## **Sharing Stewardship:**

A Model of Collaboration for Environmental Assessments between the Government of Canada & the Cree Nation Government



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# Who We Are

THE IMPACT ASSESSMENT AGENCY OF CANADA & THE CREE NATION GOVERNMENT





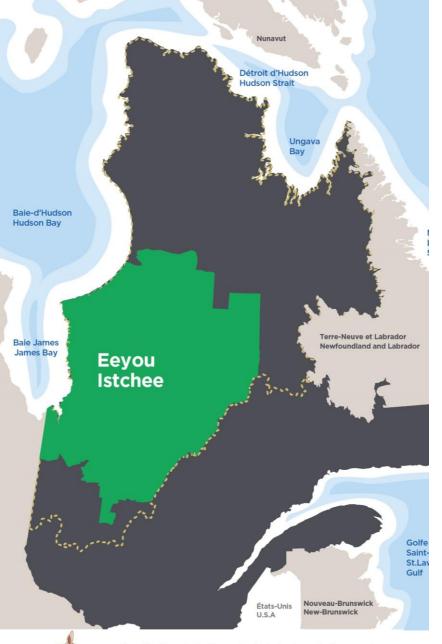
# **Impact Assessment Agency of Canada**

- Deliver high-quality impact assessments that look at positive and negative environmental, economic, social, and health impacts
- Contribute to informed decision making on major projects in support of sustainable development in Canada
- Ensure that Indigenous groups are meaningfully consulted and involved in the assessment of projects that may adversely impact Indigenous communities and their rights









### **Cree Nation Government**

- A self-governing nation founded through the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, 1975 (JBNQA)
- Nine Cree communities in Eeyou Istchee
- 18,000 people
- 400,000 km<sup>2</sup>, primarily located in Northern Quebec
- Section 22 of the JBNQA establishes the environmental and social protection regime for the region with special roles for Cree people
- Environment and Remedial Works Department –
  Environmental and Social Impact Assessment Unit





# Entering into an Agreement

A PATH TOWARDS ESTABLISHING A FRUITFUL COLLABORATION





## What Led to an Agreement?

- Two proposed mines on Eastmain Cree First Nation traditional lands recognized in the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement
- Federal environmental assessments conducted under the former Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012
- To ensure environmental assessments for these projects comply with the spirit and objectives of the treaty



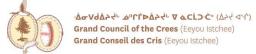






### The Agreement

- For a special and meaningful participation of the Crees in the review of the two environmental assessments
- Considers the special context in the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement treaty
- Delegation of activities, except decision-making, which remains with the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change





# A Joint Assessment Committee

- Two representatives from both parties and two cochairs
- Logistical and secretarial support provided by the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada
- Activites:
  - Co-writing of environmental assessment reports and legally-binding conditions for proponents
  - Cree First Nation consultation activities
  - Identification of Cree values with communities

# Benefits & Challenges

THE EXPERIENCE OF IMPLEMENTING THE AGREEMENT





# For the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada

#### **Benefits**

- Strengthen approach with Crees and knowledge about the Crees
- Gain Indigenous confidence in federal process
- Delivering on Canada's commitment to renewing relationships with Indigenous communities

#### Challenges

- Legislated timelines
- Working with new expertise









# For the Cree Nation Government

#### **Benefits**

- Establishment of a fruitful collaboration
- Access to federal government experts & involvement of Cree experts
- Ensure that the environmental assessments respect the spirit and objectives of the Treaty (Cree special participation)

#### **Challenges**

- Federal process timelines
- Consultation during cultural activities









# For the Environmental Assessment

#### **Benefits**

- Cree Nation perspectives reflected throughout the environmental assessment report
- Increased:
  - integration of local traditional knowledge
  - Cree participation in monitoring and follow-up activities
  - Protection of the environment and Cree way of life

#### **Challenges**

- Hybrid consultation model
- Dual processes



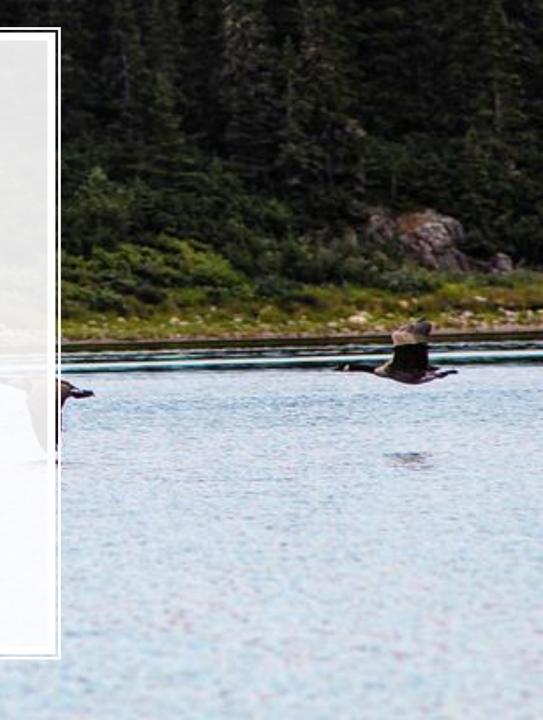


Gouvernement de la Nation Crie



### **Lessons Learned**

- Financial and logistical support
- Demonstrate openness, transparency and respect
- Allow for flexibility and adaptability
- How it informed collaboration under new Impact Assessment Act
- Incorporate Cree knowledge in biophysical analysis



### Let's continue the conversation!

Post questions and comments via chat in the IAIA22 platform.



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