

COMPREHENSIVE STUDY SCOPING DOCUMENT
Pursuant to Subsection 21(1) of the
Canadian Environmental Assessment Act

For the proposed

Star-Orion South Diamond Project

Shore Gold Inc

Prepared by:
Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency
Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Natural Resources Canada
Transport Canada

CEA Registry Reference Number: ***09-03-46277***

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1.0 INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF THE SCOPING DOCUMENT

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) and Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), responsible authorities pursuant to the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* (the Act), have determined that a comprehensive study is required in relation to the proposed Star-Orion South Diamond Project. Transport Canada (TC) is participating in the assessment in anticipation that it may be a responsible authority. As an early step, the responsible authorities are required to determine what should be included in the comprehensive study.

The purpose of this comprehensive study scoping document is to provide information to the public and to the proponent on the federal environmental assessment process, and specifically, pursuant to subsection 21(1) of the Act, to seek the views of the public on:

- the proposed scope of the project for the purposes of the environmental assessment;
- the factors proposed to be considered in the assessment;
- the proposed scope of those factors; and
- the ability of the comprehensive study to address issues relating to the project.

The following sections of this document provide an overview of the Star-Orion South Diamond Project as proposed by Shore Gold Inc. (Shore Gold), a description of the federal environmental assessment process, the scope of the federal environmental assessment, proposed public consultation, and an assessment of the ability of the comprehensive study to address issues relating to the project.

2.0 OVERVIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

The development proposal consists of a tonnage diamond project located in central Saskatchewan. The proposal includes an open pit at the Star Kimberlite and potentially a second open pit at the Orion South Kimberlite. Other components include: dense media separation plant with a capacity of 40,000 tonnes/day; internal roads and conveyors; dewatering facilities and dewatering wells and/or dewatering trenches/collectors; overburden piles and a coarse processed kimberlite pile; gravel screening and washing facility; mine water containment facilities, surface water diversion channels, administrative buildings and maintenance shop; security facilities, helicopter landing pad; explosives mixing and storage facilities; fuel storage and distribution facilities; potable water treatment plant and sewage lagoon; incinerator; and a temporary construction camp.

For further details on the development proposal, please refer to <http://www.environment.gov.sk.ca/2008-089ProjectProposal>

3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PROCESS

3.1 Requirement for a Federal Environmental Assessment

The Act applies to federal authorities when they contemplate certain actions or decisions in relation to a project that would enable it to proceed in whole or in part. Under section 5 of the Act, a federal environmental assessment may be required when a federal authority:

- is the proponent;
- provides financial assistance to a proponent;
- sells, leases or otherwise disposes of land; or
- issues a permit, licence, or any other approval as prescribed in the *Law List Regulations* under the Act.

A federal authority that proposes to undertake one of the above actions and is required to ensure that an environmental assessment is conducted under the Act is referred to as a responsible authority.

Based on current information, the following federal departments have determined that they may be required to issue the following in respect of the project:

- DFO – authorization under section 32 and subsection 35(2)– *Fisheries Act*
- NRCan – licence under subsection 7(1)(a) - *Explosives Act*
- TC – may provide approval under subsection 5(2) – *Navigable Waters Protection Act*

Therefore, DFO and NRCan are confirmed responsible authorities and are required to ensure that an environmental assessment in relation to the Star-Orion South Diamond Project is conducted pursuant to the Act. As a likely responsible authority, TC is participating in the process.

DFO has determined that certain components of the development proposal that are included within the proposed scope of project (presented in section 5.0 of this report) are subject to a comprehensive study under the Act pursuant to section 10 of the *Comprehensive Study List Regulations*, which reads:

The proposed construction, decommissioning or abandonment of a facility for the extraction of 200 000 m³/a or more of ground water or an expansion of such a facility that would result in an increase in production capacity of more than 35 per cent.

Consequently, the responsible authorities are required to ensure that a comprehensive study is conducted under the Act.

Environment Canada, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, and Health Canada indicated that they will participate in the environmental assessment as expert federal authorities with specialist or expert knowledge or information.

Annex 2 contains more information on the comprehensive study process and the roles and responsibilities of the federal project committee.

3.2 Federal/Provincial Environmental Assessment Cooperation

The Star-Orion South Diamond Project is subject to a provincial environmental assessment in accordance with Saskatchewan's *The Environmental Assessment Act*. The provincial environmental assessment process was initiated on November 6, 2008.

The federal environmental assessment will be coordinated to the extent possible with the provincial environmental assessment, according to the *Canada-Saskatchewan Agreement on Environmental Assessment Cooperation*. The Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment's Environmental Assessment Branch is the lead agency and contact for the project. However, the federal and provincial governments will each make decisions on matters within their own legislative authority.

Provincial Project Specific Guidelines for the Star-Orion South Diamond Project have been finalised and provided to Shore Gold. This federal scoping document is intended to be complementary to the provincial guidelines. One environmental impact statement from Shore Gold will address both federal and provincial environmental assessment requirements.

The Project Specific Guidelines can be viewed at the following link:
http://www.environment.gov.sk.ca/2008-089_ProjectSpecificGuidelines

4.0 ABORIGINAL ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

As per the *Cabinet Directive for Improving the Performance of the Regulatory System for Major Resource Projects*, Aboriginal Crown consultations related to major resource projects are integrated to the extent possible into the overall regulatory process. This will be accomplished by working collaboratively with federal and provincial entities and in particular, potentially impacted Aboriginal groups. The Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency leads the federal environmental assessment component of the regulatory system and is responsible for integrating Aboriginal Crown consultation into the federal environmental assessment process.

5.0 PROPOSED SCOPE OF THE FEDERAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Scoping establishes the boundaries of the federal environmental assessment in order to focus on relevant issues and concerns. The scope identifies which elements of the development are proposed to be considered in the comprehensive study, which factors will be considered under section 16 of the Act, and which environmental components are likely to be affected. The public is being asked to comment specifically on this section of the scoping document.

The proposed scope of the assessment includes the proposed scope of the project as outlined below, the factors proposed to be considered under subsections 16(1) and 16(2) of the the Act and the proposed scope of those factors. The responsible authorities *are* proposing to scope the assessment as described in this section.

5.1 Proposed Scope of the Project for the Purposes of the Federal Environmental Assessment

The proposed scope of project for the purposes of the federal environmental assessment include the physical works and activities as proposed by Shore Gold, as well as any compensation works to offset the loss of productive capacity of fish habitat resulting from the proposed project.

The project as proposed consists of the construction, operation, modification, decommissioning, abandonment (as appropriate) and reclamation of the following components:

- existing exploration facilities at Star and potentially at Orion South;
- site clearing and timber removal;
- any access and utilities corridors;
- overburden removal and excavation of up to two pits, one at Star and one potentially at Orion South;
- a Production Dense Media Separation plant with a capacity of 40,000 tonnes or more per day; the exact capacity will be determined during the feasibility studies and finalized prior to submission of the EIA;
- a 50-tonne per hour Sample Dense Media Separation plant;
- administrative, maintenance and security buildings;
- a helicopter landing pad;
- explosives mixing and storage facilities;
- fuel storage and distribution facilities;
- a temporary construction camp;

- other mine support facilities (e.g., internal roads and conveyors);
- mine waste management systems including overburden piles and a coarse processed kimberlite pile;
- dewatering facilities and installation of dewatering wells and/or dewatering trenches/collectors;
- water storage facilities;
- potential gravel screening and washing facility;
- containment facilities for mine water, process water and fine processed kimberlite;
- surface water diversion channels;
- water disposal facilities; and
- water treatment, wastewater treatment and waste management facilities.

5.2 Factors Proposed to be Considered in the Comprehensive Study

The responsible authorities are required to consider the factors specified in section 16 of the Act, taking into consideration the definitions of “environment”, “environmental effect”, and “project” set out in the Act.

The responsible authorities must consider the following factors in the comprehensive study, pursuant to section 16 of the Act:

- the environmental effects of the project, including the environmental effects of malfunctions or accidents that may occur in connection with the project and any cumulative environmental effects that are likely to result from the project in combination with other projects or activities that have been or will be carried out;
- the significance of the effects referred to in the previous paragraph;
- comments from the public that are received in accordance with the Act and its regulations;
- measures that are technically and economically feasible and that would mitigate any significant adverse environmental effects of the project;
- the purpose of the project;
- alternative means of carrying out the project that are technically and economically feasible and the environmental effects of any such alternative means;
- the need for, and the requirements of, any follow-up program in respect of the project; and
- the capacity of renewable resources that are likely to be significantly affected by the project to meet the needs of the present and those of the future.

In accordance with paragraph 16(1)(e) of the Act, the comprehensive study will also include a consideration of the “need for” the project and “alternatives to” the project,

As defined under the Act, “environmental effect” means, in respect of a project:

- a) any change that the project may cause in the environment, including any change it may cause to a listed wildlife species, its critical habitat or the residences of individuals of that species, as those terms are defined in subsection 2(1) of the Species at Risk Act
- b) any effect of any change referred to in paragraph (a) on
 - i) health and socio-economic conditions
 - ii) physical and cultural heritage
 - iii) the current use of lands and resources for traditional purposes by Aboriginal persons, or
 - iv) any structure, site or thing that is of historical, archaeological, paleontological or architectural significance, or
- c) any change to the project that may be caused by the environment whether any such change or effect occurs within or outside Canada;

Under section 79 of the *Species at Risk Act*, the responsible authorities must identify adverse effects of the project on listed species and their critical habitat or residences and ensure that measures are taken to avoid or lessen adverse effects and that effects are monitored. Mitigation measures must be consistent with recovery strategies and action plans for the species.

5.3 Proposed Scope of the Factors to be Considered

The environmental assessment will focus on those ecosystem components likely to be affected by the project that have been identified for their biophysical, socio-economic, cultural, historical or archaeological importance. These are referred to as the "Valued Ecosystem Components", or "VECs".

The responsible authorities propose that the following scope of factors be considered in the comprehensive study. Selection of these factors is based on the potential for adverse environmental effects arising from the proposed scope of project.

Biophysical Environment

Effects of the project on:

- surface and groundwater quality and quantity (emphasis on in-stream flow needs, controlled and uncontrolled site releases, and waste rock handling);
- process water and tailings quality and quantity
- slope stability and sediment;

- soils and soil productivity;
- fish, wildlife and plants listed under the *Species at Risk Act*, including their critical habitat or residences;
- fish (including lake sturgeon*) and fish habitat;
- wildlife species and wildlife habitat;
- vegetation;
- noise and vibration;
- air quality including odours, mineral and process particulates, vapours, and exhausts;
- greenhouse gas emissions;
- climate; and
- other components that the responsible authorities determine should be considered.

* Lake sturgeon were listed as endangered by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) in November 2006 and are under consideration for listing under the *Species at Risk Act*.

Socio-Economic and Cultural Environments

Effects of any change to any biophysical component listed above on:

- potable water (quality and quantity) from surface and groundwater sources;
- current use of lands and resources for traditional purposes by Aboriginal persons;
- physical and cultural heritage;
- socio-economic conditions, including worker and public health;
- any structure, site or thing that is of historical, archaeological, paleontological or architectural significance;
- other land and resource use;
 - potable water availability from groundwater sources
 - recreational use (fishing, hunting, snowmobiling, aesthetics, etc.)
 - agricultural use
 - forestry
 - mining
- effects on navigation;
- impacts to country foods due to effects of the project

Spatial and Temporal Boundaries

Impacts with respect to spatial and temporal boundaries may vary depending on the biophysical as well as socio-economic and cultural components listed above and the assessment of these impacts should consider:

- timing/scheduling of project activities and alternatives;
- natural variations of a component or the population of an environmental component;
- the time necessary for an effect to become evident;
- the time required for recovery from an impact, including the estimated degree of recovery;
- cumulative effects;
- comments from the public; and
- traditional knowledge.

The environmental assessment will clearly define (in text and maps) the rationale for the spatial boundaries that are used in the environmental assessment. The spatial boundaries will be determined specific to each Valued Ecosystem Component (VEC) to effectively assess the potential environmental effects of the project. The study area, i.e., the geographic scope of the investigations, will include those local areas directly impacted by the undertakings associated with project and also the zones within which there may be environmental effects that are regional in their nature.

The temporal boundaries will encompass the entire lifespan of the project. The environmental assessment will include an assessment of the effects of the project on each factor or environmental component with respect to each phase of the project. This includes the time required to complete the fish habitat compensation plan and any period required by federal authorities for compliance and effectiveness monitoring.

Need for and Purpose of the Project

The environmental assessment will include an evaluation of the need for and purpose of the project. The “need for” the project is defined as the problem or opportunity that the proposed project is intending to solve or satisfy. The “purpose of” the project is defined as what is to be achieved by carrying out the project. The “need for” and “purpose of” the project will be established from the perspective of the proponent.

Alternative Means of Carrying out the Project

The environmental assessment will include an analysis of the alternative means of carrying out the project that are technically and economically feasible, and the environmental effects of any such alternative means. A rationale for the preferred alternative will be included.

Additional clarity can be found on the CEAA website in the Operation Policy Statement *Addressing "Need for", "Purpose of" "Alternatives to" and "Alternative Means" under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* (November 2007)

Effects of the Environment on the Project

In addition to evaluating the effects of the project on the environment, including cumulative environmental effects, the analysis should also include consideration for effects arising from natural hazards such as: extreme weather events (drought, forest fires, extreme precipitation, flooding, wind, and icing), seismic event, slope instability, and climate change. Proposed mitigation, including design strategies, will be considered in the evaluation of the effects of the environment on the project and the determination of their significance.

Sustainability of Renewable Resources

The assessment will include consideration of the capacity of renewable resources that are likely to be significantly affected by the project to meet the needs of the present and those of the future. Groundwater availability to local and regional users needs to be evaluated for sustainable use.

Accidents and Malfunctions

The assessment will include consideration of the potential accidents and malfunctions that could occur in any phase of the project, the likelihood and circumstances under which these events could occur, and the environmental effects that may result from such events if contingency plans are not fully effective.

Cumulative Environmental Effects

Cumulative environmental effects will be considered that are likely to result from the project in combination with other projects or activities that have been or will be carried out. The evaluation of potential cumulative environmental effects will include the residual environmental effects associated with the project, as identified in the comprehensive study, in combination with the environmental effects of other past, present or future projects or activities on those environmental components. The cumulative effects assessment may include, but not necessarily be limited to, additional resource extraction in the Fort à la Corne Forest and potential additional hydroelectricity development on the Saskatchewan River.

Follow-up Program

The purpose of a follow-up program is to verify the accuracy of the environmental assessment and determine the effectiveness of mitigation measures. The environmental assessment will describe the follow-up program that is required to be carried out.

6.0 ABILITY OF THE COMPREHENSIVE STUDY TO ADDRESS THE ISSUES

Projects, or classes of projects, prescribed on the *Comprehensive Study List Regulations* are those for which the Governor in Council, on the recommendation of the Minister of the Environment, is satisfied that they are likely to have significant adverse environmental effects. If at any time prior to the Minister's track decision for a comprehensive study to continue, the responsible authority or the Minister becomes aware of likely significant adverse environmental effects or that public concern warrants, the Minister may refer a project to a review panel or a mediator. Such a decision has not yet been made for this project.

In a comprehensive study, the responsible authority will ensure that environmental effects are identified and assessed, and will determine whether, taking into account mitigation, the project is likely to cause significant adverse environmental effects. This process has mandatory provisions for public consultation at the scoping stage, public participation in the conduct of the comprehensive study, and public comment on the final comprehensive study report.

When considering the ability of the comprehensive study to address issues relating to the project and in recommending to the Minister whether to continue the comprehensive study or refer the project to a review panel, responsible authorities will consider a number of matters, including questions such as these:

- Is the environmental setting generally well understood?
- Does the project involve technology that is new, unproven or not well understood, or is it known and proven?
- Does the proponent have experience with similar projects?
- Do the responsible and federal authorities have experience conducting environmental assessments of similar types of projects?
- Was this previous experience in similar environmental settings?
- Is the project the first of its type in the Region/Community?
- Have public concerns been expressed about similar projects in the past?
- Are there other projects being undertaken or planned in the same environmental setting, community or region?
- Are the issues relatively straight-forward, or is there a wide range of opposing views regarding the proposed project?
- Are there policy issues that may be difficult to address in a comprehensive study?

7.0 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

7.1 Submission of Public Comments on Scoping Document

As previously indicated in Section 1.0, and in consideration of information contained in this scoping document, the public is invited to provide its views and opinions at this scoping stage of the environmental assessment on the following matters:

- the proposed scope of the project;
- the factors proposed to be considered in the assessment;
- the proposed scope of those factors; and
- the ability of the comprehensive study to address issues relating to the project.

When providing comments, clearly reference the Star-Orion South Diamond Project and the Registry Reference Number (09-03-46277) on your submission. Contact information and deadline for receipt of comments are provided in Section 1.0.

Persons wishing to submit comments may do so in writing to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency.

Comments may be sent to:

Project Manager – Star-Orion South Diamond Project
Project Manager - Prairies
Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency
Suite 101, 167 Lombard Ave
Winnipeg MB R3B 0T6
Telephone: 204-984-3225
Fax: 204-983-1878
Email: Star-OrionDiamondProject@ceaa.gc.ca

When commenting on the ability of the comprehensive study to address the issues, the public may want to consider whether the proposed scoping for the comprehensive study include the issues or concerns that they might have about the project and the environmental assessment, and if not, will such issues be addressed in an environmental assessment being conducted by another (e.g., provincial) jurisdiction?

Please note that all documents and/or responses received regarding this project are considered public and will become part of the public Canadian Environmental Assessment Registry (the registry), in accordance with the *Access to Information Act* and the *Privacy Act*.

7.2 Further Opportunities for Public Involvement

If the Minister of the Environment refers the project back to the responsible authorities so that they may continue the comprehensive study, the public will be provided with an opportunity to participate in the comprehensive study. The Agency will also conduct a public comment period on the comprehensive study report, after it has been submitted to the Minister of the Environment and to the Agency. The public will also have opportunities to participate in the assessment should the project be referred to a mediator or a review panel.

7.3 Participant Funding Program

Through its Participant Funding Program, the Agency makes funds available for individuals, Aboriginal groups and incorporated not-for-profit organizations wishing to become involved in the comprehensive study for the project. These funds will be available whether the environmental assessment continues as a comprehensive study or is referred to a mediator or a review panel. While scoping in a comprehensive study includes an opportunity for public participation, participant funding is not provided to the public for this initial scoping phase. Participant funding for participation in the comprehensive study is, however, available to the public:

- from the time the Minister issues a decision that the assessment will continue as a comprehensive study; and
- during the period of public comment on the completed comprehensive study report.

For additional information, the Participant Funding Program Guide, the application form and the standard contribution agreement are available on the Agency's Web Site <http://www.ceaa-acee.gc.ca/>. To receive funding, successful applicants must participate in the environmental assessment. A notice indicating the availability of funding through this program will be posted separately on the Canadian Environmental Assessment Registry Internet Site, and placed in local newspapers.

For additional information on the Participant Funding Program, please contact:

Participant Funding Program
Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency
160 Elgin Street, Place Bell Canada, 22nd Floor
Ottawa, ON K1A 0H3
1-866-582-1884 or 613-957-0254

7.4 Canadian Environmental Assessment Registry

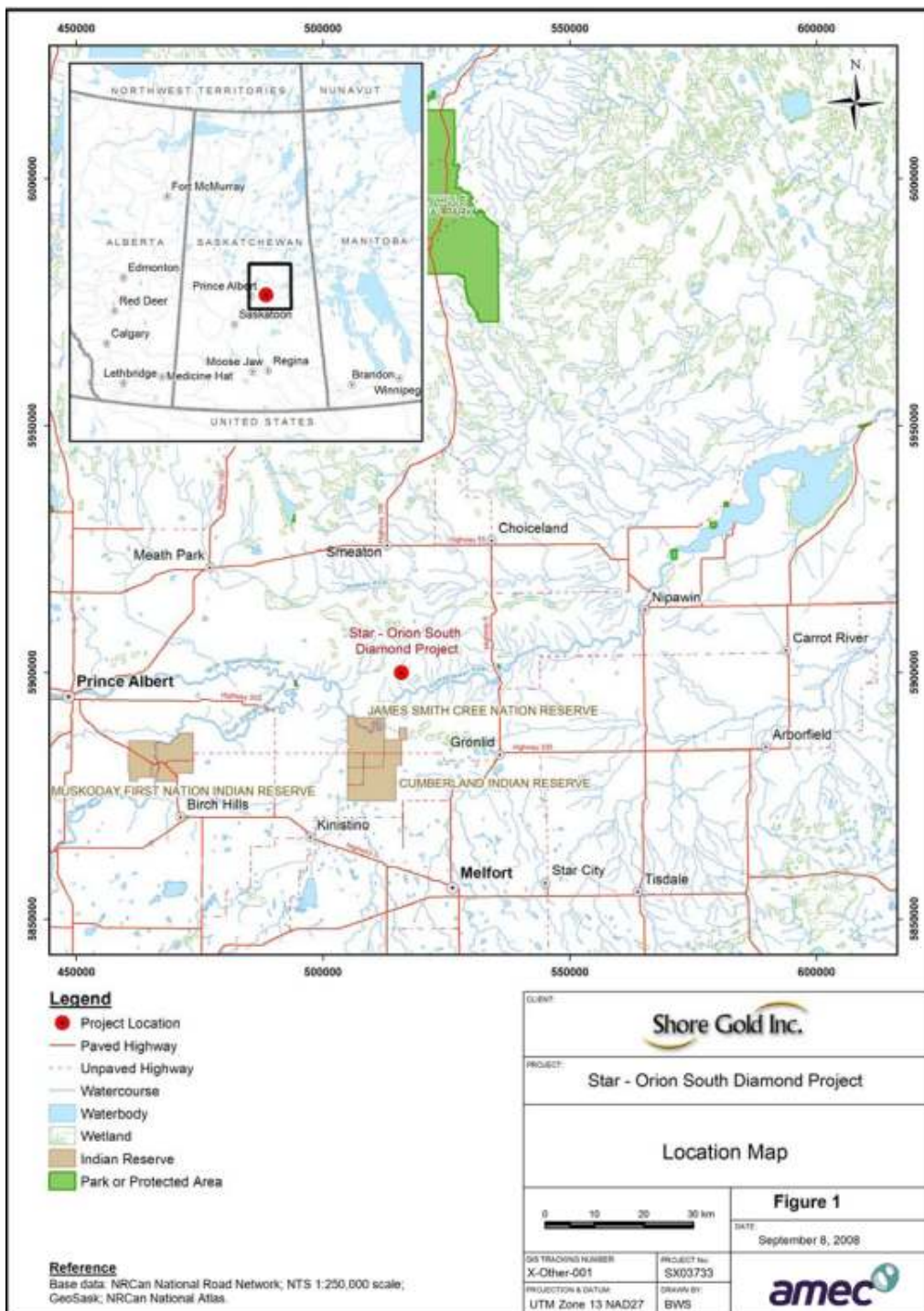
Pursuant to subsection 55(1) of the Act, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Registry (the Registry) has been established to provide timely notice of the environmental assessment and to facilitate public access to records related to the environmental assessment. The Registry consists of a project file and an Internet Site. The Internet Site of the Registry can be accessed at the following address:

http://www.ceaa.gc.ca/050/index_e.cfm (search using the Registry Reference Number).

Anyone wishing to obtain copies or view records on the Registry project file may contact Kris Frederickson at address listed above.

If you have general questions in relation to the Act, you can access the Agency website at: <http://www.ceaa-acee.gc.ca/>

Annex 1 – Map of Development Proposal



Annex 2 – Comprehensive Study Process and Federal Roles

Overview of the Comprehensive Study Environmental Assessment Process

As stated in Section 1.0, the purpose of this scoping document is to provide information to the public and to the proponent on the federal environmental assessment process, and to seek public comment on the federal environmental assessment to be conducted in relation to Star-Orion South Diamond Project. Although scoping in a comprehensive study includes an opportunity for public participation, participant funding is not provided to the public for this initial phase.

Following the public consultation period on the matters presented in this scoping document, the responsible authorities in accordance with Section 21(2) of the Act, will provide a report (called a track report) to the federal Minister of the Environment (the Minister) on the scope of the project, the factors to be considered and the scope of those factors, the results of the public consultation, the potential of the project to cause adverse environmental effects, and on the ability of the comprehensive study to address issues relating to the project. This scoping document will also form part of the track report that will be provided to the Minister. The responsible authorities will also provide the Minister with a recommendation on whether to continue the environmental assessment by means of a comprehensive study, or to refer the project to a mediator or a review panel.

After taking into account the matters the responsible authorities are required to report upon, the Minister must then decide whether to refer the project back to the responsible authorities to continue with the comprehensive study, or refer the project to a mediator or review panel. If the Minister decides that the project should continue as a comprehensive study, the project cannot be referred to a mediator or review panel at a later date.

If the Minister refers the project to a mediator or review panel, the project will no longer be subject to a comprehensive study under the Act. If the project is referred to a mediator, the mediation process must be agreed to by the proponent and key agencies and be focussed on resolving specific issues.

If the project is referred to a review panel, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (the Agency) recommends draft terms of reference for the Minister, potentially negotiates joint panel agreements on behalf of the Minister, and identifies, interviews and recommends to the Minister candidates for panel members. In most cases the Agency (and Province if applicable) prepares guidelines for preparing the Environmental Impact Statement. Both the guidelines and the subsequent Environmental Impact Statement will be made available for public comment. The public is also invited to attend hearings where they can provide further comment. The panel will then prepare a report and submit it and

recommendations to the Minister and to the responsible authorities for their consideration and response.

If the environmental assessment continues as a comprehensive study, a comprehensive study report will be prepared. During the conduct of the comprehensive study, the adverse environmental effects of the project as scoped for the purposes of the comprehensive study will be assessed and the effectiveness of proposed mitigation measures will be evaluated. The responsible authorities must ensure there are opportunities for public participation during the conduct of the comprehensive study. Following its completion, the responsible authorities will submit the comprehensive study report to the Minister and to the Agency.

The Agency will then invite the public to comment on the comprehensive study report prior to the Minister making a decision. If, prior to issuing the environmental assessment decision statement, the Minister determines that additional information is necessary or that there are public concerns that need to be further addressed, the Minister will request the responsible authorities or the proponent to ensure that any such additional information is provided or actions are taken to address such public concerns. Once the Minister issues the environmental assessment decision statement, the project will be referred back to the responsible authorities for appropriate action.

Whether the environmental assessment proceeds by means of a comprehensive study or is referred to a mediator or review panel, following the Minister's track decision participant funding will be made available by the Agency to facilitate public participation in the comprehensive study. (See Section 7.1 for additional information.)

Role of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency

For all comprehensive studies, the Agency is the federal environmental assessment coordinator (FEAC). In accordance with sections 12.1 – 12.4 of the Act, the Agency ensures that the responsible and federal authorities are identified, coordinates their participation in the comprehensive study, ensures federal authorities fulfill their obligations under the Act in a timely manner, and to the extent applicable facilitates the coordination of the federal environmental assessment process with the requirements of the province. The Agency has established a project committee which will coordinate the conduct of the comprehensive study, in the event that it continues.

In addition to its FEAC role, as this project is subject to the Initiative for Improving the Performance of the Regulatory System for Major Resource Projects, the Agency is the Environmental Assessment Manager and Crown Consultation Coordinator for this comprehensive study. In this capacity, the Agency leads the development and implementation of the public consultation and Aboriginal engagement/consultation work plans, and coordinates such engagement and consultation on behalf of the responsible

authorities, as set out in the respective work plan. The Agency, in collaboration with the responsible and federal authorities, also prepares drafts of the required documents in the comprehensive study process (scoping document, track report to the Minister of the Environment, and the comprehensive study report), and coordinates review of these documents by the responsible and federal authorities and obtains their sign-off and approval as appropriate.

Following posting of the Notice of Commencement on the Canadian Environmental Assessment Registry Internet Site, the Agency also undertakes all Canadian Environmental Assessment Registry requirements (both paper and electronic files) until the Minister's EA Decision Statement has been posted. In addition, the Agency manages the Participant Funding Program, which makes funding available following the Minister's track decision for participation in the comprehensive study. The Agency will also conduct a comment period on the comprehensive study report, once it has been finalized and submitted by the responsible authorities to the Minister and to the Agency. This will include notification about the comment period to interested or potentially affected Aboriginal groups and other affected parties.

In addition to its FEAC role, the Agency will post certain records on the Canadian Environmental Assessment Registry Internet Site as prescribed under subsection 55.2(1) of the Act (e.g. news releases, notices and environmental assessment decision statements and other records as required by the Act) and manages the Participant Funding Program, which makes funding available for participation in the comprehensive study process. The Agency will also conduct a public comment period on the comprehensive study report, once it has been finalized and submitted by the responsible authority(ies) to the Minister and to the Agency.

Role of Responsible and Federal Authorities

The responsible authorities are responsible under the Act for ensuring that a comprehensive study is conducted and a comprehensive study report is prepared. As noted in section 3.3 above, the responsible authorities have delegated this responsibility to the Agency, as Environmental Assessment Manager. The responsible authorities are responsible for providing specialist or expert knowledge or information with respect to the proposed project, and for reviewing and approving documents prepared by the Environmental Assessment Manager on their behalf, such as this scoping document. Following public consultation and engagement/consultation with Aboriginal groups on the scoping document, the responsible authorities will review and approve the track report and provide it and their recommendation to the Minister of the Environment. In the event that the Minister of the Environment refers the project back to the responsible authorities to continue as a comprehensive study, they will continue to work collaboratively with the federal authorities and the Agency as Environmental Assessment Manager and Crown

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Consultation Coordinator. This collaboration is to ensure that the comprehensive study is completed in accordance with the Act, and will provide a comprehensive study report to the Minister and to the Agency.