

**PROJECT 6 - ALL-SEASON ROAD LINKING MANTO SIPI
CREE NATION, BUNIBONIBEE CREE NATION & GOD'S LAKE
FIRST NATION**

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
SCOPING DOCUMENT**

PREPARED FOR:

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of Scoping Document

The purpose of this Scoping Document is to provide information related to the scope of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for a proposed All-Season Road (ASR) linking Manto Sipi Cree Nation (CN), Bunibonibee CN and God's Lake First Nation (FN) (the Project).

The Scoping Document for the Project has been developed with consideration of:

- Requirements under *The Environment Act* E125 (Manitoba) for transportation developments; and
- Importance and need to use Aboriginal and local knowledge, and public and stakeholder input into the environmental assessment process.

1.2 Background

Manitoba East Side Road Authority (ESRA) was established as a provincial Crown Agency and tasked with a strategic initiative to provide improved, safe and more reliable transportation services among the communities on the East Side of Lake Winnipeg. ESRA however, has been absorbed into Manitoba Infrastructure (MI) which will continue to manage the project. As a part of this initiative, MI is looking to construct an ASR linking Manto Sipi CN, Bunibonibee CN and God's Lake FN.

In support of the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Project, MI is proceeding with an EIA including biophysical, heritage resources, socio-economic and Traditional Knowledge (TK) studies, as well as Aboriginal and stakeholder¹ engagement.

1.3 Regulatory Framework

The Project constitutes a Class 2 Development as a two-lane road at a new location, and associated facilities and borrow pits, as defined by the Classes of Development Regulation 164/88 under *The Environment Act* E125 (Manitoba).

Because the Project involves the construction and operation of an all-season public highway greater than 50 kilometers (km) on new right-of-way (ROW), it is a designated project under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* 2012, and may require an EIA under that legislation.

The EIS will outline other regulatory and other approvals required for Project implementation.

¹ When used on its own, the term 'stakeholder' means all interested parties.

2 Scope of Project and Assessment

2.1 Scope of Project

The scope of the Project will comprise the physical works and activities associated with the construction, operation and maintenance of the components of the ASR and associated infrastructure. This will also include decommissioning of temporary Project components, and providing for the restoration of disturbed areas such as quarries and borrow areas. After ASR construction, the sections of the existing winter road not used for the ASR alignment will be abandoned. The Project scope will not include decommissioning of the ASR itself as it is expected that the road will be in operation well into the foreseeable future.

Project components include:

- ASR (138.3 km) linking Manto Sipi CN, Bunibonibee CN and God's Lake FN on new ROW;
- Up to two steel girder or concrete bridges at the two major water crossings;
- Approximately 52 other stream crossings using corrugated metal culverts;
- Equalization culverts to maintain surficial groundwater movement;
- Temporary construction bridges, access roads and trails, camp facilities and laydown areas; and
- Rock quarries and borrow areas.

The EIS will describe the Project using appropriate figures, diagrams, maps and/or orthophotos, and will include the following:

- Location of the ASR and associated Project works, as described above;
- Legal description of land upon which the road will be constructed;
- Land ownership including ownership of mineral rights;
- Existing land use and land use designations currently in place;
- Proposed schedule for stages of the Project;
- Other federal or provincial approvals, licences, permits, work orders and/or authorizations required for the proposed Project;
- Project funding and sources;
- Results of Aboriginal and public engagement undertaken in conjunction with Project planning;
- Plans for decommissioning of temporary infrastructure, facilities and work areas; and
- Plans for eventual abandonment of the existing winter road (not used for the ASR alignment) connecting Manto Sipi CN, Bunibonibee CN and God's Lake FN.

2.2 Scope of Assessment

The scope of the assessment will address the requirements of a Class 2 Development pursuant to *The Environment Act*, including conducting an environmental assessment, carrying out public consultation, and preparing an environmental assessment report (the EIS).

The definition of “environment” refers to air, land and water, and plant and animal life, including humans. The definition considers ecological, social and economic components of the environment consistent with the principles of sustainable development.

The following factors will be considered in the environmental assessment:

- Need and purpose of the proposed Project;
- Alternative means of carrying out the proposed Project that are technically and economically feasible, and the environmental effects of any such alternatives;
- Environmental effects of the proposed Project, including the environmental effects of malfunctions or accidents that may occur;
- Effects of the environment on the proposed Project;
- Cumulative environmental effects that are likely to result from the proposed Project in combination with the effects of other projects and activities that have been or will be carried out for the reasonably foreseeable future;
- Comments from the local communities, other Aboriginal people and the public that are received during the Aboriginal and Public Engagement Program (APEP);
- Measures that are technically and economically feasible that would mitigate adverse environmental effects;
- Requirements of a follow-up program; and
- Significance of the residual environmental effects.

The assessment will consider previous studies and activities relating to feasibility, exploration, project siting and prior authorization received from other government agencies.

3 Engagement

Stakeholder engagement is an integral part of the planning and assessment process for the Project. The APEP for the Project involves Aboriginal (FN and Métis) and non-Aboriginal communities and organizations, government departments and agencies, and other potentially affected or interested stakeholders. Comments and questions obtained through the APEP and MI's responses will be summarized by community and organization, and documented in the EIS.

3.1 Objectives

The overall objective of the APEP is to provide information on the Project to interested and potentially affected parties and to create meaningful opportunities to receive input on the Project. The APEP aims to achieve the following:

- Provide opportunities for the public, and other stakeholders to participate throughout the EIA process;
- Provide opportunities for involvement of local Aboriginal people and residents who may be directly affected by the Project throughout the environmental assessment and the various stages of Project development;
- Receive meaningful input into the Project planning, development and operation and specifically to:
 - Clearly communicate the purpose and scope of the Project;

- Obtain information on biophysical and related features including the use of the landscape, key features and heritage resources, and cultural and traditional practices in the Local Assessment Area;
- Identify potential environmental effects and effective mitigation measures, and opportunities to enhance Project benefits;
- Identify the need for follow-up plans and monitoring programs;
- Adopt an adaptive approach to adjust the APEP in response to stakeholder interests; and
- Communicate to stakeholders how input and information provided was used.

3.2 Approach

The APEP builds on past studies, ongoing discussions with the Manto Sipi CN, Bunibonibee CN and God's Lake FN, as well as other Aboriginal communities and stakeholders with interest in the east side of Lake Winnipeg. MI / ESRA has had ongoing discussions with these three communities and others since 2009 with respect to the development of an ASR network on the east side of Lake Winnipeg, the use of TK and local knowledge into the selection of the ASR alignments and, specifically for this Project, the alignment selection for the road linking Manto Sipi CN, Bunibonibee CN and God's Lake FN. Specific to the EIA for this Project, MI is conducting three rounds (4, 5 and 6) of engagement with the three local Cree Nation communities and the God's Lake Narrows Northern Affairs Community (NAC) who will be directly affected by the Project, for the purpose of identifying valued components (VCs), obtaining feedback on potential effects and mitigation, and presenting the results of the environmental assessment.

TK will be incorporated into the EIA process by providing local information pertaining to traditional land uses, economic activities, ceremonial pursuits, as well as local ecological knowledge. TK also facilitates the direct inclusion of local Aboriginal communities in project planning and design. TK information will be obtained through use of existing information (with permission), TK studies with the consent of the affected communities, and TK workshops, interviews, community meetings and Open Houses.

The APEP will extend beyond the local Aboriginal communities, with additional Public Open Houses in Winnipeg and presentations to interested stakeholders. Information from previous engagement and Crown consultation initiatives and/or programs such as the Large Area Network Study will also be incorporated. The APEP will include descriptions of the Project and solicit input on comments and questions relating to the Project and the environmental assessment, prior to submission of the EIS.

MI has also previously provided communications on the Project through seasonal newsletters, communication in various media (local radio and newspapers) and a project website.

4 Environmental Setting

The components of the existing biophysical, socio-economic, and Aboriginal environments will be described within the Project Footprint, Local Assessment Area and/or the Regional Assessment Area to provide context for an understanding of the potential effects of the Project. The Project Footprint includes the 100 m ROW for the ASR, quarries, borrow areas, and temporary construction access trails, laydown areas

and camps. The Local Assessment Area will generally consist of a 10 km corridor centered on the ASR alignment. The Regional Assessment Area will extend beyond the Local Assessment Area to include a larger area containing FN wildlife areas of interest. The Local and Regional Assessment Areas could change depending on the VC being assessed. The following sections provide a description of the components of the existing environment to be included in the EIS.

4.1 Biophysical Environment

4.1.1 Atmospheric Environment

The EIS will consider the following attributes in the relevant spatial boundary:

- Prevailing climate and meteorological conditions including historical and seasonal averages and extremes in monthly temperatures and dates of freeze and thaw; and monthly precipitation and snow cover;
- Local air quality;
- Parameters related to climate change; and
- Existing greenhouse gas and other emissions sources and production.

4.1.2 Physiography and Landscape

The EIS will consider the following attributes in the relevant spatial boundary:

- Geology and surficial materials, including geological deposits or resources that may be used for the Project;
- Soils/terrain;
- Watersheds (including lakes and streams);
- Regional surface water/quality; and
- Groundwater conditions.

4.1.3 Aquatic Environment and Habitat

The EIS will consider the following attributes in the relevant spatial boundary:

- The diversity of aquatic habitats in the area to be affected by the Project;
- Fish and mollusk species inhabiting the area to be affected by the Project, including those that are important for commercial, recreational, or Aboriginal fisheries, and species of conservation concern. Species occurrences will be based on existing information and augmented through sampling;
- Potential utilization by fish of habitats both upstream and downstream of proposed watercourse crossing locations;
 - Utilization will be based upon existing information about each watercourse, direct field observations and habitat correlations. In addition connectivity of the site to adjacent fish bearing waterbodies will be considered when assessing utilization.
- Potential fish habitat value and sensitivity to disturbance or alteration in each watercourse at or near the proposed crossing locations. Habitat value and sensitivity will consider habitat for key fish life stages, their relative abundance and importance to fish species; and
- Site specific surface water quality, including concentrations of water quality parameters that affect the suitability of the environment for aquatic life such as.

4.1.4 Vegetation and Terrestrial Habitat

The EIS will consider the following attributes in the relevant spatial boundary:

- Ecological land classification using ecological stratification;
- Vegetation composition, abundance and distribution using Land Cover Classification;
- Fire history in the boreal forest using Provincial forest data;
- Terrestrial and wetland community type descriptions developed from field studies;
- Native and introduced species developed from desktop and field studies;
- Plant species of interest using TK studies; and
- Species of conservation concern with a focus on *The Endangered Species and Ecosystems Act* (ESEA), *Species at Risk Act* (SARA), Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC), and S1 to S2 Provincial ranked species from desktop and field studies.

4.1.5 Amphibians and Reptiles

The EIS will consider the following attributes in the relevant spatial boundary using information generated through desktop investigations, discussions with local people, habitat modeling of VC species and augmented with field investigations:

- Relative abundance, diversity and habitats of amphibians and reptiles in the area; and
- Species of conservation concern.

4.1.6 Avian Species

The EIS will consider the following attributes in the relevant spatial boundary using information generated through desktop investigations, discussions with local people, habitat modeling of VC species and augmented with field investigations:

- General information on bird species known or expected to inhabit the area;
- Relative abundance of bird VC (waterfowl, raptors, game birds, song birds) and the distribution of their habitat;
- Nesting sites of colonial waterbirds and raptors; and
- Species of conservation concern.

4.1.7 Mammals

The EIS will consider the following attributes in the relevant spatial boundary using information generated through desktop investigations, discussions with local people, habitat modeling of VC species and augmented with field investigations using methodologies reviewed by MSD:

- General information on mammal species known or expected to inhabit the area;
- Relative abundance and distribution of mammal VCs including furbearers, moose and caribou; and
- Species of conservation concern.

4.2 Socio-Economic Environment

The EIS will consider the following attributes in the relevant spatial boundary:

- Land and resource use;

- Parks and Designated Protected Areas;
- Tourism and recreation;
- Human health and safety; and
- Infrastructure and services.

4.3 Aboriginal Environment

Through TK, the APEP, prior studies and existing information, the EIS will provide information on the following with respect to Aboriginal communities:

- Community information such as population and services;
- Resource use including hunting, fishing, trapping and gathering;
- Traditional and cultural activities; and
- Heritage and cultural resources.

5 Proposed Assessment Approach

5.1 Effects Assessment Principles and Objectives

The EIA will consider the existing environment without the Project, as the baseline condition against which changes caused by the Project will be identified, measured and assessed.

The EIS will include consideration of the:

- Existing biophysical, socio-economic and Aboriginal environments in the relevant spatial boundary;
- Project scope and the potential interactions among the Project activities and components of the environment;
- Scientific study and analysis, TK, local/community knowledge, and other stakeholder perspectives, comments and questions;
- Past and potential future human activities that have and continue to affect the environment and how these activities may interact with the Project;
- Sustainability of the proposed Project and effects on Aboriginal peoples and communities;
- Mitigation of adverse effects by avoidance, minimization and other means, and maximizing beneficial effects to the extent practicable; and
- Implementation of follow-up actions where beneficial.

The main objectives of the EIA for the Project are as follows:

- Assist in the planning and design of the Project by identifying and assessing potential environmental effects and mitigation options to avoid or minimize adverse effects and maximize positive effects to the degree practicable;
- Address comments and questions identified by Aboriginal peoples, local residents, and other stakeholders with respect to the Project;
- Provide sufficient information to prepare an EIS for consideration by regulators to exercise their legislated mandate; and
- Provide sufficient information about the existing environment, so that follow-up monitoring and studies can be planned.

5.2 Effects Assessment Process

The EIS will include the following steps:

- Describe the Project and the existing environment;
- Describe temporal and spatial boundaries;
- Identify and assess interactions among the Project activities and environmental components;
- Identify and describe a selected list of appropriate VCs. These VCs will be used to provide a focus to the EIA and an evaluation of the significance of the potential environmental effects of the Project;
- Identify technically and economically feasible measures to mitigate adverse effects as well as measures to enhance positive effects; and
- Determine the significance of residual effects.

5.2.1 Effects Identification

The EIS will describe and assess the potential effects of the Project for the construction, operation and maintenance phases of the Project including those on:

- The biophysical environment, including physiography and landscape, vegetation, wildlife, fisheries, surface water, groundwater, and forestry resources, including those caused by the potential release of hazardous materials (diesel fuel, used oil, etc.) or pollutants (emissions, effluents, solid wastes and hazardous wastes) that may be produced;
- Human health and safety, including, but not necessarily limited to potential effects on human health and safety resulting from the release of pollutants;
- Heritage and cultural resources;
- The exercise of Aboriginal and treaty rights, including, but not necessarily limited to:
 - Directly affected communities;
 - Resource use, including hunting, fishing, trapping, gathering, etc.; and
 - Cultural and traditional activities.

Potential socio-economic effects stemming from environmental effects will also be identified and potential climate change implications will be discussed.

5.2.2 Mitigation and Residual Effects

The EIS will identify and describe mitigation or effect management measures proposed to be implemented during the phases of the Project, including need for off-setting disruption or loss of fish habitat, fish passage, and navigation rights and safety.

The EIS will identify and describe residual environmental effects that are anticipated to remain after mitigation measures have been implemented.

5.2.3 Determination of Significance

The EIS will outline the framework to be used in the evaluation of the significance of residual adverse effects by using the following criteria:

- Duration of time that the effect occurs;
- Magnitude (i.e., severity) of the effect;
- Geographic extent of the effect;

- Frequency of the effect (i.e., how often the effect occurs);
- Reversibility of the effect (i.e., if the effect can be reversed); and
- Ecological and social context (whether a VC is resilient).

In cases where a significant adverse residual effect occurs, the following descriptors of the effect will be provided:

- Level of confidence in the data and methods used in the framework of the environmental analysis of the significance determination; and
- The likelihood of the significant effect occurring, which refers to the probability of occurrence.

Characterization of the significance of the residual adverse effects will consider scientific study and analysis, TK, and local knowledge, and will relate to all phases of the Project. The EIS will contain a conclusion on significance of residual environmental effects supported by scientific rationale and EIA results including APEP findings.

5.3 Cumulative Effects Assessment

In addition to assessing the direct effects of the Project, the EIS will also include consideration of potential cumulative effects (the potential for Project effects to act in combination with the effects of other past, present and/or reasonably foreseeable future projects in the Assessment Area). The EIS will outline the approach and methods and will include a description and rationale for the spatial and temporal boundaries used in the cumulative effects assessment.

6 Monitoring and Follow-Up

The EIS will summarize proposed mitigation measures and follow-up actions where appropriate, including monitoring, inspection and reporting to be implemented during construction, operation and maintenance of the proposed Project. Monitoring and follow-up will focus on areas of key potential effects on VCs and will consider various methods such as the implementation of contract specifications, environmental management plans, and emergency response plans, as well as specific biophysical surveys and analysis.

Monitoring measures will be considered to facilitate compliance with mitigation measures, confirm effect predictions related to anticipated effects, to determine whether unexpected effects are occurring, and to allow for adaptive management and appropriate mitigation measures if unexpected effects do occur. Required monitoring will be finalized once regulatory requirements are known, and following the issuance of authorizations and regulatory approvals. Monitoring of the environmental effects on local Aboriginal people and others who may be directly affected by the Project will be conducted, as required.

7 Report Format and Organization

The EIS will contain the following:

- Executive Summary
- Introduction and Overview

- Proponent, location, regulatory framework
- Project Justification and Alternatives Considered
- Project Description
 - Scope, phases, components, activities, schedule and funding
- Environmental Assessment Approach
 - Scope, sources of information, approach
- Aboriginal and Public Engagement
 - Objectives and approaches, history, activities, and analysis and discussion of engagement results summarized by community
- Effects Assessment
 - Project setting and baseline conditions, predicted changes to physical environment, effects on VCs, mitigation, conclusion on significance of residual effects
- Summary of Environmental Effects Assessment
- Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development
- Follow-up and Monitoring Programs
- References
 - Supporting scientific, TK and local knowledge
- Appendices

The EIS will use maps, charts, diagrams and photographs as appropriate for presentation.