively.

**To be transparent and accountable, the OEB will:**

- Explain the purpose of engagement, the objectives, and how it aligns with OEB priority areas.
- Report on how input was considered and how it informed the OEB’s decision or process.
- Report on engagement activities and their effectiveness, at minimum, on the OEB website and in the annual report.

**To measure and evaluate the effectiveness of engagement to support a process of continuous improvement, the OEB will:**

- Seek feedback on its engagement activities using a range of methods, to evaluate effectiveness
- Monitor the OEB’s progress through an annual stakeholder survey.

# Outcomes and Evaluation

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The OEB is committed to improving the effectiveness and efficiency of its engagement with stakeholders over time and will monitor and measure its progress. The OEB will regularly review the SEF and will always welcome input from sector participants on improvement opportunities.

Formal opportunities to consider how this framework is operating in practice will be provided at the evaluation and review stage of each engagement. Broader OEB reporting and evaluation mechanisms will also be used, including:

- **Quarterly reports** — To be used to provide regular reporting to the OEB’s Board of Directors, Executive Leadership Team and Senior Management Team, reflecting the number of stakeholders engaged, number of consultations conducted, and qualitative feedback received from engaged groups.
- **Annual Review of Framework and Engagement Methods** — Opportunities to consider improvements and alternatives to methods used to date, as well as measure sector satisfaction through the annual Ipsos stakeholder survey.
- **Annual Reporting** — Use reports and annual review of framework to publish external communication on a dedicated OEB webpage.