

Terms of Reference

Air Working Group (AWG)

Purpose:

To develop recommendations for regional air quality and air-related deposition management. The focus is on air quality and deposition issues related to emissions associated with industrial development that have the potential to significantly contribute to cumulative effects on air quality, human health, and/or regional ecosystems, including vegetation and wildlife.

Objectives:

- Review and track air quality related issues in the region to determine if industrial air emissions may be contributing to the cumulative effects on the environment and/or human health and if there is a role for the Group in addressing these issues.
- Identify emissions to the atmosphere that currently, or in the future based on emission predictions, may present unacceptable existing and/or future effects to human health and/or regional ecosystems, including health and productivity of vegetation and wildlife. The basis for identification of emissions and emission sources may include, but is not limited to, expert judgment of members, concerns expressed by regional stakeholders, future emission forecasts, atmospheric monitoring/modeling and studies conducted in the region, and observed regional effects potentially related to air emissions.
- Identify emissions to the atmosphere that may cause odors.
- Assess whether recommendations for changes to the management of control of emissions are required.
- Where it is determined that there is a need for recommendations on emissions management, assemble and develop knowledge of emissions and related adverse effects necessary for defining appropriate management criteria.
- Develop recommendations to the appropriate regulatory agencies for the management and control of air quality and/or emissions, monitoring of air quality and/or possible air quality effects, and also to support of regional planning initiatives, as required.
- Assist regulatory agencies, upon request and as appropriate, in the implementation and/or updating of existing regional management frameworks.

Context:

The Air Working Group (AWG) is established by CEMA to address management of cumulative effects of industrial development on the environment and/or human health in the RMWB. Prior to the formation of the AWG, air emissions management recommendations were developed by the NO_xSO₂ Management Working Group (NSMWG) and the Trace Metals and Air Contaminants Working Group (TMACWG). The AWG will adopt work in progress initiated by these earlier working groups and initiate new work as required.

The AWG will address air related issues and develop strategies or management plans as requested by the CEMA Board.

In conducting its work, the AWG will need to formally interface with other CEMA working groups, other regional multi-stakeholder organizations and regulators. These include but are not limited to: The Aboriginal Co-ordination Committee, The Sustainable Ecosystems Working Group, The Wood Buffalo Environmental Association (WBEA), The Regional Aquatics Monitoring Program (RAMP), and the federal and provincial health and environment departments.

Air quality and air-related deposition management recommendations of the AWG will be undertaken within the context of federal and provincial legislation, regulation, and policy although management recommendations may suggest or result in changes to legislation, regulation, or policy. In this regard, AWG will address those air quality and regional cumulative environmental and human health effects which, due to peculiarities of the regional environment or industrial development, are not adequately addressed by provincial or federal regulations or policy.

Operating Guidelines:

- Recommendations will be consistent with the best available science.
- The working group may commission scientific or other studies to get a better understanding of oil sand specific issues where this is required for the development of management recommendations.
- The views of all members will be heard and considered.
- The working group will strive to make consensus-based decisions on management recommendations.
- The working group will operate in a manner consistent with all CEMA policies. This includes operating within the bounds of CEMA-approved term work plans and budgets.
- Work plans and budgets will be submitted to CEMA in a timely manner for approval.
- Chairpersons will be selected by the working group in accordance with CEMA guidelines. Chairpersons are responsible for effective and efficient operation of the working group in a manner consistent with CEMA guidelines and policies, for timely submission of work plans and budgets for approval by CEMA, and for reporting working group progress to CEMA.

Reporting:

Activity plans, key product delivery dates, and key deliverables for AWG recommendations to be submitted to CEMA, and progress reports submitted as required.

The AWG Terms of Reference will be reviewed and updated periodically, as deemed appropriate by the AWG.

Membership:

- Any CEMA member is eligible to become a member of the AWG
- Other interested stakeholders may request and be granted non-voting membership by the working group
- The working group will strive to maintain broad stakeholder representation
- The working group may appoint task groups to provide recommendations to the working group on specific, defined matters, generally of a technical nature. Task groups report to the AWG and can consist of members of the working group and external technical experts invited to participate in the task group.