

## **2.0 DEVELOPMENT OF THE MODEL CLASS SCREENING REPORT**

The MCSR was developed by PFRA in consultation with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), Fish Habitat Program and Canadian Coast Guard; and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (the Agency). Figure 2.1 illustrates the steps which were followed to develop the MCSR. The steps are briefly described below.

### **Step 1: Definition of the project class**

The first step in the development of the MCSR was to review grain road projects which would likely be funded under PGRP in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta to determine a) if they may be amenable to, and benefit from, a class screening approach; and b) the appropriate types of projects and their associated activities that were to be included in the MCSR.

The types of grain road projects that are subject to this MCSR are those which meet the definition of a “project” under the *CEA Act* and are funded under the PGRP by AAFC (PFRA), excepting those projects listed in the *Exclusion List Regulations*. It is not anticipated that any projects would be funded which would require a Comprehensive Study.

The MCSR covers grain road projects, defined as including road upgrades (i.e. road widening, resurfacing, leveling or re-contouring, extension or realignment projects) and bridge deck modifications. The MCSR also includes activities associated with grain road projects including the operation of asphalt plants and borrow or aggregate pits, and culvert replacement or installation on non-fish bearing waterbodies.

### **Step 2: Outline potential environmental effects of prairie grain road projects**

Potential environmental effects of the projects that constitute the class were identified and outlined by:

- Describing the physical works and physical activities undertaken during the construction, operation, post construction and decommissioning phases of road upgrade projects;
- Describing the typical environments that may be affected by road projects during all project phases;
- Identifying the potential project/environment interactions (i.e., project activities that may affect the environment) during all project phases and determining their likely significance;
- Assessing potential effects of accidents and malfunctions and identifying accepted control and response measures;
- Considering the potential for cumulative environmental effects to occur; and
- Identifying potential residual adverse environmental effects and their likely significance

### **Step 3: Identify and develop standard mitigation measures for projects and associated activities**

Standard environmental mitigation practices applicable to the class of road projects in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba were identified. The standard environmental mitigation measures identified by the MCSR reflect accepted environmental best-management practices and standards. The majority of standard environmental mitigation practices for road projects are adapted from provincial government standards, codes of practice, guidelines and recommendations from federal authorities. Identification of standard mitigation measures included:

- Consultation with potential Responsible Authorities (RAs), and Federal Authorities (FAs). These contacts served to identify key environmental issues associated with the construction, modification and maintenance of roads, and to ensure that required environmental standards were captured in the MCSR;
- Assessment of the potential environmental effects of project activities.
- Identification of appropriate and accepted measures to mitigate effects that are considered likely (standard environmental mitigation practices);
- Assessment of potential effects of accidents and malfunctions and identification of accepted control and response measures;
- Identification of potential residual effects and their likely significance;
- Identification, evaluation and mitigation of potential cumulative environmental effects;
- Government stakeholders were involved in reviewing and commenting on various drafts of the MCSR. The public review process conducted by the Agency will complete the public consultation process.

#### **Step 4: Development of the Class Screening Project Report (CSPR)**

The fourth step in developing the MCSR was to identify and outline the process and procedures through which a screening of road projects in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta would be completed. The Class Screening Project Report (CSPR) was developed to provide an expeditious yet rigorous format for evaluating the environmental effects of each proposed project. The CSPR is divided into 4 parts:

Part 1 was designed to ensure that adequate project description information is obtained and to determine the application of the Act to the project. Some projects may be excluded from the *CEA Act* at this stage.

Part 2 was developed to determine if the project fits within the class of projects defined in the MCSR. Projects that do not fit into the class are reclassified to an individual screening. Part 2 is also used to identify site-specific, and potentially sensitive environmental variables related to a project and to determine the need for project referrals to other federal and provincial government authorities.

Part 3 mirrors issues identified in Part 2 and is designed to collect additional project and environmental information from project proponents and from other interested government authorities. Part 3 enables the customization of the standard mitigative measures identified in the MCSR by including additional input from other government authorities e.g., special recommendations, authorizations, licenses, conditions etc. Part 3 also allows the RAs to

reclassify the project to an individual screening in the event that environmental issues cannot be assessed properly within the model class screening.

Part 4 was designed to assess the potential for residual effects, cumulative effects, and the significance of environmental effects. Part 4 summarizes the standard and additional mitigation to be applied to the project and documents the decision of the RA(s).

#### **Step 5: Preparation of the Model Class Screening Report (MCSR)**

The results of all of the previous steps were compiled to produce the MCSR for Prairie Grain Road Projects in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. The MCSR describes the types of projects covered by the class and any associated activities that should be included in the assessments; the typical environmental settings in which these kinds of projects are located; typical environmental effects associated with these projects; standard mitigation measures that would be applied, given both the environmental setting and the project characteristics; and the process and procedures by which screening would be conducted under the class, including the format for and information required to be documented in a CCSR.

#### **Step 6: Submission of the MCSR to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency for review and approval**

The MCSR must be submitted to the Agency for declaration in accordance with the requirements of the *CEA Act*. The Agency and other government authorities have the opportunity to review and comment on the MCSR.

#### **Step 7: Agency provides an opportunity for public review of MCSR**

The Agency publishes a notice in the *Canada Gazette* and local media inviting comments from the public on the appropriateness of using the proposed MCSR; the review period typically is 30 days. The Agency may also send direct notices regarding the availability of the report, to interested organizations and individuals.

Following the public comment period, the Agency will take into consideration any comments filed in respect of the screening report and determines if the issues raised are relevant to the EA and, if so, if they have been adequately addressed in the proposed model report.

If the public comments have raised issues that have not been adequately addressed, the Agency will refer the proposed model report back to the Responsible Authority for further work

#### **Step 8: Declaration of the MCSR by the Agency**

Once the Agency determines that the issues raised in the public comments have been adequately addressed, and that the MCSR meets the requirements of the *CEA Act*, the Agency approves the MCSR..

An official notification is then published in the *Canada Gazette*. Notification is also provided to those organizations and individuals who provided comments on the proposed model report.

**Figure 2.1**

**Developing the MCSR for PFRA Prairie Grain Road Projects**

