



Canada Energy  
Regulator

Régie de l'énergie  
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# Red Tape Review Report



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## Progress Update on the Red Tape Review – 13 April 2026

To date, the CER has made progress across its key regulatory modernization initiatives.

### Modernizing Regulations and Regulatory Frameworks

Initiative	Status	Details
1. Rules of Practice and Procedure Review	Ongoing, revised timeline	Draft regulations are expected to be pre-published in <i>Canada Gazette, Part I</i> in Spring 2026.
2. Export and Import Regulatory Framework Review	Ongoing, revised timeline	Final regulations are expected to be published in <i>Canada Gazette, Part II</i> in late 2026/early 2027.
3. Onshore Pipeline Regulations and Filing Manuals Update	Ongoing, on target	Engagement is ongoing, with a regulatory proposal expected to be released in fall 2026. An update to the Filing Manual is expected to be released in 2026.
4. Regulatory Pilot Project	Completed	This initiative is complete and is informing the next phase of the OPR Update.

### Modernizing Regulatory Processes

Initiative	Status	Details
5. CER Portal Project	Ongoing, on target	The first external release of the <a href="#">CER Portal</a> was launched on 25 February 2026, allowing digital submission of section 214 applications and Notifications by proponents, and Statements of Concern from the public.
6. Rapid Review Process	Completed	On 20 October 2025, the Commission issued a <a href="#">Streamlining Order and a Decommissioning Exemption Order</a> for negligible-risk projects, which came into effect 1 December 2025. <a href="#">Amended Orders</a> were subsequently issued on 28 January 2026 to clarify and reduce duplication of criteria in Schedule A of the Orders. This initiative is now completed.
7. Routine Application Decision Timelines Project (Section 214)	Completed	Monitoring of results show that the 30-day completeness targets, as well as all service standards and timelines for routine filings,

		including facility applications, continue to be met. This initiative is now completed.
8. Regulatory Optimization Project	Ongoing, on target	Several sub-projects are underway focused on increased efficiency in adjudicative decision-making, with more set to launch.

**Modernizing Information Sharing and Cooperation**

Initiative	Status	Details
9. Regulatory Cooperation	Ongoing, on target	<p>New agreements to improve cooperation and efficiency came into effect, including a <a href="#">Process Coordination Framework agreement with the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board</a> (December 2025), and a cooperative <a href="#">memorandum of understanding with the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Energy Regulator and the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Energy Regulator</a> (January 2026).</p> <p>In the fall, the Western Regulator's Forum (WRF) engaged with industry associations and regulated companies to identify and implement opportunities to improve efficiency. The WRF will also organize monthly sessions for regulators to share internal process improvements and regulatory innovations.</p> <p>The Canada Energy Regulator is working with the Major Projects Office to support readiness to regulate projects under the <i>Building Canada Act</i>.</p>

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## Context

The Canada Energy Regulator (CER) works to keep energy moving safely through pipelines and power lines across the country. We regulate pipelines, energy development and trade in the Canadian public interest. Before making a decision or recommendation, we factor in economic, environmental and social considerations. Additionally, the CER shares energy information with the Minister and all Canadians and enforces some of the strictest safety and environmental standards in the world.

Established under the *Canadian Energy Regulator Act* (CER Act), the CER oversees the full lifecycle of pipelines that cross a national, provincial or territorial border, as well as electrical power lines that cross a national border, or those that cross a provincial or territorial border and are designated under the CER Act. In addition, the CER regulates traffic, tolls and tariffs, offshore renewable energy projects, the export of energy products, and oil and gas activities in frontier and offshore areas.

The CER's regulatory framework is shaped by government policy, our strategic priorities, and our regulatory approaches. The CER bases its work as a regulator on sound philosophies such as fairness and impartiality, reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, harm prevention, continual improvement, and data-driven, risk-informed oversight. Applying its regulatory tools, including technical standards, authorizations, and guidance products, the CER ensures compliance with its regulations, aiming for a framework that is robust, transparent, and coherent.

### *Government of Canada Priorities*

Getting major projects built in Canada is a priority. Federal departments and agencies have been reviewing policies and practices to accelerate decision-making and improve the delivery of project assessments, permits, licenses, and authorizations for major projects. Under the instruction of the Cabinet Directive on Regulatory and Permitting Efficiency and coordinated by the Clean Growth Office in the Privy Council Office, the CER has been working together with other federal departments to develop permitting plans, coordinate Crown consultations and increase collaboration with proponents to improve coordination related to major projects.

On June 26, 2025, the *Building Canada Act* received royal assent, empowering the government to accelerate nation-building projects in consultation with Indigenous Peoples. The CER is committed to supporting the implementation while protecting environmental integrity and Indigenous rights and building relationships and opportunities for economic partnerships with Indigenous Peoples.

The CER is committed to continual improvement and consistently strives to modernize and implement regulatory efficiencies in its processes. Since the CER Act came into effect in 2019,

the CER has consistently met or exceeded service standards and legislative timelines<sup>1</sup>. This includes completing both routine and complex pipeline project reviews in under two years. The CER has demonstrated its commitment to regulatory efficiency while ensuring all projects are thoroughly reviewed and serve the public interest.

## Executive Summary

In July 2025, the Government of Canada launched an initiative to reduce regulatory red tape, including complicated or outdated processes, unnecessary, duplicative or overly burdensome rules, or inefficient or unpredictable regulatory administration or service delivery.

The CER regularly reviews its regulations and related practices to identify outdated, duplicative, or unnecessarily burdensome requirements. The goal is to continuously modernize the regulatory system while maintaining strong protections regarding safety, and the protection of people and the environment.

This report outlines the recent actions taken and future plans to streamline the CER's regulatory framework and decision-making processes.

In addition to the cyclical review of the regulations that appear in our [Forward Regulatory Plan](#) and [Regulatory Stock Review Plan](#), to promote continual improvement, the CER has identified the following initiatives aimed at reducing red tape in the near, medium and long term.

### Modernizing Regulations and Regulatory Frameworks

1. Rules of Practice and Procedure Review
2. Export and Import Regulatory Framework Review
3. Onshore Pipeline Regulations and Filing Manuals Update
4. Regulatory Pilot Project

### Modernizing Regulatory Processes

5. CER Portal Project
6. Rapid Review Process
7. Routine Application Decision Timelines Project (Section 214)
8. Regulatory Optimization Project

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<sup>1</sup> The CER is committed to processing applications as efficiently as possible while respecting procedural fairness. The CER Act mandates specific legislative timelines for various types of applications, once an application is deemed completed. In addition, the CER has established service standards to guide expectations and measure performance. These are not legally binding but are tracked and reported annually. Further information can be found on the [CER website](#).

## Modernizing Information Sharing and Cooperation

### 9. Regulatory Cooperation

All initiatives are currently in progress with the exception of the Routine Application Decision Timelines Project which was recently completed.

These initiatives mark significant steps towards enhanced CER responsiveness, transparency, and regulatory efficiency that better serves Canadians and supports economic growth.

## Initiative Details, Progress Achieved and Next Steps

### Item 1: Rules of Practice and Procedure Review

**Context:** The CER is updating its Rules of Practice and Procedure (Rules). The Rules are made by the Commission under section 35 of the CER Act. The Commission may make rules generally for the carrying out of its work and the management of its internal affairs, including rules respecting:

- The powers, duties and functions of the Commissioners;
- Sittings;
- Decisions, orders and recommendations; and
- Procedures and practices.

The current Rules were created in 1995 and no longer reflect modern practices or the CER's governance structure.

The updated Rules will:

- Align with the CER Act.
- Provide clear, predictable and timely processes for participants.
- Support the CER's strategic priorities such as the ongoing commitment to Reconciliation and enhanced competitiveness.

**Actions:** The CER launched Phase I of the Rules Review in September 2024 by releasing a Discussion Paper and holding three information sessions. Indigenous Peoples and communities were given an opportunity to apply for a \$6,000 grant to support their participation. The comment period closed in January 2025.

The CER will:

- Update guidance materials
- Modernize the electronic filing system
- Ensure a smooth transition to the new Rules

**Outcomes:** The new Rules will:

- Use clearer, modern language
- Remove outdated technology
- Reduce red tape and improve timelines

By streamlining hearing procedures, removing outdated procedural requirements, and clarifying timelines, the CER aims to reduce administrative burden, improve accessibility, and support efficient decision-making for all participants.

**Next Steps:** Phase II began with a Summary Report that was released in Summer 2025 for a 60-day comment period. Draft regulations are expected to be pre-published in *Canada Gazette*, Part I in winter 2025/2026. Final regulations are expected to come into force in spring 2026. A post-implementation review is planned for 2027.

**Progress:** This initiative is currently underway and is projected to be complete in the medium term.

## Item 2: Export and Import Regulatory Framework Review

**Context:** The CER is updating four National Energy Board (NEB) regulations to align with the CER Act. These changes will reduce red tape, improve clarity, and support economic growth.

**Actions:** The CER proposes replacing four current NEB regulations with the following:

- *Export Applications (Licences and Permits) Regulations*
- *Export and Import (Orders, Licences and Permits) Regulations*
- *International Power Lines (Permits) Regulations*
- *Export and Import Reporting Regulations*
- *Toll Information Reporting Regulations*

The proposed regulations will regulate the export and import of oil, gas and electricity, the construction and operation of international power lines (IPLs), and the reporting of toll information.

The proposed regulations will:

- Simplify application requirements.
- Remove the need for authorizations for some export and all import activities.
- Eliminate certain reporting requirements.
- Use modern language and reflect current industry practices.

The proposed regulations were pre-published in the *Canada Gazette*, Part I, on December 13, 2024. The public comment period ended January 28, 2025. Feedback from companies was generally positive, especially for those changes that reduce administrative burden.

**Outcomes:** These changes will make it easier for companies to understand and meet their obligations, while also reducing administrative burden and improving regulatory consistency. These updates will help create a fair, predictable, and consistent regulatory framework for Canada's energy sector.

**Next Steps:** The CER will review and consider all comments in finalizing the regulations with final regulations expected to come into force in winter-spring 2026. Guidance, Filing Manuals, and systems will subsequently be updated to support implementation, and the CER will monitor the regulations to ensure they remain effective and appropriate.

**Progress:** This initiative will conclude in the short to medium term.

### Item 3: Onshore Pipeline Regulations and Filing Manuals Update

**Context:** The CER is updating its Onshore Pipeline Regulations (OPR) and the Environmental and Socio-Economic portions of the Filing Manuals. The OPR sets out the requirements for companies to design, construct, operate, or abandon pipelines in a manner that ensures the safety and security of persons and pipelines, and protects property and the environment. The Filing Manuals are tools providing direction and guidance regarding the information the CER would typically expect to see addressed in filings. The goal is to provide applicants with a clear definition of the CER's expectations for complete filings.

Since the OPR was last substantively updated in 2013, with the addition of management system requirements, the regulatory landscape has evolved to include greater participation by Indigenous Peoples in adjudication and oversight activities. The update to the Filing Manuals is part of the CER's commitment to continual improvement. Collectively, these projects present opportunities to improve regulatory clarity and efficiency for proponents.

The objectives of the OPR/Filing Manuals Update are to deliver a regulation and Filing Manuals that support the highest level of safety, security and environmental protection, advance Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, address transparency and inclusive participation, provide for appropriate oversight, enhance predictability and certainty, and encourage innovation.

**Actions:** In 2022, the CER began Phase 1 Engagement by releasing a Discussion Paper. The responses received highlighted the need for clearer regulatory expectations, better integration of Indigenous rights, and more modern oversight tools.

From June 2024 to March 2025, Phase 2 Engagement on the OPR/Filing Manuals Update occurred. The CER received over 140 submissions. All feedback is being analyzed and will be considered during the drafting of the regulatory proposal and updating the Filing Manuals.

**Outcomes:** The OPR/Filing Manuals Update is expected to result in a more inclusive and effective regulatory framework. The initiative will provide greater predictability, consistency and clarity around compliance requirements, reduce duplicative reporting, and offer more flexible oversight tools. By integrating Indigenous rights and knowledge, the updated OPR and Filing Manuals will better reflect the values and expectations of all stakeholders and Rightsholders.

**Next Steps:** The CER will continue engaging with Rightsholders and stakeholders throughout 2026 to refine the draft regulatory proposals and updates to the Filing Manuals.

**Progress:** In the short term, the CER anticipates releasing its regulatory proposal in 2026 for comment. After comments are received, the CER will work with relevant departments to produce the draft regulations, for pre-publication in the *Canada Gazette*, Part I in the medium term.

## Item 4: Regulatory Pilot Project

**Context:** The CER has undertaken work to test a compliance verification process to involve Indigenous Peoples in overseeing pipeline activities that could affect their rights and interests. The project leverages existing funding under regulatory experimentation initiatives and is part of a broader review of the OPR.

**Actions:** The CER worked with:

- 2 pipeline companies
- 1 First Nation
- 1 Métis government

The purpose of the project was to:

- Test the feasibility and suitability of proposed requirements to help inform final regulatory development.
- Test a new and innovative approach to regulatory development.
- Test how the CER could involve Indigenous Peoples in compliance verification activities (CVAs), beyond current practice.
- See how companies are currently preventing and addressing impacts to Indigenous rights and interests and including Indigenous knowledge in their work.

- Understand the time and cost to conduct a new compliance verification process and implement proposed regulatory requirements.
- Identify where additional guidance may be needed to improve clarity, efficiency and predictability.

**Outcomes:** The CER will produce a report for TBS on the learning objectives listed above at the end of August. TBS will share learnings with other government departments and agencies. Key learnings include:

- Companies need more guidance on CER expectations before introducing new requirements.
- Relationship building through engagement is key to achieving intended outcomes.
- Early engagement with Indigenous partners helped scope meaningful CVAs.
- Involving third parties is more resource and time intensive than traditional CVAs.

**Next Steps:** The CER will use what it learned from the pilot to improve the OPR. This includes creating clearer rules and guidance to help companies meet any new requirements. The CER will also support companies in building stronger, more consistent processes to prevent impacts to the rights and interests of Indigenous Peoples and support engagement. Ongoing collaboration with Indigenous Peoples will remain a key part of this work.

**Progress:** This initiative is complete and will inform the next phase of the OPR/Filing Manuals Update.

## Item 5: CER Portal Project

**Context:** The CER Portal project is a major flagship initiative to simplify and modernize how people and companies interact with regulatory processes across the energy lifecycle.

It aims to create a single-window digital platform that consolidates multiple systems and information sources. Through the CER Portal, people and companies will manage all aspects of their regulatory activities in one place, making interactions with the CER more efficient, transparent, and user-friendly.

**Actions:** The CER Portal will offer a range of capabilities to improve regulatory efficiency. Key features include:

- Simplified navigation of legislative and regulatory requirements through clear, accessible content.
- Streamlined and automated workflows that reduce manual steps, lower administrative burden, and improve processing time.
- Real-time updates on application status, compliance, and required tasks to keep companies informed and proactive.

- Centralized document exchange to send, receive, and track regulatory documents securely.

**Outcomes:** The CER Portal will:

- Present legislative and regulatory requirements in a simplified format for easy navigation.
- Automate many aspects of the application and assessment process, minimizing manual effort and saving time.
- Automate tasks and allow for easier tracking of compliance.

**Next Steps:**

- The first phase of the CER Portal will feature online applications for routine applications under section 214 of the CER Act (pipeline projects under 40 km), and company landing pages.
- Expansion to a single access point encompassing other systems and regulatory activities will continue through subsequent phases until the full implementation, planned for 2030.

**Progress:** An initial internal release of the CER Portal occurred in November 2024, reducing the number of manual process steps for CER staff and automating functions to save time. In the short term, the first external launch of the CER Portal is planned for 2026. Further development is expected to continue through 2030 with the aim of delivering a fully integrated system that supports all regulatory activities across the energy lifecycle, ensuring a seamless, modern experience.

## Item 6: Rapid Review Process

**Context:** The CER is exploring an expedited project review process for negligible and low-risk projects. This includes updating the [Streamlining Order](#) and [Decommissioning Exemption Order](#) for negligible-risk projects to align with the CER Act. These changes will reduce unnecessary requirements, improve clarity, and support economic growth.

**Actions:** The proposed orders will:

- Allow negligible-risk projects to proceed without requiring project-specific Commission approval.
- Improve the efficiency and predictability of regulatory processes<sup>2</sup>.
- Expedite decisions for low-risk projects, while maintaining strong environmental protection and advancing reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.

In July 2024, the CER released a Discussion Paper for comment. All stakeholder comments were reviewed and considered in developing the Rapid Review process.

**Outcomes:** These updates will help further advance a fair, predictable, and consistent regulatory framework for Canada's energy sector.

**Next Steps:** To support implementation, the CER will:

- Re-issue orders to companies with updated criteria covering negligible risk projects.
- Update guidance materials on the CER's website and in the Filing Manual.
- Report on the progress of this initiative.

The CER will also evaluate the performance of the updated orders to ensure they remain effective, appropriate, and aligned with policy objectives.

**Progress:** It is anticipated that this initiative will be concluded in the short term, with the orders coming into effect in Fall 2025 and Winter 2026.

## Item 7: Routine Application Decision Timelines Project (Section 214)

**Context:** The CER has significantly improved processing times for routine applications under section 214 of the CER Act (pipeline projects under 40 km), reducing decision timelines by 59% while maintaining rigorous, transparent assessments that respect Indigenous rights. These applications make up the bulk of facility applications the CER receives every year. These

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<sup>2</sup> The CER processes applications following legislative timelines set by the CER Act and CER established service standards. For example, for routine Section 214 applications, the CER classifies applications into three categories based on complexity, expected information requests, and likelihood of third-party interest. While the legislative timelines range from 130-300 days, the CER's service standard targets are:

- Category A (Minor complexity): 40 calendar days
- Category B (Moderate complexity): 90 calendar days
- Category C (Major complexity): 120 calendar days

The CER aims to issue decisions within these timeframes for 80% of applications. Information on legislative timelines and service standards for other applications can be found on the [CER website](#).

improvements align with the CER Act, and legislated timelines, which require applications to be processed as efficiently as possible.

**Actions:** Key changes include:

- Streamlined completeness determination<sup>3</sup> to 30 days (down from 92 days in 2019-20).
- Discontinued CER-led Notice of Application<sup>4</sup>; companies now lead notifications during early engagement.
- Reduced the Statement of Concern<sup>5</sup> period to 21 days, supported by early engagement requirements.
- Reduced overall decision timelines to an average of 79 days (down from an average of 191 days four years ago).

**Outcomes:** These changes enhance predictability for industry planning, reduce administrative burden, and ensure compliance with legislated timelines. The CER achieved this through automated processes which significantly reduced administrative steps.

**Next Steps:** The CER will monitor the results of the initiative to ensure process efficacy. The Filing Manual, website guidance, and internal systems will be updated to reflect the streamlined process and there will be continued emphasis placed on early engagement by companies with stakeholders and Indigenous groups.

**Progress:** The first phase of the initiative is complete. Updates to the Filing Manual and other guidance will be undertaken over the short to medium term.

## Item 8: Regulatory Optimization Project

**Context:** As part of its ongoing commitment to regulatory excellence, the CER launched the Regulatory Optimization Project (ROP) in April 2025 to enhance the efficiency, clarity, and consistency of its adjudicative processes. This initiative builds on the learnings of the Rapid Review Process and Routine Application Decision Timelines projects and supports those efficiency initiatives by providing additional resourcing, and coordination. The ROP strengthens the CER's core commitments to safety, environmental protection, and Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, ensuring these remain central and integral to all aspects of its work.

The ROP will also enable the CER to respond to government advice on potential process improvements, helping ensure the organization remains responsive and effective over time.

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<sup>3</sup> A formal [decision](#) made by the Commission on whether an application submitted for a project contains all the information required under the CER Act.

<sup>4</sup> The CER requires companies filing section 214 applications to [notify](#) everyone that may be impacted, including landowners and Indigenous peoples, that an application has been filed with the CER.

<sup>5</sup> Anyone that has specific concerns about a company's proposed project can submit a [statement of concern](#) within 21 days of the application being filed with the CER.

**Actions:** The project began with a review of internal adjudicative processes – including workflows, structures, and operations – to identify areas where efficiencies could be gained to support effective regulatory decision-making. These efforts were informed by the legislative timelines for regulatory decisions, as set out in the CER Act. The focus was on understanding how roles, skillsets, and resources could be clarified or better aligned to enhance the overall efficiency of internal processes to ensure timely decisions.

Next, the ROP will explore, develop and implement improvements that streamline existing adjudicative processes. The ROP will also explore the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and other technologies, including the CER Portal, to support adjudicative processes.

**Outcomes:** The ROP aims to enhance the efficiency, clarity, and predictability of our adjudicative processes. While focused on internal improvements, the outcomes align with the Government of Canada’s broader red tape reduction priorities and support even more timely, transparent, and trusted regulatory decision-making.

**Next Steps:** The CER will continue to advance the ROP by refining internal recommendations and identifying key areas for improved efficiency and consistency across regulatory processes. This work will inform the next phase of implementation, which will outline how prioritized improvements are rolled out and monitored over time.

**Progress:** In the short term (2025-2026) the CER will meet internal deliverables, including identifying opportunities for regulatory efficiency, developing an Implementation Plan with defined roles, actions, and timelines and begin implementation.

In the medium term (2026–2027) the CER will continue phased execution of priority actions; using performance indicators, and tracking improvements in efficiency, coordination, and decision-making.

Finally, over the long term (2028 and beyond), the CER will monitor its progress and refine its approaches as needed.

## Item 9: Regulatory Cooperation

**Context:** The CER is working with other regulators to reduce red tape and improve how energy projects are reviewed. Through memoranda of understanding (MOUs) and fora like the Western Regulators’ Forum<sup>6</sup>, the CER is streamlining processes, sharing best practices, and clarifying roles. These efforts help reduce duplication, shorten timelines, and improve coordination across jurisdictions.

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<sup>6</sup> The WRF was established to collaboratively pursue mutual priorities among oil and gas regulators in Western Canada. Its members include the Alberta Energy Regulator, the British Columbia Energy Regulator, the Ministry of Energy and Resources (SK), the Northwest Territories Office of the Regulator of Oil and Gas Operations and the CER.

**Actions:** The CER has recently developed or renewed co-operative agreements with:

- Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO)
- Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (IAAC)
- Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC)
- Canadian Transportation Accident Investigation and Safety Board (TSB)
- The Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board (MVEIRB)

The CER is also working with the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Energy Regulator and Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Energy Regulator to support better co-operation and learnings for regulatory oversight of offshore renewable and other offshore energy projects.

In addition, the Western Regulators' Forum has initiated a multi-year Regulatory Coherence and Efficiency Initiative. The goal of the initiative, which is being led by the CER, is to formally address regulatory differences across member jurisdictions to reduce administrative burden, enhance regulatory alignment and increase predictability in regulatory processes for Indigenous communities and stakeholders, particularly for companies operating in multiple western Canadian provinces and territories.

**Outcomes:** These agreements and initiatives support more efficient and predictable project reviews, allowing departments and agencies to assess projects at the same time, share technical input, and improve engagement with Indigenous Peoples and the public.

Additionally, these actions help reduce costs and delays for project proponents. They also improve transparency and ensure that regulatory decisions are informed by the latest science, Indigenous knowledge, and stakeholder input. The CER continues to review and update its agreements to ensure they remain effective and aligned with its mandate.

**Next Steps:** Looking ahead, the CER will work with other members of the Western Regulators' Forum and relevant stakeholders to identify actionable insights and develop solutions for implementation. The CER will also finalize new MOUs and operational annexes, evaluate the impact of existing agreements, and develop new agreements to support a modern, efficient, and responsive regulatory system that benefits Canadians, industry, and Indigenous Peoples.

**Progress:** This work is taking place in phases. Some of the MOUs have already been executed. Other co-operative agreements and operational annexes are currently under development, making them short to medium term initiatives. Participation in the Western Regulator's Forum is an ongoing initiative to continually seek opportunities for greater co-operation and regulatory improvement.