



# **DRAFT GUIDELINES FOR THE PREPARATION OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

**pursuant to the**

***Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012***

**SUNDOG RENEWABLE GENERATING STATION PROJECT**

**PROPOSED BY SUNDOG RGS GP INC.**

**AND**

**PELICAN RENEWABLE GENERATING STATION PROJECT**

**PROPOSED BY PELICAN RGS GP INC.**

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**DISCLAIMER**

This document is not a legal authority, nor does it provide legal advice or direction; it provides information only, and must not be used as a substitute for the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012* (CEAA 2012) or its regulations. In the event of a discrepancy, CEAA 2012 and its regulations prevail. Portions of CEAA 2012 have been paraphrased in this document, but will not be relied upon for legal purposes.

# Abbreviations and Short Forms

CEAA 2012	<i>Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012</i>
Agency	Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency
EA	environmental assessment
EIS	environmental impact statement
EIS Guidelines	environmental impact statement guidelines
Minister	Minister of Environment and Climate Change
Proponent	Sundog RGS GP Inc. or Pelican RGS GP Inc.
SARA	<i>Species at Risk Act</i>
VC	valued component

# Part 1 – Key Considerations

## PREAMBLE

The Sundog Renewable Generating Station (RGS) Project proposed by Sundog RGS GP Inc. and the Pelican Renewable Generating Station (RGS) Project, proposed by Pelican RGS GP Inc., are run-of-river hydroelectric facilities on the Athabasca River, 130 kilometers and 180 kilometers respectively, upstream of Fort McMurray, Alberta.

Given the similarities in the timing, location, physical works and activities for the Sundog and Pelican RGS Projects, the requirements outlined in this document for the development of an environmental impact statement (EIS) apply to each proponent for their respective project, as designated by the Minister of Environment and Climate Change (the Minister).

Sundog RGS GP Inc. and Pelican RGS GP Inc. (the proponents) are both wholly owned subsidiaries of Innergex Renewable Energy Inc. The proponents may choose to submit separate EISs for their respective project or may choose to submit a single EIS for both projects. Should the proponents choose to collaborate and submit a single EIS, the environmental effects of the Sundog RGS Project and the Pelican RGS Project, as well as applicable measures that would mitigate any significant adverse environmental effects of each project, must be captured in separate chapters.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to identify for the proponent the minimum information requirements for the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for a designated project<sup>1</sup> to be assessed pursuant to the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012* (CEAA 2012). This document specifies the nature, scope and extent of the information required. Part 1 of this document defines the scope of the environmental assessment (EA) and provides guidance and general instruction on the preparation of the EIS. Part 2 outlines the minimum information that must be included in the EIS.

Section 5 of CEAA 2012 describes the environmental effects that must be considered in an EA, including changes to the environment and effects of changes to the environment. The factors that are to be considered in an EA are described under section 19 of CEAA 2012. The Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (the Agency) or a review panel will use the proponent's EIS and other information received during the EA process to prepare a report that will inform the issuance of a decision statement by the Minister. Therefore, the EIS must include a full description of the changes the project will cause to the environment that may result in adverse effects on areas of federal jurisdiction (i.e. section 5 of CEAA 2012) including changes that are directly linked or necessarily incidental to any federal decisions that would permit the project to be carried out. The EIS must also include a list of key mitigation measures that the proponent proposes to undertake in order to avoid or minimize any adverse environmental effects of the project. It is the responsibility of the proponent to provide sufficient data and analysis on potential changes to the environment to ensure a thorough evaluation of the environmental effects of the project by the Agency or review panel.

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<sup>1</sup> In this document, "project" has the same meaning as "designated project" as defined in the *CEAA 2012*.

## **2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

### **2.1. Environmental assessment as a planning and decision making tool**

Environmental assessment (EA) is a process to predict environmental effects of proposed projects before they are carried out. An EA:

- identifies potential adverse environmental effects;
- proposes measures to mitigate adverse environmental effects;
- predicts whether there will be significant adverse environmental effects, after mitigation measures are implemented; and
- includes a follow-up program to verify the accuracy of the EA and the effectiveness of the mitigation measures.

### **2.2. Public participation**

One of the purposes identified in CEAA 2012 is to ensure that opportunities are provided for meaningful public participation during an EA. CEAA 2012 requires that the Agency provide the public with an opportunity to participate in the EA. For EAs led by the Agency the public has an opportunity to comment on the draft EA report. For EAs by a review panel, CEAA 2012 requires that the review panel hold a public hearing. Additional opportunities for participation may also be provided by the Agency or the review panel.

Meaningful public participation is best achieved when all parties have a clear understanding of the proposed project as early as possible in the review process. The proponent is required to provide current information about the project to the public and to the communities likely to be most affected by the project.

### **2.3. Engagement with Indigenous groups**

A key objective of CEAA 2012 is to promote communication and cooperation with Aboriginal peoples which includes, First Nations, Inuit and Métis. The proponent is expected to engage with potentially affected groups as early as possible in the project planning process. The proponent shall provide potentially affected groups with opportunities to learn about the project and its potential effects, make their concerns known about the project's potential effects, and discuss measures to mitigate those effects. The proponent is strongly encouraged to work with each potentially affected group in establishing an engagement approach. The proponent will make reasonable efforts to integrate traditional Aboriginal knowledge into the assessment of environmental impacts. For more information on incorporating Aboriginal traditional knowledge, refer to Part 1, Section 4.2.2 of these guidelines.

In order to fulfill the Crown's constitutional obligations to consult with potentially impacted groups, the Agency integrates its legal obligation for consultation and accommodation in the EA process. The information gathered by the proponent during its engagement with groups helps to contribute to the Crown's understanding of any potential adverse impacts of the project on potential or established Aboriginal or Treaty rights protected under section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982* ("section 35 Aboriginal rights") including title and related interests, and the effectiveness of measures proposed to avoid or minimize those impacts.

## **2.4. Application of the precautionary approach**

In documenting the analyses included in the EIS, the proponent will demonstrate that all aspects of the project have been examined and planned in a careful and precautionary manner in order to avoid significant adverse environmental effects.

## **3. SCOPE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

### **3.1. Designated Project**

On December 20, 2017, the Minister designated the Sundog RGS Project and the Pelican RGS Project under subsection 14(2) of CEAA 2012 to require an EA because the Projects may cause adverse environmental effects to areas of federal jurisdiction, including fish and fish habitat, migratory birds, federal lands, and Indigenous peoples' current use of lands and resources.

The EA will include the construction, operation, decommissioning and abandonment of the following project components and activities:

#### Main Works

- Headworks, including powerhouses, spillway, and embankment dam
- Head pond
- Substation
- Transmission line
- Access roads, including new roads and any upgrading to existing roads
- Fish passage, including any alternatives considered
- Boat passage, including any alternatives considered
- Construction ferry crossing

#### Associated Works and Activities

- Site clearing, earthmoving, leveling, excavation, and blasting activities
- Borrow areas
- Explosives storage, manufacturing, and handling
- Construction, operation, and removal of cofferdams and any other temporary construction works, including any diversion structures
- Construction activities and accommodations, including waste disposal, temporary work areas, laydowns, and camp facilities
- Power supply(source, quantity)
- Works for erosion control
- Water management facilities, including ditches, embankments, and containment ponds
- Filling of the head pond
- Drinking and industrial water requirements (source, quantity required, need for water treatment)
- Waste disposal for all waste streams



- Ancillary infrastructure (Administrative, maintenance, and storage buildings)

### 3.2. Factors to be considered

Scoping establishes the parameters of the EA and focuses the assessment on relevant issues and concerns. Part 2 of this document specifies the factors to be considered in this EA, including the factors listed in subsection 19(1) of CEAA 2012:

- 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 physical activities that have been or will be carried out;
- the significance of effects;
- comments from the public;
- mitigation measures that are technically and economically feasible and that would mitigate any significant adverse environmental effects of the project;
- the requirements of the follow-up program in respect 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 alternatives;
- any change to the project that may be caused by the environment;
- the results of any relevant regional study pursuant to CEAA 2012; and
- Under the authority of paragraph 19(1)(j) of CEAA 2012, the Agency also requires consideration of the following additional factor:
  - ✓ environmental and health and socio-economic effects of the Project on the Outstanding Universal Value of the Wood Buffalo National Park, namely on values, integrity and protection and management as described in its *Statement of Outstanding Universal Value*<sup>2</sup>.

#### 3.2.1. Changes to the environment

Environmental effects occur as interactions between actions (the carrying out of the project or decisions made by the federal government in relation to the project) and receptors in the environment, and subsequently between components of the environment (e.g., change in water quality that may affect fish).

Under CEAA 2012, an examination of environmental effects that result from changes to the environment as a result of the project being carried out or as a result of the federal government exercising any power duty or function that would allow the project to be carried out must be considered in the EIS.

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<sup>2</sup> Statements of Outstanding Universal Value are available at: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/>

In scoping the potential changes to the environment that may occur, proponents should consider any potential changes in the physical environment such as changes to air quality, water quality and quantity, and physical disturbance of land that could reasonably be expected to occur.

### 3.2.2. Valued components to be examined

Valued components (VCs) refer to environmental biophysical or human features that may be impacted by a project. The value of a component not only relates to its role in the ecosystem, but also to the value people place on it. For example, it may have been identified as having scientific, social, cultural, economic, historical, archaeological or aesthetic importance.

The EIS will identify the VCs linked to section 5 of CEEA 2012, including the ones identified in Part 2 (section 6.2) that maybe affected by changes in the environment, as well as species at risk and their critical habitat as per the requirement outlined in section 79 of the *Species at Risk Act*. Section 5 of CEEA 2012 defines environmental effects as:

- a change that may be caused to fish and fish habitat, marine plant and migratory birds;
- a change that may be caused to the environment on federal lands, in another province or outside Canada;
- with respect to aboriginal peoples, an effect of any change caused to the environment on:
  - ✓ health and socio-economic conditions;
  - ✓ physical and cultural heritage;
  - ✓ the current use of lands and resources for traditional purposes; or
  - ✓ any structure, site or thing that is of historical, archaeological, paleontological or architectural significance;
- for projects requiring a federal authority to exercise a power or perform a duty or function under another Act of Parliament;
  - ✓ a change, other than the ones mentioned above, that may be caused to the environment and that is directly linked or necessarily incidental to the exercise of the federal power or function.
  - ✓ the effect of that change, other than the ones mentioned above, on:
    - health and socio-economic conditions;
    - physical and cultural heritage; and
    - any structure, site or thing that is of historical, archaeological, paleontological or architectural significance.

The list of VCs presented in the EIS will be completed according to the evolution and design of the Project and reflect the knowledge acquired on the environment through public consultation and engagement with Indigenous groups. The EIS will describe what methods were used to predict and assess the adverse environmental effects of the Project on these valued components.

The VCs will be described in sufficient detail to allow the reviewer to understand their importance and to assess the potential for environmental effects arising from the project activities. The EIS will provide a rationale for selecting specific VCs and for excluding any VCs or information specified in these guidelines. Challenges may arise regarding particular exclusions, so it is important to document the information and the criteria used to justify the exclusion of a particular VC or piece of information. Justification may be based on, for example, primary data collection, computer modelling, literature

references, public participation or engagement with Indigenous groups, or expert input or professional judgement. The EIS will identify those VCs, processes, and interactions that either were identified to be of concern during any workshops or meetings held by the proponent or that the proponent considers likely to be affected by the project. In doing so, the EIS will indicate to whom these concerns are important (i.e. the public or Indigenous groups) and the reasons why, including environmental, cultural, historical, social, economic, recreational, and aesthetic considerations, and traditional knowledge. If comments are received on a component that has not been included as a VC, these comments will be summarized and the rationale for excluding the component will address the comments.

### 3.2.3. Spatial and Temporal boundaries

The spatial and temporal boundaries used in the EA may vary depending on the VC and will be considered separately for each VC, including for VCs related to current use of lands and resources for traditional purposes by Aboriginal peoples, or other environmental effects referred to under paragraph 5(1)(c) of CEAA 2012. The proponent is encouraged to consult with the Agency, federal and provincial government departments and agencies, local government and Indigenous groups, and take into account public comments when defining the spatial and temporal boundaries used in the EIS.

The EIS will describe the spatial boundaries, including local and regional study areas, of each VC to be used in assessing the potential adverse environmental effects of the project and provide a rationale for each boundary. Spatial boundaries will be defined taking into account the appropriate scale and spatial extent of potential environmental effects, community knowledge and Aboriginal traditional knowledge, current or traditional land and resource use by Indigenous groups, ecological, technical, and social and cultural considerations.

The temporal boundaries of the EA will span all phases of the project determined to be within the scope of this EA as specified under section 3.1 above. If impacts are predicted after project decommissioning, this should be taken into consideration in defining boundaries. Community knowledge and Aboriginal traditional knowledge should factor into decisions around defining temporal boundaries.

If the temporal boundaries do not span all phases of the project, the EIS will identify the boundaries used and provide a rationale.

## 4. PREPARATION AND PRESENTATION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

### 4.1. Guidance

The proponent is encouraged to consult relevant Agency policy and guidance<sup>3</sup> on topics to be addressed in the EIS, and to liaise with the Agency during the planning and development of the EIS. The proponent is also encouraged to consult relevant guidance from other federal departments.

Submission of regulatory and technical information necessary for federal authorities to make their regulatory decisions during the conduct of the EA is at the discretion of the proponent. Although that

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<sup>3</sup> Visit the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency website: <https://www.canada.ca/en/environmental-assessment-agency/services/policy-guidance.html>

information is not necessary for the EA decision, the proponent is encouraged to submit it concurrent with the EIS. While the EIS must outline applicable federal authorizations required for the project to proceed, the proponent must provide information relevant to the regulatory role of the federal government. It should be noted that the issuance of these other applicable federal legislative, regulatory and constitutional requirements are within the purview of the relevant federal authorities, and are subject to separate processes post EA decision.

## **4.2. Use of information**

### **4.2.1. Government Expert Advice**

Section 20 of CEEA 2012 requires that every federal authority with specialist or expert information or knowledge with respect to a project subject to an EA make that information or knowledge available to the Agency or review panel. The Agency will advise the proponent of the availability of any pertinent information or knowledge or expert and specialist knowledge received from other federal authorities or other levels of government so that it can be incorporated into the EIS.

### **4.2.2. Community Knowledge and Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge**

Sub-section 19(3) of CEEA 2012 states that “the environmental assessment of a designated project may take into account community knowledge and Aboriginal traditional knowledge”. For the purposes of these guidelines, community knowledge and Aboriginal traditional knowledge refer to knowledge acquired and accumulated by a local community or an Indigenous group.

The proponent will incorporate into the EIS the community knowledge and Aboriginal traditional knowledge to which it has access or that is acquired through public participation and engagement with Indigenous groups, in keeping with appropriate ethical standards and obligations of confidentiality. The proponent will integrate community knowledge and Aboriginal traditional knowledge into all aspects of its assessment including both methodology (e.g. establishing spatial and temporal boundaries, defining significance criteria) and analysis (e.g. baseline characterization, effects prediction, development of mitigation measures). Agreement should be obtained from Indigenous groups regarding the use, management and protection of their existing traditional knowledge information during and after the EA. For more information on how Aboriginal traditional knowledge can be obtained and incorporated in the preparation of the EIS, please refer to the Agency’s reference guide entitled “Considering Aboriginal traditional knowledge in environmental assessments conducted under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012*<sup>4</sup>”.

### **4.2.3. Existing information**

In preparing the EIS, the proponent is encouraged to make use of existing information relevant to the Project. When relying on existing information to meet requirements of the EIS Guidelines, the proponent will either include the information directly in the EIS or clearly direct the reader to where it may obtain the information (i.e., through cross-referencing). When relying on existing information, the proponent will also comment on how the data were applied to the project, separate factual lines of

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<sup>4</sup> [Considering Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge in Environmental Assessments conducted under CEEA 2012](#)

evidence from inference, and state any limitations on the inferences or conclusions that can be drawn from the existing information.

#### 4.2.4. Confidential information

In implementing CEAA 2012, the Agency is committed to promoting public participation in the environmental assessment of projects and providing access to the information on which environmental assessments are based. All documents prepared or submitted by the proponent or any other stakeholder in relation to the environmental assessment are included in the Canadian Environmental Assessment Registry and made available to the public on request. For this reason, the EIS will not contain information that:

- is sensitive or confidential (i.e., financial, commercial, scientific, technical, personal, cultural or other nature), that is treated consistently as confidential, and the person affected has not consented to the disclosure; or,
- may cause harm to a person or harm to the environment through its disclosure.

The proponent will consult with the Agency regarding whether specific information requested by these guidelines should be treated as confidential.

### **4.3. Study strategy and methodology**

The proponent is expected to respect the intent of these guidelines and to consider the environmental effects that are likely to arise from the project (including situations not explicitly identified in these guidelines), the technically and economically feasible mitigation measures that will be applied, and the significance of any residual effects. Except where specified by the Agency, the proponent has the discretion to select the most appropriate methods to compile and present data, information and analysis in the EIS as long as they are justifiable and replicable.

It is possible these guidelines may include matters which, in the judgement of the proponent, are not relevant or significant to the project. If such matters are omitted from the EIS, the proponent will clearly indicate it, and provide a justification so the Agency, federal authorities, Indigenous groups, the public and any other interested party have an opportunity to comment on this decision. Where the Agency or the review panel disagrees with the proponent's decision, it will require the proponent to provide the specified information.

The assessment will include the following general steps:

- ✓ identifying the activities and components of the project;
- ✓ predicting potential changes to the environment;
- ✓ predicting and evaluating the likely effects on identified valued components;
- ✓ identifying technically and economically feasible mitigation measures for any significant adverse environmental effects;
- ✓ determining any residual environmental effects;
- ✓ considering cumulative effects of the project in combination with other physical activities that have been or will be carried out; and
- ✓ determining the potential significance of any residual environmental effect following the implementation of mitigation.

For each VC, the EIS will describe the methodology used to assess project-related effects. The EIS could include an analysis of the pathway of the effects of environmental changes on each VC. The EIS will document where and how scientific, engineering, community knowledge and Aboriginal traditional knowledge were used to reach conclusions. Assumptions will be clearly identified and justified. All data, models and studies will be documented such that the analyses are transparent and reproducible. All data collection methods will be specified. The uncertainty, reliability, sensitivity and conservativeness of models used to reach conclusions must be indicated.

The EIS will identify all significant gaps in knowledge and understanding related to key conclusions, and the steps to be taken by the proponent to address these gaps. Where the conclusions drawn from scientific, engineering and technical knowledge are inconsistent with the conclusions drawn from Aboriginal traditional knowledge, the EIS will present each perspective on the issue and a statement of the proponent's conclusions and rationale.

The EIS will include a description of the environment (both biophysical and human), including the components of the existing environment and environmental processes, their interrelations as well as the variability in these components, processes and interactions over time scales appropriate to the likely effects of the project. The description will be sufficiently detailed to characterize the environment before any disturbance to the environment due to the project and to identify, assess and determine the significance of the potential adverse environmental effects of the project. These data should include results from studies done prior to any physical disruption of the environment due to initial site clearing activities. The information describing the existing environment may be provided in a stand-alone chapter of the EIS or may be integrated into clearly defined sections within the effects assessment of each VC. This analysis will include environmental conditions resulting from historical and present activities in the local and regional study areas.

If the baseline data have been extrapolated or otherwise manipulated to depict environmental conditions in the study areas, modelling methods and equations will be described and will include calculations of margins of error and other relevant statistical information, such as confidence intervals and possible sources of error. The proponent will provide the references used in creating their approach to baseline data gathering, including identifying where appropriate, the relevant federal or provincial standards. The proponent is encouraged to discuss the timeframe and considerations for its proposed baseline data with the Agency and affected Indigenous groups prior to submitting its EIS.

In describing and assessing effects to the physical and biological environment, the proponent will take an ecosystem approach that considers both scientific and community knowledge and Aboriginal traditional knowledge and perspectives regarding ecosystem health and integrity. The proponent will consider the resilience of relevant species populations, communities and their habitats. The assessment of environmental effects on Aboriginal peoples, pursuant to paragraph 5(1)(c) of CEEA 2012, will undergo the same rigour and type of assessment as any other VC (including setting of spatial and temporal boundaries, identification and analysis of effects, identification of mitigation measures, determination of residual effects, identification and a clear explanation of the methodology used for assessing the significance of residual effects and assessment of cumulative effects). The proponent will consider the use of both primary and secondary sources of information regarding baseline information, changes to the environment and the corresponding effect on health, socio-economics, physical and cultural heritage and the current use of lands and resources for traditional purposes. Primary sources of information include traditional land use studies, socio-economic studies, heritage surveys or other relevant studies conducted specifically for the project and its EIS. Often

these studies and other types of relevant information are obtained directly from Indigenous groups. Secondary sources of information include previously documented information on the area, not collected specifically for the purposes of the project, or desk-top or literature-based information. The proponent will provide Indigenous groups the opportunity to review and provide comments on the information used for describing and assessing effects on Aboriginal peoples prior to finalizing the EIS (further information on engaging with Indigenous groups is provided in Part 2, Section 5 of this document). Where there are discrepancies in the views of the proponent and Indigenous groups on the information to be used in the EIS, the EIS will document these discrepancies and the rationale for the proponent's selection of information.

The assessment of the effects of each of the project components and physical activities, in all phases, will be based on a comparison of the biophysical and human environments between the predicted future conditions with the project and the predicted future conditions without the project. In undertaking the environmental effects assessment, the proponent will use best available information and methods. All conclusions will be substantiated. Predictions will be based on clearly stated assumptions. The proponent will describe how each assumption has been tested. With respect to quantitative models and predictions, the EIS will document the assumptions that underlie the model, the quality of the data and the degree of certainty of the predictions obtained.

#### **4.4. Presentation and organization of the Environmental Impact Statement**

To facilitate the identification of the documents submitted and their placement on the Canadian Environmental Assessment Registry, the title page of the EIS(s) and its related documents will contain the following information:

- Project name and location;
- title of the document, including the term “environmental impact statement”;
- subtitle of the document;
- name of the proponent; and
- date of submission of the EIS.

The EIS will be written in clear, precise language. A glossary defining technical words, acronyms and abbreviations will be included. The EIS will include charts, diagrams, tables, maps and photographs, where appropriate, to clarify the text. Perspective drawings that clearly convey the various components of the project will also be provided. Wherever possible, maps will be presented in common scales and datum to allow for comparison and overlay of mapped features.

For purposes of brevity and to avoid repetition, cross-referencing is preferred. The EIS may make reference to the information that has already been presented in other sections of the document, rather than repeating it. The exception to this preference is the cumulative effects assessment, which should be provided in a stand-alone section. Detailed studies (including all relevant and supporting data and methodologies) will be provided in separate appendices and will be referenced by appendix, section and page in the text of the main document. The EIS will explain how information is organized in the document. This will include a list of all tables, figures, and photographs referenced in the text. A complete list of supporting literature and references will also be provided. A table of concordance, which cross references the information presented in the EIS with the information requirements identified in the EIS Guidelines, will be provided. The proponent will provide copies of the EIS and its

summary for distribution, including paper and electronic version in an unlocked, searchable PDF format, as directed by the Agency or review panel.

#### **4.5. Summary of the environmental impact statement**

The proponent will prepare a summary of the EIS in both of Canada's official languages (French and English) to be provided to the Agency at the same time as the EIS and which will include the following:

- a concise description of all key components of the Project and related activities;
- a summary of engagement with Aboriginal groups, the public, and government agencies, including a summary of the issues raised and the proponent's responses;
- an overview of expected changes to the environment;
- an overview of the key environmental effects of the project and proposed technically and economically feasible mitigation measures;  
an overview of how factors under paragraph 19(1) of CEAA 2012 were considered; and
- the proponent's conclusions on the residual environmental effects of the Project, and the significance of those effects, after taking into account mitigation measures.

The summary is to be provided as a separate document and should be structured as follows:

1. Introduction and EA context
2. Project overview
3. Alternative means of carrying out the project
4. Public participation
5. Engagement with Indigenous Groups
6. Summary of environmental effects assessment for each VC, including:
  - a. description of the baseline
  - b. anticipated changes to the environment
  - c. anticipated effects
  - d. mitigation measures
  - e. significance of residual effects
7. Follow-up and monitoring programs proposed

The summary will have sufficient details for the reader to learn and understand the Projects, potential environmental effects, mitigation measures, and the significance of the residual effects. The summary will include key maps illustrating the project location and key project components.



# Part 2 – Content of the Environmental Impact Statement

## 1. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

### 1.1. The proponent

In the EIS, the proponent will:

- provide contact information (e.g. name, address, phone, fax, email);
- identify itself and the name of the legal entity(ies) that would develop, manage and operate the Project;
- describe corporate and management structures;
- specify the mechanism used to ensure that corporate policies will be implemented and respected for the Project; and
- identify key personnel, contractors, and/or sub-contractors responsible for preparing the EIS.

### 1.2. Project Overview

The EIS will describe the Project, key project components and associated activities, scheduling details, the timing of each phase of the Project and other key features. If the Project is a part of a larger sequence of projects, the EIS will outline the larger context.

The overview is to identify the key components of the Project, rather than providing a detailed description, which will follow in Part 2, Section 3 of this document.

### 1.3. Project Location

The EIS will contain a description of the geographical setting in which the Project will take place. This description will focus on those aspects of the Project and its setting that are important in order to understand the potential environmental effects of the Project. The following information will be included:

- the Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) coordinates of the main project site;
- current land use in the area;
- distance of the project facilities and components to any federal lands;
- the environmental significance and value of the geographical setting in which the Project will take place and the surrounding area;

- environmentally sensitive areas, such as national, provincial and regional parks, ecological reserves, wetlands, estuaries, and habitats of federally or provincially listed species at risk and other sensitive areas<sup>5</sup>;
- description of local communities; and,
- traditional territories and/or consultation areas, treaty lands, Indian Reserve lands and Métis harvesting regions and/or seasonal or permanent settlements.

#### **1.4. Regulatory framework and the role of government**

The EIS will identify:

- any federal power, duty or function that may be exercised that would permit the carrying out (in whole or in part) of the Project or associated activities;
- legislation and other regulatory approvals that are applicable to the Project at the federal, provincial, regional and municipal levels;
- government policies, resource management, planning or study initiatives pertinent to the Project and/or EA and their implications;
- any treaty or self-government agreements between federal or provincial governments and Indigenous groups that are pertinent to the Project and/or EA;
- relevant existing or draft land use plans, land zoning, or community plans; and
- regional, provincial and/or national objectives, standards or guidelines that have been used by the proponent to assist in the evaluation of any predicted environmental effects.

## **2. PROJECT JUSTIFICATION AND ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

### **2.1. Purpose of the project**

The EIS will describe the purpose of the Project by providing the rationale for the Project, explaining the background, the problems or opportunities that the Project are intended to satisfy and the stated objectives from the perspective of the proponent. If the objectives of the Project are related to broader private or public sector policies, plans or programs, this information will also be included.

The EIS will also describe the predicted environmental, economic and social benefits of the Project. This information will be considered in assessing the justifiability of any significant adverse residual environmental effects as defined in section 5 of CEAA 2012, if such effects are identified.

### **2.2. Alternative means of carrying out the project**

The EIS will identify and consider the environmental effects of alternative means of carrying out the Project that are technically and economically feasible. The proponent will complete the assessment of

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<sup>5</sup> This shall include a description of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of Wood Buffalo National Park World Heritage Site, including a description of the features that contribute to the property's OUV and consideration of the values, integrity, and the protection and management of the Site (see the IUCN World Heritage Advice Note on Environmental Assessment [https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/import/downloads/iucn\\_advice\\_note\\_environmental\\_assessment\\_18\\_11\\_13\\_iucn\\_template.pdf](https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/import/downloads/iucn_advice_note_environmental_assessment_18_11_13_iucn_template.pdf))

alternative means in accordance with the Agency's Operational Policy Statement entitled "*Addressing "Purpose of" and "Alternative Means" under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012*".

In the alternative means analysis, the proponent will:

- Identify the alternative means to carry out the Project;
- Identify the effects of each technically and economically feasible alternative means;
- Select the approach for the analysis of alternative means (i.e., identify a preferred means or bring forward alternative means); and
- Assess the environmental effects of the alternative means.

In its alternative means analysis, the proponent will address, at a minimum, the following project components:

- location of the headworks;
- fish passage;
- boat passage;
- routing of transmission line;
- routing of access roads;
- construction methods for instream components;
- fill types and borrow sites; and
- any other relevant key project components.

The Agency recognizes that projects may be in the early planning stages when an EIS is being prepared. Where proponents have not made final decisions concerning the placement of project infrastructure, the technologies to be used, or that several options may exist for various project components, they are strongly encouraged to conduct an environmental effects analysis at the same level of detail assessment of the various options available (alternative means) within the EIS.

### **3. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

#### **3.1. Project components**

The EIS will describe the Project, by presenting the project components (as identified in Part 1, section 3.1), associated and ancillary works, and other characteristics that will assist in understanding the environmental effects. This will include:

- maps, at an appropriate scale, of the project location, the project components, boundaries of the proposed site with UTM coordinates, the major existing infrastructure, adjacent land uses and any important environmental features.

#### **3.2. Project activities**

The EIS will include descriptions of the construction, operation, decommissioning and abandonment associated with the proposed Project.

This will include descriptions of the activities to be carried out during each phase, the location of each activity, expected outputs and an indication of the activity's magnitude and scale.

Although a complete list of project activities should be provided, the emphasis will be on activities with the greatest potential to have environmental effects. Sufficient information will be included to predict environmental effects and address public concerns identified. Highlight activities that involve periods of increased environmental disturbance or the release of materials into the environment.

The EIS will include a summary of the changes that have been made to the Project since originally proposed, including the benefits of these changes to the environment, Indigenous peoples, and the public.

The EIS will include a schedule including time of year, frequency, and duration for all project activities.

The information will include a description of:

#### 3.2.1. Site preparation and construction

- site clearing, grading, excavation;
- explosive manufacture and storage (location and management);
- blasting (frequency and methods);
- borrow materials requirements (source and quantity);
- construction of access roads;
- water diversion required (location, methods, timing);
- equipment requirements (type, quantity);
- administrative buildings, garages, other ancillary facilities;
- construction camp (location, capacity, wastewater treatment);
- Power supply (source and quantity);
- Cofferdams;
- effluent management and treatment (quantity, treatment requirement, release point);
- contribution to atmospheric emissions, including emissions profile (type, rate and source);
- waste management and recycling; and
- number of employees, transportation of employees, work schedule, lodging requirement on site and off site.

#### 3.2.2. Operation

- equipment requirements;
- water management on the project site, including a detailed water management plan;
- contribution to atmospheric emissions, including emissions profile (type, rate and source);
- storage, handling, and transport of materials;
- waste management and recycling; and
- number of employees, transportation of employees, any other relevant work requirements.

#### 3.2.3. Decommissioning and abandonment

- the preliminary outline of a decommissioning and reclamation plan for any components associated with the Project;
- the ownership, transfer and control of the different project components;
- the responsibility for monitoring and maintaining the integrity of the remaining structures; and
- for permanent facilities, a conceptual discussion on how decommissioning could occur.

#### **4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND CONCERNS**

The EIS will describe the ongoing and proposed participation activities including information sessions that the proponent will hold or that it has already held on the Project. It will provide a description of efforts made to distribute project information and provide a description of information and materials that were distributed during the consultation process. The EIS will indicate the methods used, where the consultation was held, the persons and organizations consulted, the concerns voiced and the extent to which this information was incorporated in the design of the project as well as in the EIS. The EIS will provide a summary of key issues raised related to the project and its potential effects to the environment as well as describe any outstanding issues and ways to address them.

#### **5. ENGAGEMENT WITH INDIGENOUS GROUPS AND CONCERNS RAISED**

For the purposes of developing the EIS, the proponent will engage with Indigenous groups that may be affected by the Project, to obtain their views on:

- effects of changes to the environment on Aboriginal peoples (health and socio-economic conditions; physical and cultural heritage, including any structure, site or thing that is of historical, archaeological, paleontological or architectural significance; and current use of lands and resources for traditional purposes), and
- potential adverse impacts of the Project on potential or established section 35 rights, including title and related interests, in respect of the Crown's duty to consult, and where appropriate, accommodate Aboriginal peoples.

With respect to the effects of changes to the environment on Aboriginal peoples, the assessment requirements are outlined in Part 2, sections 6.1.9 and 6.3.4 of these guidelines. With respect to potential adverse impacts of the project on potential or established section 35 rights, including title and related interests, the EIS will document for each group identified in Part 2, Section 5.1 of these guidelines (or in subsequent correspondence from the Agency):

- potential or established section 35 rights<sup>6</sup>, including title and related interests, when this information is directly provided by a group to the proponent, the Agency or is available through public records, including:

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<sup>6</sup> The 2011 *Updated Guidelines for Federal Officials to Fulfill the Duty to Consult (the Guidelines)* defines Aboriginal rights as: practices, traditions and customs integral to the distinctive culture of the Aboriginal group claiming the right that existed prior to contact with the Europeans (Van de Peet). In the context of Métis groups, Aboriginal rights means practices, traditions, and customs integral to the distinctive culture of the Métis group that existed prior to effective European control, that is, prior to the time when Europeans effectively established political and legal control in the claimed area (*Powley*). Generally, these rights are fact and site specific. Visit the Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada website at: <http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100014664/1100100014675>

- ✓ geographical extent, nature, frequency and timing of the practice or exercise of the right; and
- ✓ maps and data sets (e.g., fish catch numbers);
- potential adverse impacts of each of the project components and physical activities, in all phases, on potential or established section 35 rights, including title and related interests. This assessment is to be based on a comparison of the exercise of the identified rights, title and related interests between the predicted future conditions with the project and the predicted future conditions without the Project. Include the perspectives of potentially impacted groups where these were provided to the proponent by the Indigenous groups;
- measures identified to accommodate potential adverse impacts of the Project on the potential or established section 35 rights, including title and related interests. These measures will be written as specific commitments that clearly describe how the proponent intends to implement them, and may go beyond mitigation measures that are developed to address potential adverse environmental effects;
- potential adverse impacts on potential or established section 35 rights, including title and related interests that have not been fully mitigated or accommodated as part of the EA and associated engagement with Indigenous groups. The proponent will also take into account the potential adverse impacts that may result from the residual and cumulative environmental effects. Include the perspectives of potentially affected groups where these were provided to the proponent by the groups.

The information sources, methodology and findings of the assessment of paragraph 5(1)(c) effects under CEAA 2012 may be used to inform the assessment of potential adverse impacts of the project on potential or established section 35 rights, including title and related interests. However, there may be distinctions between the adverse impacts on potential or established section 35 rights, including title and related interests and paragraph 5(1)(c) effects under CEAA 2012. The proponent will carefully consider the potential distinction between these two aspects and, where there are differences, will include the relevant information in its assessment.

In terms of gathering views from potentially affected groups with respect to both environmental effects of the Project and the potential adverse impacts of the Project on potential or established section 35 rights, including title and related interests, the EIS will document:

- VCs and related spatial and temporal boundaries suggested by groups for inclusion in the EIS, whether they were included, and the rationale for any exclusions;
- specific suggestions raised by each group for mitigating the effects of changes to the environment on Aboriginal peoples or accommodating potential adverse impacts of the Project on potential or established section 35 rights, including title and related interests;
- views expressed by each group on the effectiveness of the mitigation or accommodation measures;
- from the proponent's perspective, any potential cultural, social and/or economic impacts or benefits to each group identified that may arise as a result of the Project. Include the perspectives of potentially affected groups where these were provided to the proponent by the groups;
- any other comments, specific issues and concerns raised by potentially affected groups and how they were responded to or addressed;

- changes made to the project design and implementation directly as a result of discussions with potentially affected groups;
- where and how Aboriginal traditional knowledge was incorporated into the environmental effects assessment (including methodology, baseline conditions and effects analysis for all VCs) and the consideration of potential adverse impacts on potential or established section 35 rights, including title and related interests, and related mitigation measures; and
- any additional issues and concerns raised by potentially affected groups in relation to the environmental effects assessment and the potential adverse impacts of the Project on potential or established section 35 rights, including title and related interests.

The Agency recommends the proponent create a tracking table of key issues raised by each Indigenous group, including the concerns raised related to the Project, proposed mitigation measures, and where appropriate, a reference to the proponent's analysis in the EIS. Information provided related to potential adverse impacts on potential or established section 35 rights will be considered by the Crown in meeting its common law duty to consult obligations as set out in the *Updated Guidelines for Federal Officials to Fulfill the Duty to Consult* (2011).

### **5.1. Aboriginal Groups to Engage & Engagement Activities**

With respect to engagement activities, the EIS will document:

- the engagement activities undertaken with each group prior to the submission of the EIS, including the date and means of engagement (e.g., meeting, mail, telephone);
- any future planned engagement activities; and
- how engagement activities by the proponent allowed Indigenous groups to understand the Project and evaluate its effects on their communities, activities, potential or established section 35 rights, including title and related interests.

In preparing the EIS, the proponent will ensure that Aboriginal groups have access to timely and relevant information on the Project and how the Project may adversely impact them. The proponent will structure its Indigenous engagement activities to provide adequate time for Indigenous groups to review and comment on the relevant information. Engagement activities are to be appropriate to the Indigenous groups' needs and should be arranged through discussions with the groups. The EIS will describe all efforts, successful or not, taken to solicit the information required from Indigenous groups to support the preparation of the EIS.

The proponent will ensure that views of groups are recorded and that groups are provided with opportunities to validate the interpretation of their views. The proponent will keep detailed tracking records of its engagement activities, recording all interactions with Aboriginal groups, the issues raised by each Aboriginal group and how the proponent addressed the concerns raised. The proponent will share these records with the Agency.

For the groups expected to be most affected by the Project, the proponent is expected to strive towards developing a productive and constructive relationship based on on-going dialogue with the groups in order to support information gathering and the effects assessment. These groups include:

- Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation
- Beaver Lake Cree Nation High
- Big Stone Cree Nation

- Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement
- Chipewyan Prairie Dene First Nation
- Conklin Métis Local #193
- Fort Chipewyan Métis Local #125
- Fort McKay First Nation
- Fort McKay Metis Local #63
- Fort McMurray #468 First Nation
- Fort McMurray Métis Local #1935
- Heart Lake First Nation
- Kikino Métis Settlement
- Lac La Biche Métis Local #2097
- Lakeland Métis Local #1909
- Métis Nation of Alberta – Region 1
- Mikisew Cree First Nation
- Owl River Métis #1949
- Peerless Trout First Nation
- Sawridge First Nation
- Swan River First Nation
- Whitefish Lake First Nation #459
- Willow Lake Métis Local #780

For the above groups, the proponent will strive to use primary data sources and hold face-to-face meetings to discuss concerns. The proponent will facilitate these meetings by making key EA summary documents (baseline studies, EIS, key findings, plain language summaries) accessible in advance. The proponent will ensure there are sufficient opportunities for individuals and groups to provide oral input in the language of their choice. If possible, the proponent should consider translating information for these groups into the appropriate Indigenous languages(s) in order to facilitate engagement activities during the EA.

For groups that may also be affected by the Project, but to a lesser degree, the proponent will ensure these groups are notified about key steps in the EIS development process and of opportunities to provide comments on key EA documents and/or information to be provided regarding their community. The proponent will still ensure these groups are reflected in the baseline information and assessment of potential effects or impacts in the EIS. These groups include:

- Deninu K'ue First Nation
- Fort McMurray Métis Local #2020
- Fort Resolution Métis Council
- Fort Smith Métis Council
- Hay River Métis Council
- K'atlodeeche First Nation
- Little Red River Cree Nation
- Loon River Cree Nation
- Métis Nation of Alberta – Region 5
- Northwest Territory Métis Nation
- Salt River First Nation
- Smith's Landing First Nation



The groups referenced above may change as more is understood about the environmental effects of the Project or if the Project or its components change during the EA. The Agency reserves the right to alter the list of groups that the proponent will engage as additional information is gathered during the EA.

Upon receipt of knowledge or information of potential effects or adverse impacts to a group not listed above, the proponent shall provide that information to the Agency at the earliest opportunity.

## **6. EFFECTS ASSESSMENT**

### **6.1. Project setting and baseline conditions**

Based on the scope of the Project described in section 3 (Part 1), the EIS will present baseline information in sufficient detail to enable the identification of how the Project could affect the VCs and an analysis of those effects. Should other VCs be identified during the conduct of the EA, the baseline condition for these components will also be described in the EIS. To determine the appropriate spatial boundaries to describe the baseline information, refer to section 3.3.3 (Part 1). As a minimum, the EIS will include a description of:

#### **6.1.1. Atmospheric Environment**

- ambient air quality in the project areas and the results of a baseline survey of ambient air quality, including the following contaminants: total suspended particulates, fine particulates (PM<sub>2.5</sub>), particulate matters up to 10 micrometers in size (PM-10), sulfur oxide (SO<sub>x</sub>), volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and nitrogen oxide (NO<sub>x</sub>);
- identify and quantify existing greenhouse gas emissions<sup>7</sup> by individual pollutant measured as kilotons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent per year in the project study areas;
- direct and indirect sources of air emissions;
- current provincial/territorial/federal limits for greenhouse gas emission targets;
- current ambient daytime and nighttime noise levels at key receptor points (e.g. Indigenous communities, priority areas as described by Indigenous groups), including the results of a baseline ambient noise survey. Information on typical sound sources, geographic extent and temporal variations will be included;
- existing ambient night-time light levels at the project sites and at any other areas where project activities could have an effect on light levels. The EIS will describe night-time illumination levels during different weather conditions and seasons; and
- historical records of relevant meteorological information (e.g., total precipitation (rain and snow, mean, maximum and minimum temperatures and typical wind speed and direction).

#### **6.1.2. Geology and geochemistry**

- the bedrock and host rock geology of the river channel and surrounding area, including a table of geologic descriptions, geological maps and cross-sections of appropriate scale;

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<sup>7</sup> Greenhouse gas emissions include: carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), sulphur hexafluoride (SF<sub>6</sub>) and nitrogen trifluoride (NF<sub>3</sub>).

- bedrock lithology, geomorphology and geotechnical characteristics of areas proposed for construction of major project components;
- the geochemical characterization of excavated materials such as waste rock and potential construction material in order to predict metal leaching and acid rock drainage<sup>8</sup>;
- geological hazards that exist in the areas planned for the project facilities and infrastructure, including:
  - ✓ history of seismic activity in the area;
  - ✓ isostatic rise or subsidence; and
  - ✓ landslides, slope erosion and the potential for ground and rock instability, subsidence following project activities;
- Baseline concentrations of contaminants of concern within the local, regional and downstream receiving environment;
- sites that may be of paleontological and paleobotanical interest; and
- a description of regional and local geological structures, including major and local features, their formation, and general distribution.

#### 6.1.3. Topography and soil

- baseline mapping and description of landforms and soils within the local and regional project areas;
- soil maps depicting soil type distribution and diversity and properties (soil pH, organic matter, depths of horizon);
- potential for soil instability and erosion; and
- suitability of topsoil and overburden for use in the rehabilitation of disturbed areas.

#### 6.1.4. Groundwater and Surface Water

- local and regional hydrogeology, including:
  - ✓ the hydrogeological context, including the delineation of key stratigraphic and hydrogeologic boundaries, spatial distribution of major features, flow characteristics;
  - ✓ the physical properties of the hydrogeological units (e.g., hydraulic conductivity, transmissivity, saturated thickness, storativity, porosity, specific yield);
  - ✓ the groundwater flow patterns and rates;
  - ✓ a delineation and characterization of groundwater surface water interactions including the locations of groundwater discharge to surface water and surface water recharge to groundwater;
  - ✓ temporal changes in groundwater flow (e.g., seasonal and long term changes in water levels);

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<sup>8</sup> The manual produced by the Mine Environment Neutral Drainage (MEND) Program, entitled, MEND Report 1.20.1, "Prediction Manual for Drainage Chemistry from Sulphidic Geologic Materials", Version 0 - December 2009 is a recommended reference for use in acid rock drainage and metal leaching prediction.

- ✓ temperature changes in surface water as a result of groundwater-surface water interactions;
  - ✓ changes to surface water quality as a result of groundwater-surface water interactions;
  - ✓ a discussion of the hydrogeologic, hydrologic, geomorphic, climatic and anthropogenic controls on groundwater flow;
  - ✓ any local and regional groundwater resource use, including potable water and agricultural water uses, and a description of their current use and potential for future use;
  - ✓ all groundwater monitoring wells that may provide data relevant to the project, including their locations;
  - ✓ any monitoring protocols in place for collection of existing groundwater data; and
  - ✓ an appropriate hydrogeologic model for the project areas, including major structures such as the headpond and headworks, that discusses hydrogeological systems, flow regimes, analyses sensitivity to climatic variations (e.g. seasonal recharge) and hydrogeologic parameters (e.g. hydraulic conductivity) and includes a discussion of model assumptions.
- hydrology of the Athabasca River watershed<sup>9</sup>, including;
- ✓ the delineation of drainage basins, at appropriate scales (water bodies and watercourses), including intermittent streams, flood risk areas and wetlands, boundaries of the watershed and sub-watersheds, overlaid by key project components;
  - ✓ regional and local hydrology, including maps and relevant diagrams;
  - ✓ for each affected water body and watercourse, the total surface area, bathymetry, maximum and mean depths, water level fluctuations, type of substrate (sediments), discharge data at monthly, seasonal and annual flow rates and sediment transport characteristics;
  - ✓ any seasonal water quality data (e.g. water temperature, turbidity, pH, dissolved oxygen, suspended sediments, chemistry, nutrient load) and analytical interpretation at several representative local stream and water body monitoring stations established at the project site;
  - ✓ changes to surface water quality, including seasonal changes in runoff entering watercourses;
  - ✓ mercury and methylmercury concentrations, stores, mobility and fate in groundwater;
  - ✓ any local and regional potable surface water resource; and
  - ✓ ice formation and mechanical and dynamic break-up processes on the Athabasca River and associated tributaries, including any ice formation modelling done that describes seasonal variation, climatic variability, ice thickness and abundance and includes a discussion of model assumptions.

#### 6.1.5. Riparian, Wetland and Terrestrial Environments

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<sup>9</sup> Consideration of the Athabasca River watershed should include the entire river, from its headwaters to its confluence with Lake Athabasca, and will include the Peace-Athabasca Delta, as well as major tributaries contributing to flows along the Athabasca River's course.

- characterization of soils in the excavation area, in terrestrial and riparian environments, with a description of their past use;
- topography, drainage, geology and hydrogeology, and the physicochemical characteristics of potential on-land sediment or soil disposal sites;
- characterization of the shoreline, banks, current and future flood risk areas, and wetlands (fens, marshes, peatlands, mudflats and eelgrass beds, etc.), including the location and extent of wetlands likely to be affected by project activities according to their size, type (class and form), the description of their ecological function (ecological, hydrological, wildlife, socioeconomic, etc.) and species composition<sup>10</sup>; and
- plant and animal species (abundance, distribution and diversity) and their habitats, with a focus on species at risk or with special status that are of social, economic, cultural or scientific significance, as well as invasive alien species.

6.1.6. For potentially affected surface waters:

- fish populations on the basis of species and life stage, abundance, distribution, and movements, including information on the surveys carried out and the source of data available (e.g. location of sampling stations, catch methods, date of catches, species);
- aquatic resources (e.g. benthic communities, aquatic invertebrates, feeder species, aquatic plants) in terms of abundance, distribution, general life cycles, movements, and seasonal availability;
- habitat by homogeneous section, including the length of the section, width of the channel from the high water mark (bankful width), water depths, type of substrate (sediments), aquatic and riparian vegetation, and photos;
- instream flow needs and habitat preferences for resident fish species in the Peace River;
- natural obstacles (e.g. falls, beaver dams) or existing structures (e.g. water crossings) that hinder the free passage of fish;
- maps, at a suitable scale, indicating the surface area of potential or confirmed fish habitat for spawning, nursery, feeding, overwintering, migration routes, etc. This information should be linked to water depths (bathymetry) to identify the extent of a water body's littoral zone;
- fish or invertebrate species at risk that are known to be present including bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*) and Rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) and other valued fish species; and
- type and location of suitable habitats for fish species at risk that appear on federal and provincial lists and that are found or are likely to be found in the study area.

Note that certain intermittent streams or wetlands may constitute fish habitat or contribute indirectly to fish habitat. The absence of fish at the time of the survey does not irrefutably indicate an absence of fish habitat.

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<sup>10</sup> The Canadian Wetland Classification System, National Wetlands Working Group, 1997. See the website [http://www.gret-perg.ulaval.ca/fileadmin/fichiers/fichiersGRET/pdf/Doc\\_generale/WetlandsWetlands.pdf](http://www.gret-perg.ulaval.ca/fileadmin/fichiers/fichiersGRET/pdf/Doc_generale/WetlandsWetlands.pdf)

#### 6.1.7. Migratory birds and their habitat<sup>11</sup>

- birds and their habitats that are found or are likely to be found in the study area. This description may be based on existing sources, but supporting evidence is required to demonstrate that the data used are representative of the avifauna and habitats found in the study area. The existing data must be supplemented by surveys, if required
- abundance, distribution, and life stages of migratory and non-migratory birds (including waterfowl, raptors, shorebirds, marsh birds and other land birds) likely to be affected in the project area based on existing information, or surveys, as appropriate, to provide current field data;
- characterization of various ecosystems found in the project areas, likely to be affected, based on existing information (land cover types, vegetation); and
- year-round migratory bird use of the area (e.g. winter, spring migration, breeding season, fall migration), based on preliminary data from existing sources and surveys to provide current field data if appropriate.

#### 6.1.8. Species at Risk

- a list of all potential or known federally listed species at risk that may be affected by the Project (fauna and flora), using existing data and literature as well as surveys to provide current field data;
- a list of all federal species designated by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) for listing on Schedule 1 of the *Species at Risk Act*. This will include those species in the risk categories of extirpated, endangered, threatened and special concern.<sup>12</sup>
- any published studies that describe the regional importance, abundance and distribution of species at risk; and
- residences, seasonal movements, movement corridors, habitat requirements, key habitat areas, identified critical habitat and/or recovery habitat (where applicable) and general life history of species at risk that may occur in the project area, or be affected by the Project.

#### 6.1.9. Indigenous peoples

With respect to potential effects of any change that maybe caused to the environment on Indigenous peoples and the related VCs, baseline information will be provided for each group identified in section 5 (Part 2) of these guidelines (and any groups identified after these guidelines are finalized). Baseline information will describe and characterize the elements in paragraph 5(1)(c) of CEEA 2012 based on the spatial and temporal scope selected for the EA according to the factors outlined in Part 1, Section 3.3.3 of this document. Baseline information will also characterize the regional context of each of the elements of paragraph 5(1)(c) of CEEA 2012 to support the assessment of project related effects and

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<sup>11</sup> Surveys should be designed with reference to the Canadian Wildlife Service's guidance such as Technical Report No. 508, *A Framework for the Scientific Assessment of Potential Project Impacts on Birds* (Hanson *et al.* 2009). Appendix 3 of the Framework provides examples of project types and recommended techniques for assessing impacts on migratory birds.

<sup>12</sup> Proponents are encouraged to consult COSEWIC's annual report for a listing of the designated wildlife species: [http://www.cosewic.gc.ca/eng/sct0/index\\_e.cfm#sar](http://www.cosewic.gc.ca/eng/sct0/index_e.cfm#sar)

cumulative effects. Baseline information will be sufficient to provide a comprehensive understanding of the current state of each VC.

Baseline information for current use of lands and resources for traditional purposes will focus on the traditional activity (e.g. hunting, fishing, trapping, plant gathering, cultural practices) and include a characterization of all attributes of the activity that may be affected by environmental change. This includes not only identifying species of importance, but also assessing the quality and quantity of preferred traditional resources and locations, timing (e.g. seasonality, access restrictions, distance from community), ambient/sensory environment (e.g. noise, air quality, visual landscape, presence of others) and cultural environment (e.g. historical/generational connections, preferred areas). Specific aspects that will be considered include, but are not limited to:

- location of traditional territory, reserves and communities (including maps where available);
- location of hunting camps and cabins;
- traditional uses currently practiced or practiced in recent history;
- fish, wildlife, birds, plants or other natural resources of importance for traditional use;
- places where fish, wildlife, birds, plants or other natural resources are harvested, including places that are preferred;
- access and travel routes for conducting traditional practices;
- frequency, duration or timing of traditional practices;
- existing or proposed protected areas, special management areas, and conservation areas;
- cultural values associated with the area affected by the project and the traditional uses identified; and
- cultural values associated with the area affected by the Project and the traditional uses identified.

Baseline information for health<sup>13</sup> and socio-economic conditions will include the functioning and health of the socio-economic environment, encompassing a broad range of matters that affect communities in the study area in a way that recognizes interrelationships, system functions and vulnerabilities. Specific aspects that will be considered include, but are not limited to:

- drinking water sources (permanent, seasonal, periodic, or temporary);
- consumption of or reliance on country foods;
- which country foods are consumed by which groups, frequency, and location country foods are harvested;
- commercial activities (e.g. fishing, trapping, hunting, forestry, outfitting); and
- recreational uses.

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<sup>13</sup> The proponent should refer to Health Canada's *Useful Information for Environmental Assessments* document in order to include the appropriate baseline information relevant to human health. This document can be obtained at <http://www.publications.gc.ca/site/eng/481782/publication.html>

Baseline information for physical and cultural heritage<sup>14</sup> (including any site, structure or thing of archaeological, paleontological, historical or architectural significance) will consider all elements of cultural and historical importance to groups in the area and is not restricted to artifacts considered under provincial heritage legislative requirements. Specific aspects that will be considered include, but are not limited to:

- burial sites;
- cultural landscapes;
- sacred, ceremonial or culturally important places, objects or things; and
- archaeological potential and/or artifact places.

Any other baseline information that supports the analysis of predicted effects of project related changes to the environment on Indigenous peoples will be included as necessary. The EIS will also indicate how input from groups, including Aboriginal traditional knowledge, was used in establishing the baseline conditions related to health and socio-economics, physical and cultural heritage and current use of lands and resources for traditional purposes.

#### 6.1.10. Changes to the environment that would occur on federal lands, in another province or outside Canada

- Wood Buffalo National Park, including the Peace-Athabasca Delta

#### 6.1.11. Human environment

- the rural and urban settings likely to be affected by the Project;
- transportation infrastructure likely to be affected by the Project;
- the current use of land in the study area, including a description of hunting, recreational and commercial fishing, trapping, gathering, outdoor recreation, use of seasonal cabins, outfitters;
- current use of all waterways and water bodies that will be directly affected by the Project, including recreational uses, where available;
- location of and proximity of any permanent, seasonal or temporary residences or camps;
- health<sup>15</sup> and socio-economic conditions, including the functioning and health of the socio-economic environment, encompassing a broad range of matters that affect communities in the study area in a way that recognizes interrelationships, system functions and vulnerabilities, and;
- physical and cultural heritage, including structures, sites or things of historical, archaeological, paleontological or architectural significance.

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<sup>14</sup> Heritage resources to be considered will include but not be limited to, physical objects (e.g. middens, culturally-modified trees, historic buildings), sites or places (e.g. burial sites, sacred sites, cultural landscapes) and attributes (e.g. language, beliefs).

<sup>15</sup> The proponent should refer to Health Canada's Useful Information for Environmental Assessments document in order to include the appropriate baseline information relevant to human health. This document can be obtained at [http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/pubs/eval/environ\\_assess-eval/index-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/pubs/eval/environ_assess-eval/index-eng.php)

## 6.2. Predicted Changes to the Physical Environment

The assessment will include a consideration of the predicted changes to the environment as a result of the Project being carried out or as a result of any powers duties or functions that are to be exercised by the federal government in relation to the Project. These predicted changes to the environment are to be considered in relation to each phase of the Project (construction, operation, decommissioning, and abandonment) and are to be described in terms of the magnitude, geographic extent of the changes, the duration and frequency of change, and whether the environmental changes are reversible or irreversible. As changes to various parts of the physical environment, listed below, may be inter-related as part of an ecosystem, the EIS will explain and describe the connections between the changes described.

### 6.2.1. Changes to the atmospheric environment

- changes in air quality;
- an estimate of the direct greenhouse gas emissions associated with all phases of the Project as well as any mitigation measures proposed to minimize greenhouse gas emissions. This information is to be presented by individual pollutant and should also be summarized in CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent per year;
  - ✓ justify all estimates and emission factors used in the analysis;
  - ✓ provide the methods and calculations used for the analysis;
  - ✓ compare and assess the level of estimated emissions of greenhouse gases to the regional, provincial and federal emission targets;
- changes in ambient daytime and night time noise levels at key receptor locations; and
- changes in night-time light levels.

### 6.2.2. Changes to Groundwater, Surface Water and Fluvial Morphology

- changes to the hydrological and hydrometric conditions including instream flow conditions, velocity, quantity, depth, seasonal changes and flooding stages;
- changes to the ice regime of the Athabasca River and any associated tributaries;
- changes to the ecological functions provided by the Athabasca River, such as flooding, recharge to waterbodies, sediment transport, quantity or quality;
- changes to fluvial geomorphology, including changes to the channel, bed and erosion processes contributing to channel stability;
- changes to groundwater recharge/discharge areas and any changes to groundwater infiltration areas;
- changes to water quality in the Athabasca River or any associated tributaries, including turbidity, oxygen level, methylmercury concentrations, and water temperature.

### 6.2.3. Changes to riparian, wetland and terrestrial environments

- overall description of changes related to landscape disturbance;



- changes to migratory bird habitat, including losses, structural changes, fragmentation of habitat and wetlands (cover types, ecological land unit in terms of quality, quantity, diversity, distribution and functions) used by migratory birds;
- changes to critical habitat for federally listed species at risk; and
- changes to key habitat for species important to current use of lands resources.

### 6.3. Predicted effects on valued components

Based on the predicted changes to the environment identified in section 6.2, the proponent is to assess the environmental effects of the project on the followings VCs:

#### 6.3.1. Fish and Fish Habitat

- the identification of any potential adverse effects to fish and fish habitat as defined in subsection 2(1) of the *Fisheries Act*, including the calculations of any potential habitat loss (temporary or permanent) or alterations in terms of surface areas (e.g. spawning grounds, fry-rearing areas, feeding), and in relation to watershed availability and significance. The assessment will include a consideration of:
  - ✓ the geomorphological changes and their effects on hydrodynamic conditions and fish habitats (e.g. modification of substrates, dynamic imbalance, silting of spawning beds);
  - ✓ the modifications of hydrological and hydrometric conditions on fish habitat and on the fish species' life cycle activities (e.g. reproduction, fry-rearing, movements);
  - ✓ potential impacts on riparian areas that could affect aquatic biological resources and productivity taking into account any anticipated modifications to fish habitat;
  - ✓ any potential imbalances in the food web in relation to baseline; and
  - ✓ the potential risk of methylmercury production and accumulation in fish habitat and fish.
- the effects of changes to the aquatic environment on fish and their habitat, including:
  - ✓ changes to water quality or quantity, including nutrient availability, turbidity, temperature and dissolved gases;
  - ✓ the anticipated changes in the composition and characteristics of the populations of various fish species;
  - ✓ any modifications in migration or local movements (upstream and downstream migration, and lateral movements) following the construction and operation of works (physical and hydraulic barriers);
  - ✓ any reduction in fish populations as a result of potential overfishing due to increased access to the project area; and
  - ✓ any modifications and use of habitats by federally or provincially listed fish species.
- a discussion of how project construction timing correlates to key fisheries windows for freshwater and anadromous species, and any potential impacts resulting from overlapping periods; and
- a discussion of how vibration caused by blasting may affect fish behaviour, such as spawning or migrations.

### 6.3.2. Migratory Birds

- direct and indirect adverse effects on migratory birds, including population level effects that could be caused by all project activities, including, but not limited to:
  - ✓ site preparation;
  - ✓ deposit of harmful substances in waters that are frequented by migratory birds;
- collision risk of migratory birds with any project infrastructure and vehicles; and
- indirect effects caused by increased disturbance (e.g. noise, light, presence of workers), relative abundance movements, and losses or changes in migratory bird habitat, considering the critical breeding and migration periods for the birds.

### 6.3.3. Species at Risk

- for each habitat unit, the potential effects of the Project on federally listed species at risk and those species listed by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada classified as extirpated, endangered, threatened or of special concern (flora and fauna) and their critical habitat; and
- identify any potential direct or indirect effects on those identified species at risk.

### 6.3.4. Indigenous peoples

With respect to Indigenous peoples, a description and analysis of how changes to the environment caused by the Project will affect:

- current use of lands and resources for traditional purposes. This assessment will characterize the effects on the use or activity (e.g. hunting, fishing, trapping, plant gathering) as a result of the underlying changes to the environment (i.e. how will the activity change if the project proceeds). The underlying changes to the environment will also be described, including, but not limited to:
  - ✓ any changes to resources (fish, wildlife, birds, plants or other natural resources) used for traditional purposes (e.g. hunting, fishing, trapping, collection of medicinal plants, use of sacred sites),
  - ✓ any changes or alterations to access into the areas used for traditional purposes, including development of new roads, deactivation or reclamation of access roads and changes to waterways that affect navigation,
  - ✓ any changes to the environment that affect cultural value or importance associated with traditional uses or areas affected by the project (e.g. values or attributes of the area that make it important as a place for inter-generational teaching of language or traditional practices, communal gatherings, integrity of preferred traditional practice areas),
  - ✓ how timing of project activities (e.g. construction, blasting, discharges) have the potential to interact with the timing of traditional practices, and any potential effects resulting from overlapping periods,
  - ✓ consideration of the regional context for traditional use, and the value of the project area in that regional context, including alienation of lands from traditional use,
  - ✓ any changes to environmental quality (e.g. air, water, soil), the sensory environment (e.g. noise, light, visual landscape), or perceived disturbance of the environment (e.g. fear of

- contamination of water or country foods) that could detract from use of the area or lead to avoidance of the area,
- ✓ any changes to the environment resulting from the presence of worker or increased access to the area by non-Indigenous peoples (e.g. noise, competition for or pressure on resources), and
- ✓ an assessment of the potential to return affected areas to pre-project conditions to support traditional practices;
- human health, considering, but not limited to potential changes in air quality, quality and availability of country foods, drinking water quality, and noise exposure. When risks to human health due to changes in one or more of these components are predicted, a complete Human Health Risk Assessment (HHRA) examining all exposure pathways for pollutants of concern may be necessary to adequately characterize potential risks to human health;
- socio-economic conditions, including but not limited to:
  - ✓ the use of navigable waters,
  - ✓ forestry and logging operations,
  - ✓ commercial fishing, hunting, trapping, and gathering activities,
  - ✓ commercial outfitters, and
  - ✓ recreational use;
- physical and cultural heritage, and any structure, site or thing of historical, archaeological, paleontological or architectural significance to Aboriginal groups, including, but not limited to:
  - ✓ the loss or destruction of physical and cultural heritage,
  - ✓ changes to access to physical and cultural heritage, and
  - ✓ changes to the cultural value or importance associated with physical and cultural heritage;
- Other effects of changes to the environment on Indigenous peoples should be reflected as necessary.

6.3.5. Other VCs, selected because of federal lands, interprovincial, international concerns or related to issuance of a permit (if relevant)

Based on the changes to the environment that have been identified in section 6.2, additional VCs are to be selected based on the following:

Federal decisions under the:

- *Fisheries Act*, and
- *Navigation Protection Act*

Federal lands:

- Wood Buffalo National Park

Lands of international concern:

– Peace-Athabasca Delta<sup>16</sup>

If there is the potential for the Project to result in environmental changes on another province, then VCs of importance not already identified above are to be listed in this section. Any change to the physical environment necessitates the consideration of the effects to health or socio-economic conditions, physical and cultural heritage, or any structure, site, or thing that is of historical, archaeological, paleontological or architectural significance in the effects assessment under section 6.3.5.

#### **6.4. Mitigation**

Every EA conducted under CEAA 2012 will consider measures that are technically and economically feasible and that would mitigate any significant adverse environmental effects of the project. Under CEAA 2012, mitigation measures includes measures to eliminate, reduce or control the adverse environmental effects of a designated project, as well as restitution for damage to the environment through replacement, restoration, compensation or other means. Measures will be specific, achievable, measurable and verifiable, and described in a manner that avoids ambiguity in intent, interpretation and implementation. Mitigation measures may be considered for inclusion as conditions in the EA decision statement and/or in other compliance and enforcement mechanisms provided by other authorities' permitting or licensing processes.

As a first step, the proponent is encouraged to use an approach based on the avoidance and reduction of the effects at the source. Such an approach may include the modification of the design of the Project or relocation of project components.

The EIS will describe the standard mitigation practices, policies and commitments that constitute technically and economically feasible mitigation measures and that will be applied as part of standard practice regardless of location (including the measures directed at promoting beneficial or mitigating adverse socio-economic effects). The EIS will then describe the Project environmental protection plan and its environmental management system, through which the proponent will deliver this plan. The plan will provide an overall perspective on how potentially adverse effects would be minimized and managed over time. The EIS will further discuss the mechanisms the proponent would use to require its contractors and sub-contractors to comply with these commitments and policies and with auditing and enforcement programs.

The EIS will then describe mitigation measures that are specific to each environmental effect identified. Mitigation measures will be written as specific commitments that clearly describe how the proponent intends to implement them and the environmental outcome the mitigation is designed to address. Where mitigation measures have been identified in relation to species and/or critical habitat listed under the *Species at Risk Act*, the mitigation measures will be consistent with any applicable recovery strategy and action plans.

The EIS will specify the actions, works, minimal disturbance footprint techniques, best available technology, corrective measures or additions planned during the project's various phases to eliminate or reduce the significance of adverse effects. The EIS will also present an assessment of the effectiveness of the proposed technically and economically feasible mitigation measures. The reasons

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<sup>16</sup> The Peace-Athabasca Delta is a vast inland delta, designated as a RAMSAR wetland of international significance and is a component of the outstanding universal value of the Wood Buffalo National Park World Heritage Site.

for determining if the mitigation measure reduces the significance of an adverse effect will be made explicit. The proponent is also encouraged to identify mitigation measures for effects that are adverse although not significant.

The EIS will indicate what other technically and economically feasible mitigation measures were considered, and explain why they were rejected. Trade-offs between cost savings and effectiveness of the various forms of mitigation will be justified. The EIS will identify who is responsible for the implementation of these measures and the system of accountability.

Where mitigation measures are proposed to be implemented for which there is little experience or for which there is some question as to their effectiveness, the potential risks and effects to the environment should those measures not be effective will be clearly and concisely described. In addition, the EIS will identify the extent to which technology innovations will help mitigate environmental effects. Where possible, it will provide detailed information on the nature of these measures, their implementation, management and the requirements of the follow-up program.

Adaptive management is not considered as a mitigation measure, but if the follow-up program (refer to section 9) indicates that corrective action is required, the proposed approach for managing the action should be identified.

#### **6.5. Significance of residual effects**

After having established the technically and economically feasible mitigation measures, the EIS will present any residual environmental effects of the Project on the VCs identified in section 6.3. The residual effects, even if very small or deemed insignificant, will be described.

The EIS will then provide an analysis of the significance of the residual environmental effects that are considered adverse, using guidance described in section 4 of the Agency's reference guide *Determining Whether a Project is Likely to Cause Significant Adverse Environmental Effects under CEAA 2012*<sup>17</sup>.

The EIS will identify the criteria used to assign significance ratings to any predicted adverse effects. It will contain clear and sufficient information to enable the Agency or review panel, technical and regulatory agencies, Indigenous groups and the public to review the proponent's analysis of the significance of effects. The EIS will document the terms used to describe the level of significance.

The following criteria should be used in determining the significance of residual effects:

- ecological and social context<sup>18</sup>;
- magnitude;
- geographic extent;
- timing

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<sup>17</sup> Visit the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency's website at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/environmental-assessment-agency/news/media-room/media-room-2015/determining-whether-designated-project-is-likely-cause-significant-adverse-environmental-effects-under-ceaa-2012.html>

<sup>18</sup> The ecological and social context within which potential environmental effects may occur should be taken into account when considering the key criteria above in relation to a particular VC, as the context may help better characterize whether adverse effects are significant.

- frequency;
- duration;
- reversibility; and
- existence of environmental standards, guidelines or objectives for assessing the impact.

In assessing significance against these criteria the proponent will, where possible, use relevant existing regulatory documents, environmental standards, guidelines, or objectives such as prescribed maximum levels of emissions or discharges of specific hazardous agents into the environment. The EIS will contain a section which explains the assumptions, definitions and limits to the criteria mentioned above in order to maintain consistency between the effects on each VC.

Where significant adverse effects are identified, the EIS will set out the probability (likelihood) that they will occur, and describe the degree of scientific uncertainty related to the data and methods used within the framework of its environmental analysis.

## **6.6. Other Effects to Consider**

### **6.6.1. Effects of potential accidents or malfunctions**

The failure of certain works caused by human error or exceptional natural events (e.g. flooding, earthquake) could cause major effects. The proponent will therefore conduct an analysis of the risks of accidents and malfunctions, across all phases of the project, determine their effects and present preliminary emergency measures.

Taking into account the lifespan of different project components, the proponent will identify the probability of potential accidents and malfunctions related to the Project, including an explanation of how those events were identified, potential consequences (including the environmental effects as defined in section 5 of CEEA 2012), the plausible worst case scenarios and the effects of these scenarios.

This assessment will include an identification of the magnitude of an accident and/or malfunction, including the quantity, mechanism, rate, form and characteristics of the contaminants and other materials likely to be released into the environment during the accident and malfunction events and would potentially result in an adverse environmental effect as defined in section 5 of CEEA 2012.

The EIS will describe the preventative measures and safeguards that have been established to protect against such occurrences and the contingency and emergency response procedures in place if such events do occur.

### **6.6.2. Effects of the environment on the Project**

The EIS will take into account how local conditions and natural hazards, such as severe and/or extreme weather conditions and external events (e.g. flooding, drought, ice jams, landslides, avalanches, erosion, subsidence, fire, outflow conditions and seismic events) could adversely affect the Project and how this in turn could result in impacts to the environment (e.g., extreme environmental conditions result in malfunctions and accidental events). These events will be considered in different probability patterns (i.e. 5-year flood vs. 100-year flood). Longer-term effects of climate change will also be discussed up to the projected post-closure phase of the Project. This discussion will include a description of climate data used.

The EIS will provide details of planning, design and construction strategies intended to minimize the potential environmental effects of the environment on the Project.

### 6.6.3. Cumulative effects assessment

The proponent will identify and assess the Projects' cumulative effects using the approach described in the Agency's Operational Policy Statement entitled *Addressing Cumulative Environmental Effects under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012* and the guide entitled *Technical Guidance for Assessing Cumulative Effects under CEAA 2012*<sup>19</sup>.

Cumulative effects are defined as changes to the environment due to the project combined with the existence of other past, present and reasonably foreseeable physical activities. Cumulative effects may result if:

- implementation of the project being studied may cause direct residual adverse effects on the valued components, taking into account the application of technically and economically feasible mitigation measures; and
- the same VCs may be affected by other past, present or reasonably foreseeable physical activities<sup>20</sup>.

Valued components that would not be affected by the Project or would be affected positively by the Project can, therefore, be omitted from the cumulative effects assessment. A cumulative effect on an environmental component may, however, be important even if the assessment of the project's effects on this component reveals that the effects of the project are minor.

In its EIS, the proponent will:

- Identify and provide a rationale for the VCs that will constitute the focus of the cumulative effects assessment, emphasizing this assessment on the VCs most likely to be affected by the project and other project and activities. To this end, the proponent must consider, without limiting itself thereto, the following components likely to be affected by the Project:
  - ✓ Athabasca River, including its hydrology and ice formation processes,
  - ✓ fish and fish habitat, including bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*) and Rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*), and other valued fish species,
  - ✓ the Outstanding Universal Values of Wood Buffalo National Park, including the Peace-Athabasca Delta,
  - ✓ species at risk, and
  - ✓ Indigenous peoples;
- Identify and justify the spatial and temporal boundaries for the cumulative effect assessment for each VC selected. The boundaries for the cumulative effects assessments will generally be different for each VC considered. These cumulative effects boundaries will also generally be larger than the boundaries for the corresponding project effects;

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<sup>19</sup> Visit the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency's website at: [www.ceaa-acee.gc.ca/](http://www.ceaa-acee.gc.ca/)

<sup>20</sup> These terms are defined in the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency's *Technical Guidance for Assessing Cumulative Environmental Effects under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012*, Draft, December 2014 – <http://www.ceaa-acee.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=en&n=B82352FF-1&offset=&toc=hide>

- Identify the sources of potential cumulative effects. Specify other projects or activities that have been or that are likely to be carried out that could cause effects on each selected VC within the boundaries defined, and whose effects would act in combination with the residual effects of the project. This assessment may consider the results of any relevant study conducted by a committee established under section 73 or 74 of CEEA 2012.
- assess the cumulative effects on each VC selected by comparing the future scenario with the project and without the project. Effects of past activities (activities that have been carried out) will be used to contextualize the current state of the VC. In assessing the cumulative effects on current use of lands and resources for traditional purposes, the assessment will focus on the cumulative effects on the relevant activity (e.g. hunting, fishing, trapping, plant harvesting);
- Describe the mitigation measures that are technically and economically feasible. The proponent shall assess the effectiveness of the measures applied to mitigate the cumulative effects. In cases where measures exist that are beyond the scope of the proponent's responsibility that could be effectively applied to mitigate these effects, the proponent will identify these effects and the parties that have the authority to act. In such cases, the EIS will summarize the discussions that took place with the other parties in order to implement the necessary measures over the long term;
- Determine the significance of the cumulative effects; and
- Develop a follow-up program to verify the accuracy of the assessment or to dispel the uncertainty concerning the effectiveness of mitigation measures for certain cumulative effects.

The proponent is encouraged to consult with key stakeholders prior to finalizing the choice of VCs and the appropriate boundaries to assess cumulative effects.

#### 6.6.4. Effects on the Outstanding Universal Value of Wood Buffalo National Park

Pursuant to paragraph 19(1)(j) of CEEA 2012, the following additional matter relevant to the environmental assessment must be taken into account:

- environmental and health and socio-economic effects , including direct, indirect and cumulative effects, of the Project on the Outstanding Universal Value of the Wood Buffalo National Park, namely on values, integrity and protection and management as described in its *Statement of Outstanding Universal Value*.

Natural World Heritage sites are internationally recognized as being of Outstanding Universal Value to humanity under the World Heritage Convention and are inscribed on the World Heritage List. Wood Buffalo National Park was inscribed on the World Heritage List based on the following World Heritage criteria:

Criterion (vii): The great concentrations of migratory wildlife are of world importance and the rare and superlative natural phenomena include a large inland delta, salt plains and gypsum karst that are equally internationally significant.

Criterion (ix): Wood Buffalo National Park is the most ecologically complete and largest example of the entire Great Plains-Boreal grassland ecosystem of North America, the only place where the predator-prey relationship between wolves and wood bison has continued, unbroken, over time.



Criterion (x): Wood Buffalo National Park contains the only breeding habitat in the world for the whooping crane, an endangered species brought back from the brink of extinction through careful management of the small number of breeding pairs in the park. The park's size (4.5 million ha), complete ecosystems and protection are essential for in-situ conservation of the whooping crane.

The proponent will assess the potential environmental and health and socio-economic effects of the Project on the Outstanding Universal Values of Wood Buffalo National Park. Some project activities might have a positive impact as they enhance certain values, while others might compromise ascribed values and could lead to the deterioration of the heritage site. For example, increased infrastructure or improved access can impact social and cultural uses of a heritage site. Other impacts may be society's valuing of a heritage site due to the proximity of project activities or changes in local population due to the influx of workers. Change in local population or access can lead to illegal extraction of biological or geological resources, threatening the Outstanding Universal Value of a World Heritage site. These should be identified in close consultation with local communities and Indigenous groups.

## **7. SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS ASSESSMENT**

The EIS will contain a table summarising the following key information:

- potential environmental effects on VCs;
- proposed mitigation measures to address the effects identified; and
- potential residual effects and the significance of the residual environmental effects.

The summary table will be used in the EA Report prepared by the Agency or review panel. An example of a format for the key summary table is provided in Appendix 1 of this document.

In a second table, the EIS will summarize all key mitigation measures and commitments made by the proponent which will more specifically mitigate any significant adverse effects of the project on valued components (i.e., those measures that are essential to ensure that the project will not result in significant adverse environmental effects).

## **8. FOLLOW-UP AND MONITORING PROGRAMS**

A follow-up program is designed to verify the accuracy of the effects assessment and to determine the effectiveness of the measures implemented to mitigate the adverse effects of the Project. Where there is uncertainty about effects outcomes, the proponent will show evidence of detailed follow-up and monitoring programs to identify change, and identify adaptive management measures that will be applied.

Considerations for developing a follow-up program include:

- whether the Project will impact environmentally sensitive areas/VCs or protected areas or areas under consideration for protection;
- the nature of Indigenous and public concerns raised about the Project;
- the accuracy of predictions;
- whether there is a question about the effectiveness of mitigation measures or the proponent proposes to use new or unproven techniques and technology;

- the nature of cumulative environmental effects;
- the nature, scale and complexity of the program; and
- whether there was limited scientific knowledge about the effects in the EA.

The goal of a monitoring program is to ensure that proper measures and controls are in place in order to decrease the potential for environmental degradation during all phases of project development, and to provide clearly defined action plans and emergency response procedures to account for human and environmental health and safety.

### **8.1. Follow-up Program**

The duration of the follow-up program shall be as long as required for the environment to regain its equilibrium and to evaluate the effectiveness of the mitigation measures.

The EIS shall present a preliminary follow-up program and shall include:

- objectives of the follow-up program and the VCs targeted by the program;
- list of elements requiring follow-up;
- number of follow-up studies planned as well as their main characteristics (list of the parameters to be measured, planned implementation timetable, etc.);
- intervention mechanism used in the event that an unexpected deterioration of the environment is observed;
- mechanism to disseminate follow-up results among the concerned populations;
- accessibility and sharing of data for the general population;
- opportunity for the proponent to take advantage of the participation of Indigenous groups and stakeholders on the affected territory, during the implementation of the program; and
- involvement of local and regional organizations in the design, implementation and evaluation of the follow-up results as well as any updates, including a communication mechanism between these organizations and the proponent.

### **8.2. Monitoring**

The proponent will prepare an environmental monitoring program for all phases of the Project.

Specifically, the environmental impact statement shall present an outline of the preliminary environmental monitoring program, including the:

- identification of the interventions that pose risks to one or more of the components and the measures and means planned to protect the environment;
- identification of regulatory instruments that include a monitoring program requirement for the valued components;
- description of the characteristics of the monitoring program where foreseeable (e.g., location of interventions, planned protocols, list of measured parameters, analytical methods employed, schedule, human and financial resources required);

- description of the proponent’s intervention mechanisms in the event of the observation of non-compliance with the legal and environmental requirements or with the obligations imposed on contractors by the environmental provisions of their contracts;
- guidelines for preparing monitoring reports (number, content, frequency, format) that will be sent to the authorities concerned; and
- plans to engage Indigenous groups in monitoring, where appropriate.

### Appendix 1 Example - Summary Table of Environmental Assessment

Valued Component affected	Area of federal jurisdiction <sup>21</sup> (v)	Project Activity	Potential effects	Proposed mitigation	Residual effect	<i>Magnitude</i>	<i>Extent</i>	<i>Duration</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Reversibility</i>	<i>Other criteria used to determine significance</i> <sup>22</sup>	Significance of residual adverse effect
Fish and fish habitat												
Migratory birds												
Species at risk												
Current use of land and resource for traditional purpose	v 5(1)(c)(iii)											
Any other VCs identified												

<sup>21</sup> Indicate by a check mark which valued components can be considered “environmental effects” as defined in section 5 of CEAA 2012, and specify which subsection of this Act is relevant. For example, for the VC “Use of land and resources by Aboriginal people”, the appropriate cell would indicate, section 5(1)(c)(iii).

<sup>22</sup> The ecological and social context within which potential environmental effects may occur should be taken into account when considering the key criteria above in relation to a particular VC, as the context may help better characterize whether adverse effects are significant.