

The background of the slide is a scenic landscape photograph. It features a dirt road that curves through a valley with autumn-colored vegetation. In the distance, there are rugged mountains, some with snow-capped peaks, under a blue sky with light clouds.

YESAB

Yukon Environmental and
Socio-economic Assessment Board

yesab.ca

Consideration of Wetlands in Assessments under YESAA

Wetlands Policy Roundtable
April 11, 2018

Basics

YESAA

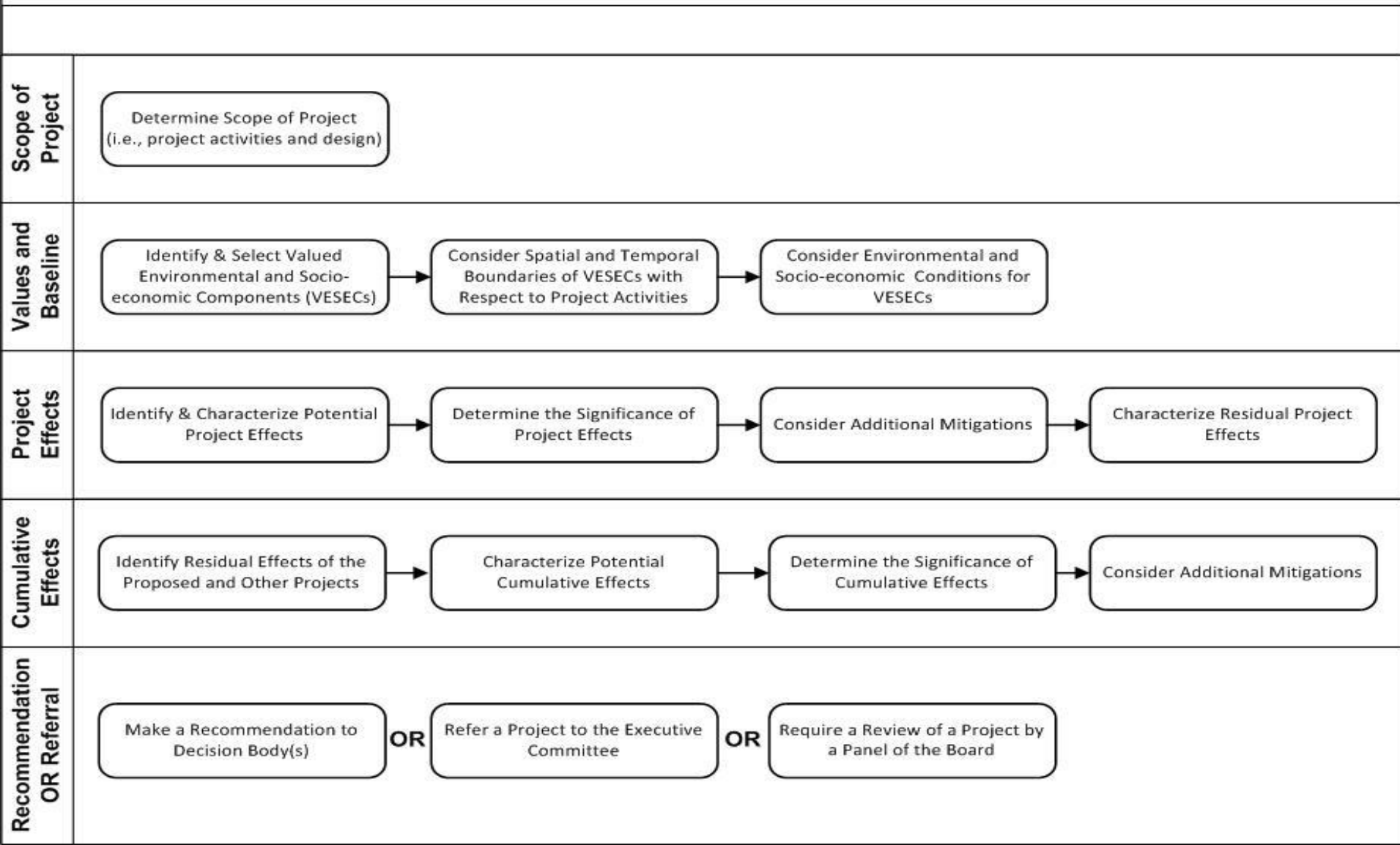
- Federal legislation established to implement the development assessment provisions of the UFA (Chapter 12)

YESAB

- Independent, arm's length body mandated to conduct assessments under YESAA
- Makes *recommendations* to government decision makers based on presence or absence of significant *adverse* project effects

Assessment Methodology

YESAB – Assessment Methodology



Identification of VESECs

- Informed by participants in the process and knowledge of the project locale
- Wetlands have typically been considered indirectly in assessments
 - Wildlife and wildlife habitat
 - Environmental quality
 - Traditional use / heritage values

Indian River System

- First time wetlands identified as a separate and distinct value
 - Important landscape feature and desirable element of natural diversity
 - Ecosystem services
 - Cultural significance
 - Wetland conservation generally regarded an important pursuit by most governments and resource managers

Characterizing Effects



Peatlands



Open-ponded systems



Effect? Significant and adverse?

Mitigating Effects to Wetlands

- Buffer zones for wetland areas where no disturbance should occur
- Planning prior to wetland disturbance
 - Progressive habitat restoration plans
 - Wetland protection and restoration plans
- No mining in undisturbed wetlands pending further information on ecological and socio-economic value/acceptable level of change

Cumulative Effects Studies

- At the request of a government, YESAB may undertake studies of effects that are cumulative geographically or over time (YESAA s. 112)
- Cumulative effects studies vs land-use planning vs resource management

Lessons from Indian River

- “It’s about doing it right” and understanding limits and tradeoffs
- Communication and collaboration are essential
- There are challenging conversations to be had and difficult decisions to make

Assessment Needs

- Clear understanding of values and interests
- Baseline information
- Benchmarks against which to judge the significance of effects