Agence d'évaluation d'impact du Canada | Impact Assessment Agency of Canada

Timiskaming Dam-Bridge of Quebec Replacement Project

INFORMATION REQUEST NO. 2

May 27th, 2024

Canada

Table of Contents

Important information to consider when responding to the information request

Rational for missing elements of information

The proponent must answer all the following questions to allow the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (the Agency) to continue its analysis. Referring to the sector studies is not a sufficient response. These studies support the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The proponent must clearly indicate how it considered these studies in its environmental assessment and decisions.

If the proponent chooses to provide a single answer for more than one question, the proponent must clearly identify which questions the answer relates to.

The proponent must provide a rationale if no information is submitted for any of the items requested in this information request.

Review of the environmental effects assessment

For any questions that require a revision of the project's environmental effects assessment, the proponent must also update the following aspects:

- Description of potential environmental effects;
- Mitigation measures;
- Description and assessment of the significance of residual environmental effects;
- Cumulative effect assessment;
- Follow-up and monitoring programs.

Mitigation measure

In responding to the questions in this information request, the proponent must describe the practices, policies and commitments that constitute mitigation measures, i.e., technically and economically feasible measures for the elimination, reduction or control of the project's environmental effects. In its analysis of the significance of the effects, the Agency assesses whether the mitigation measures proposed by the proponent are adequate to mitigate the anticipated effects on the various valued components. In the absence of adequate mitigation measures proposed by the proponent, the Agency may conclude that there are significant adverse environmental effects and present its conclusions in the environmental assessment report submitted to the Minister.

Methodology of Analysis

Information requests directed to the proponent

IAAC-2-1 - Valued Components

References

Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA), August 2018. Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, Part 1. Section 3.2.2 (Valued components to consider).

Tetra Tech, February 2023. Timiskaming Dam-Bridge of Quebec Replacement Project (Quebec) Environmental Impact Statement. Sections 4, 5.1 and 10.1.2 and Chapters 18 to 20.

Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC), March 2024. PSPC Response to Information Request No. 1 (Part 1). Response to question IAAC-1-1.

Context

For each of the valued components, the effects on Kebaowek, Wolf Lake and Timiskaming First Nations (SART) should be assessed in Table 20.1 of the proponent response to question IAAC-1-1. The table title should also be “Summary of Effects on the Human Environment” as it presents the effects on the human environment and not on the biological environment. Finally, the reference to paragraph 5(2)b)i), instead of 5(1)c(i) in Table 20.1 seems more appropriate for health and socio-economic aspects impacting non-Indigenous people.

The Agency instructs the proponent to:

A) Provide a revised table considering SART information.

IAAC-2-2 - Wildlife Data Sources

References

CEAA, August 2018. Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, Part 2. Sections 7.1.6 (Fish and Fish Habitat), 7.1.7 (Birds and bird habitat) and 7.1.8 (Species at Risk).

Tetra Tech, February 2023. Timiskaming Dam-Bridge of Quebec Replacement Project (Quebec) Environmental Impact Statement. Chapter 12.

PSPC, March 2024. PSPC Response to Information Request No. 1 (Part 1). Response to question IAAC-1-4.

Context

There are concerns that the use of data from the Ontario dam replacement project in the present EIS may be outdated. In the proponent response to question IAAC-1-4, it is unclear what data for which species was carried over to the EIS from the Hatch reports. It is also unclear if Ontario databases were checked for more recent data.

The Agency instructs the proponent to:

A) List all species assessed in the EIS that were informed by Hatch reports and the datasets carried over.
B) Review data and studies available from Ontario Wildlife databases and incorporate any recent (last 5 years) data or studies in the EIS.

Comments and advice for the proponent

Comment 2-1 - Integration of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act

References

PSPC, March 2024. PSPC Response to Information Request No. 1 (Part 1). Response to question IAAC-1-1.

Department of Justice Canada, 2023. United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan. https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/declaration/ap-pa/ah/pdf/unda-action-plan-digital-eng.pdf

Comments and advice

The United Nations (UN) Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act provides a roadmap for the Government of Canada and First Nations, Inuit and Métis to work together to implement the UN Declaration based on lasting reconciliation, healing and cooperative relations.

The Agency encourages the proponent to work in consultation and cooperation with First Nations, Inuit and Métis to achieve the objectives of the UN Declaration.

Because of their strong connections to traditional lands, SART and AOPFN pointed out that the project is located on unceded Algonquin land.

Alternative Means of Carrying out the Project

Information requests directed to the proponent

IAAC-2-3- Comparison of Options

References

CEAA, August 2018. Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, Part 2. Section 2.2 (Alternative means of carrying out the project).

Tetra Tech, February 2023. Timiskaming Dam-Bridge of Quebec Replacement Project (Quebec) Environmental Impact Statement. Sections 6.3.1.

PSPC, March 2024. PSPC Response to Information Request No. 1 (Part 1). Response to questions IAAC-1-6 and 1-31 and comments 1-9 and 1-11.

Arbour (2020). Assessing inputs of contaminants in the upper Ottawa River near the Town of Témiscaming, Québec. M.E.Sc Thesis, Nipissing University, 292 pp. Thesis - Assessing inputs of contaminants in the upper Ottawa River

Context

In response to question IAAC-1-6, the proponent provided an amended table with environmental, social, economic, and technical issues (Table 6.7 of the EIS). There are concerns arising from the review of different options, and most notably the rationale behind the preference of option 1 (construction downstream). It should be clear how each factor was considered in the decision-making process.

Furthermore, the proponent should acknowledge concerns on the location of the dam-bridge raised in SART Bio Cultural Impact Pathways Report. A total of 47.5% of Kebaowek First Nation members, who are the most active fishers of the three communities, highlighted option 2 (upstream of the existing location) as the preferred choice. Option 3 (same location) was the second choice for 33.8% of the members, while Option 1 (downstream of the existing location) was chosen by 14.5%.

Main issues are:

(1) Fish and fish habitat. Although there is more surface area of fish habitat destroyed in option 2 (construction upstream), the types of habitats destroyed, and the ecological functions associated with these habitats in option 1 and option 3 (current layout) are very different from the type of habitat destroyed in option 2. It is unclear how the overall effect on fish habitat was calculated and whether there were different weightings assigned to the type of habitat.
(2) Residual materials. It is unclear how the global effect of residual materials was calculated and whether there were different weightings assigned to the type of residual materials.

(3) Contaminated soils. The contaminated soils sampled around the projected construction zone represents an issue that should be addressed in the comparative table.
(4) Sediment volume. The proponent should explain why sediment sampling was not considered prior to selecting project option. Dredging comparisons are needed to assess each option.
(5) Contaminated sediments. Characterization of sediment sampled upstream and downstream of the dam-bridge showed mercury content, as underlined by Arbour (2020). There are concerns about the potential release of contaminated sediments in the project area that should be comparatively addressed.

The Agency instructs the proponent to:

A) Provide a description of how the global effect on fish habitat was determined for each alternative.
B) Provide a description of how the global effect of residual materials was determined for each alternative.
C) Describe how the contaminated soils have been addressed for each alternative, if any.
D) Provide a description of dredging sediment volumes for each option.
E) Precise which option has the least potential of releasing potentially contaminated sediments.

Atmospheric Environment

Information requests directed to the proponent

IAAC-2-4 - GHG Emissions - Operational and Decommissioning Phases

References

CEAA, August 2018. Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, Part 2. Sections 7.1.1 (Atmospheric, light and noise environment) and 7.2.1 (Changes to atmospheric, sound and light environments).

Tetra Tech, February 2023. Timiskaming Dam-Bridge of Quebec Replacement Project (Quebec) Environmental Impact Statement. Section 11.2.1.1.3.2.3.

PSPC, March 2024. PSPC Response to Information Request No. 1 (Part 1). Response to comment 1-8.

Context

The EIS is missing information on GHG emission estimates for the operational and decommissioning phases of the project. The proponent did not respond to ECCC recommendation to provide these estimates (comment 1-8 - GHG emissions – operational and decommissioning phases).

The Agency instructs the proponent to:

A) Provide anticipated GHG emissions during operations and decommissioning phases.

IAAC-2-5 - Estimated Quantities of Contaminant Emissions

References

CEAA, August 2018. Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, Part 2. Section 7.2.1 (Changes to the atmospheric, sound and light environments).

Tetra Tech, February 2023. Timiskaming Dam-Bridge of Quebec Replacement Project (Quebec), Environmental Impact Statement. Sections 11.2.1 and 11.2.1.1.1.

PSPC, March 2023. PSPC Response to Information Request No. 1 (Part 1). Response to question IAAC-1-9.

Context

Part of the information used to make assumptions about the estimated contaminant emissions during the various phases of the project is missing. Without detailed information, ECCC is unable to confirm or evaluate the data presented by the proponent. In response to question IAAC-1-9, the proponent mentions that the assumptions were made using the experience of the Ontario dam, under the supervision of PSPC, and other similar projects in the region. These values are expected to evaluate the results anticipated for the Quebec dam-bridge.

The Agency instructs the proponent to:

A) Provide the missing information used to make assumptions about the estimation of contaminant emissions, enabling the estimation of contaminant emission to be validated.

IAAC-2-6 - Blasting activities

References

CEAA, August 2018. Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, Part 2. Sections 7.2.1 (Changes to atmospheric, sound and light environments) and 7.4 (Mitigation measures).

Tetra Tech, February 2023. Timiskaming Dam-Bridge of Quebec Replacement Project (Quebec), Environmental Impact Statement. Sections 11.2, 11.2.1 and 11.2.1.1.1.

PSPC, March 2024. PSPC Response to Information Request No. 1 (Part 1). Response to questions IAAC-1-11 and IAAC-1-15.

Context

In response to question IAAC-1-11, the proponent states that blasting activities would only be possible when a jackhammer could not be used to remove parts of the existing dam-bridge, but that it is impossible to assess the quantities of possible explosive used as well as their location. Blasting activities were used in the Ontario dam replacement project.

For blasting activities, the proponent refers to mitigation measures for the protection of fish that would have been agreed with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) for the Ontario dam replacement project. According to the proponent, “no fish mortalities (floating fish) or impacts were observed or recorded during the contained-blast demolition of the dam-bridge piers”.

Furthermore, response to question IAAC-1-15 mentions only one mitigation measure to limit dust emissions, namely avoiding blasting activities during periods of high winds.

The Agency instructs the proponent to:

A) Provide a realistic scenario for the use and handling of explosives.
B) Present other mitigation measures to reduce dust generation during blasting.

C) Confirm which and whether there were any other environmental effects monitored for, following blasting at the Ontario dam site, and the criteria used for monitoring.
D) Describe what monitoring will be done if blasting is used for this project in addition to the noted incidental observations.
E) Include in this description any other anticipated effects from blasting in addition to fish spawning as well as methods employed to limit the overpressure threshold in or near waterways to 30 kPa (210 dB re 1 µPa) during blasting.
F) Describe how Indigenous communities will be involved in the decision process and planning for blasting, including adaptive measures, if it is determined that blasting is required.

Comments and advice for the proponent

Comment 2-2 - – Air Quality Management Plan

References

CEAA, August 2018. Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, Part 2. Sections 7.1.1 (Atmospheric, light and noise environment), 7.1.9 (Indigenous peoples) and 7.2.1 (Changes to atmospheric, sound and light environments), and 7.3.4 (Indigenous peoples).

Tetra Tech, February 2023. Timiskaming Dam-Bridge of Quebec Replacement Project (Quebec) Environmental Impact Statement. Section 23.7.1.1.

PSPC, March 2024. PSPC Response to Information Request No. 1 (Part 1). Response to question IAAC-1-15.

Comments and advice

In response to question IAAC-1-15, the proponent modified Table 23.1 of section 23.7.1.1 from the EIS. The Agency encourages the proponent to develop the air quality management plan with Indigenous communities affected, notably by including people in charge of the Algonquin Canoe Company Store. .

Surface Water

Information requests directed to the proponent

IAAC-2-7 – Service, Storage and Parking Areas and Mitigation Measures

References

CEAA, August 2018. Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, Part 2. Sections 7.2.2 (Changes to surface water) and 7.4 (Mitigation measures).

Tetra Tech, February 2023. Timiskaming Dam-Bridge of Quebec Replacement Project (Quebec) Environmental Impact Statement. Section 11.2.3.4.2.

PSPC, March 2024. PSPC Response to Information Request No. 1 (Part 1). Response to question AEIC-1-16.

Context

Given the location and surface area of the service area and heavy equipment parking area, and the width of Long Sault Island (approximately 120 m), the following mitigation measures, presented in the response to question IAAC-1-16, seem difficult or impossible to implement:

- avoid work and storage in the 30 m riparian buffer zone;
- avoid moving machinery within the 30 m riparian buffer zone;
- install a concrete mixer washing station at least 60 m from the shoreline;
- install a temporary concrete plant at least 60 m from the shoreline.

If the 30 m (or 60 m) riparian buffer strip is applied, there is almost no surface area left for the areas mentioned. It therefore seems difficult or impossible to carry out all the activities presented on Long Sault Island while respecting the 30 m or 60 m riparian buffer strip. The proponent will have to find storage, service and parking areas that respect the buffer strip, and ensure that mitigation measures are in place to capture TSS (total suspended sediments) from runoff from these areas.

It would also be relevant to define what is meant by “inert materials” to ensure that no contaminants or debris, including TSS, can reach surface waters.

The Agency instructs the proponent to:

A) Locate on a map potential machinery maintenance and refuelling sites, hydrocarbon and material storage sites, concrete mixer parking and washing sites, and potential concrete plant sites that are compatible with the proposed mitigation measures, or present additional mitigation measures if their distance from watercourses is less than 30 m, or 60 m in the case of the concrete mixer washing station.

B) Detail any additional mitigation measures planned to capture TSS from runoff from service and parking areas.
C) Define what is meant by “inert materials”.

IAAC-2-8 –Management of Contaminated Sediments

References

CEAA, August 2018. Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, Part 2. Section 7.1.5 (Surface water).

Tetra Tech, February 2023. Timiskaming Dam-Bridge of Quebec Replacement Project (Quebec) Environmental Impact Statement. Sections 11.1.9.5 and 22.5.

PSPC, March 2024. PSPC Response to Information Request No. 1 (Part 1). Response to question IAAC-1-20.

Context

As indicated in the context of question IAAC-1-20, contaminated sediments should be managed on land, but the criteria for managing contaminated sediments are not specified in the proponent response.

The Agency instructs the proponent to:

A) Specify the criteria for assessing sediment quality used for land-based management.

IAAC-2-9 – Discharge Criteria for pH and Suspended Solids

References

CEAA, August 2018. Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, Part 2. Sections 7.2.2 (Changes to surface water) and 7.4 (Mitigation measures).

Tetra Tech, February 2023. Timiskaming Dam-Bridge of Quebec Replacement Project (Quebec) Environmental Impact Statement. Section 11.2.3.4.2.

PSPC, March 2024. PSPC Response to Information Request No. 1 (Part 1). Response to question AEIC-1-17.

Context

Discharge criteria for pH and suspended solids are not included in response to question IAAC-1-17.

The Agency instructs the proponent to:

A) Determine the applicable pH and suspended solids criteria that will be used to justify the discharge of concrete mixer wash water into the aquatic environment.

Comments and advice for the proponent

Comment 2-3 – Characterization of Excavated Material

References

CEAA, August 2018. Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, Part 2. Sections 3.1 (Project components), 7.1.5 (Surface water), 7.2.2 (Changes to surface water), 7.4 (Mitigation measures) and 9 (Follow-up and monitoring programs).

Tetra Tech, February 2023. Timiskaming Dam-Bridge of Quebec Replacement Project (Quebec) Environmental Impact Statement. Sections 7.1.2, 7.4 and 22.5.

PSPC, March 2024. PSPC Response to Information Request No. 1 (Part 1). Response to question IAAC-1-19.

Comments and advice

In response to question IAAC-1-19, the proponent states that the material to be excavated from the trenches consists of a boulder horizon followed by a till layer, and that consequently there would be no sediments to excavate. However, it is reasonable to expect that the till horizon will contain a matrix of material that can be characterized. Characterization of the material excavated from the trenches, and in particular the fine matrix of materials that make up the till, will have to be carried out in the same way as the sediments excavated between the containment curtain and the existing dam-bridge, to ensure that they can be safely used for cofferdam construction and properly managed when the cofferdam is dismantled.

Riparian, Wetland and Terrestrial Environments

Information requests directed to the proponent

IAAC-2-10 – Wetland Habitat

References

CEAA, August 2018. Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, Part 2. Sections 7.1.4 (Riparian and wetland environments), 7.2.3 (Changes to riparian, wetland and terrestrial environments) and 7.4 (Mitigation measures).

Tetra Tech, February 2023. Timiskaming Dam-Bridge of Quebec Replacement Project (Quebec) Environmental Impact Statement. Sections 10.1.2 and 12.1.5.1.1, Appendix 1 from Appendix 12.1 and Map 9-1.

PSPC, March 2024. PSPC Response to Information Request No. 1 (Part 1). Response to question AEIC-1-27.

Context

Response to IAAC-1-27 states that one wetland is in the vicinity of the project, adjacent to Gordon Creek. The proponent explains that this marsh is known to have several ecological functions, mainly water filtration, flood control, carbon sequestration, habitat function and erosion prevention. However, it does not mention for which species this wetland is used as habitat.

The Agency instructs the proponent to:

A) Specify which migratory bird species or species at risk use this wetland as a habitat.
B) Specify whether monitoring of this wetland will be done, during construction of the new dam-bridge structure and demolition of the old one, to document any adverse effects on this wetland and itsr functions. If not, justify the absence of monitoring.
C) Describe additional mitigation measures that could be implemented if adverse effects are expected on this wetland and its functions during construction and demolition.

Fish and Fish Habitat

Information requests directed to the proponent

IAAC-2-11 – Health of Benthic Communities in Relation to Fish

References

CEAA, August 2018. Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, Part 2. Section 7.3.1 (Fish and fish habitat)

Tetra Tech, February 2023. Timiskaming Dam-Bridge of Quebec Replacement Project (Quebec) Environmental Impact Statement. Section 12.1.

PSPC, March 2024. PSPC Response to Information Request No. 1 (Part 1). Response to question AEIC-1-3.

Context

There are concerns with the health of benthic communities in relation to other species, particularly sturgeon, using the dam-bridge site. It is unclear also if and how the proponent will monitor benthic communities post construction.

The Agency instructs the proponent to:

A) Explain why benthic fauna was not assessed and no benthic community survey was carried out.
B) Provide a description of methods for monitoring health and availability of food sources for fish species at the dam-bridge site post construction.

IAAC-2-12 – Fish and Fish Habitat Surveys and Indigenous Knowledge

References

CEAA, August 2018. Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, Part 2. Section 7.1.6. (Fish and fish habitat).

Tetra Tech, February 2023. Timiskaming Dam-Bridge of Quebec Replacement Project (Quebec) Environmental Impact Statement. Section 12.2.3.2 and Appendix 6 of Appendix 12.1.

PSPC, March 2024. PSPC Response to Information Request No. 1 (Part 1). Response to question AEIC-1-31.

Context

Response to question IAAC-1-31 provides examples of some of the Indigenous knowledge shared by Indigenous communities but does not discuss or describe how Indigenous knowledge did or did not inform habitat surveys.

The Agency instructs the proponent to:

A) Provide a more detailed response on how Indigenous knowledge changed or did not change survey protocols (for example, any situation where Indigenous knowledge identified areas that were not surveyed by the proponent) and include the rationale for why Indigenous knowledge was not followed.

IAAC-2-13 - Potential Effects on Fish – Sluice-Gate System

References

CEAA, August 2018. Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, Part 2. Section 7.3.1 (Fish and fish habitat).

Tetra Tech, February 2023. Timiskaming Dam-Bridge of Quebec Replacement Project (Quebec) Environmental Impact Statement. Sections 11.2.3.4.6, 12.2.3.2.1.4 and 19.

*PSPC, March 2024. PSPC Response to Information Request No. 1 (Part 1). Response to question AEIC-1-*36.

Context

In response to question IAAC 1-36, the proponent refers to a figure of a water flow below a sluice gate versus a logwood beam. Water flow patterns from the sluice-gate system are expected to be different with increased bottom water flow observed within a 50 m length downstream of the dam-bridge, as stated in section 11.2.3.3.2.5 of the EIS. The water flow change is illustrated qualitatively in figure 11-33. According to the proponent, operation of a sluice-gate system instead of wood log system should have limiting effect on fish and fish habitat conditions. The rationale behind this statement is limited and supported by only one publication (Algera *et al*., 2020). There are concerns about potential effects on water flows, such as how the sluice-gate system could affect spawning grounds, fish mortality and entrapment.

The Agency instructs the proponent to:

A) Provide information on the biophysical effects of the change in water flow distribution downstream of the dam-bridge with the sluice-gate system.
B) Provide more information and background literature about the potential effects on fish spawning grounds and fish passage.
C) Provide evidence of where incubation and larval drift occur and an estimate of water flow change at this location.

Comments and advice for the proponent

Comment 2-4 – Work Periods for Fish

References

CEAA, August 2018. Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, Part 1. Section 3.2.2 (Valued components to consider).

Tetra Tech, February 2023. Timiskaming Dam-Bridge of Quebec Replacement Project (Quebec) Environmental Impact Statement. Sections 4, 5.1 and 10.1.2 and Chapters 18 to 20.

PSPC, March 2024. PSPC Response to Information Request No. 1 (Part 1). Response to question IAAC-1-1.

Comments and advice

In Table 18.1, it is recommended to avoid construction work during periods that could not only affect critical fish spawning but also during periods that could affect egg incubation and larval drift.

Comment 2-5 –Larval Drift and Dewatering Period

References

CEAA, August 2018. Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, Part 2. Sections 7.1.6. (Fish and fish habitat), and 7.3.1 (Fish and fish habitat).

Tetra Tech, February 2023. Timiskaming Dam-Bridge of Quebec Replacement Project (Quebec) Environmental Impact Statement. Sections 11.2.3.3.2.5 et 19.

PSPC, March 2024. PSPC Response to Information Request No. 1 (Part 1). Response to question AEIC-1-43 and comment 1-15.

Comments and advice

DFO and the First Nations of Kebaowek, Wolf Lake and Timiskaming raised doubts about the effectiveness, as a mitigation measure, of starting the dewatering period around mid-July, i.e. 10 days after the water temperature in the work area reaches 18°C. In the scientific literature, some authors report that lake sturgeon eggs hatch between 7 and 10 days after spawning. However, there is no consensus on this number of days, and other authors suggest longer periods before hatching. For example, Smith *et al.* (2017) and Peterson *et al.* (2007) mention a period of 8 to 14 days before hatching, depending on water temperatures, and Smith *et al.* (2017) and LaHaye *et al.* (1992) indicate that the larva will consume its yolk sac reserves before drifting downstream from the spawning site. This period could take from 13 to 19 days after hatching before the larva moves downstream. Thus, these various authors suggest that the time taken by lake sturgeon to use the spawning site, from the egg stage to the drifting larva, may extend to 30 days after spawning.

Since, according to the scientific literature, there is a possibility that lake sturgeon eggs and larvae may still be present in the area to be dewatered in mid-July, the proposed waiting period before the start of dewatering is not conservative enough and should therefore be extended to 30 days following spawning.

Comment 2-6 – Fish Passage and Fish Habitat Compensation Design and Planning

References

CEAA, August 2018. Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, Part 2. Sections 7.1.6. (Fish and fish habitat), and 7.3.1 (Fish and fish habitat).

Tetra Tech, February 2023. Timiskaming Dam-Bridge of Quebec Replacement Project (Quebec) Environmental Impact Statement. Sections 11.2.3.3.2.5 et 19.

PSPC, March 2024. PSPC Response to Information Request No. 1 (Part 1). Response to questions AEIC-1-37 and 1-38.

Comments and advice

Following discussions with all stakeholders, the proponent is encouraged to commit to and provide a description of next steps to include impacted Indigenous communities in fish passage and fish habitat compensation design and planning.

Comment 2-7 - Fish Spawning Optimization Plan

References

CEAA, August 2018. Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, Part 2. Sections 2.2 (Alternative means of carrying out the project), 7.3.1 (Fish and fish habitat) and 7.4 (Mitigation measures).

Tetra Tech, February 2023. Timiskaming Dam-Bridge of Quebec Replacement Project (Quebec) Environmental Impact Statement. Sections 6 and 7.9.

PSPC, March 2024. PSPC Response to Information Request No. 1 (Part 1). Response to question IAAC-1-42.

Comments and advice

Response to question IAAC-1-42 mentions a DFO Fisheries Act Authorization that was issued for the Ontario dam replacement project. A Fish Spawning Optimization Plan was produced. The proponent should share this plan with impacted Indigenous communities.

Furthermore, in its response, the proponent states that the plan will be adapted for the Quebec dam-bridge replacement project based on the Ontario dam experiences. The proponent should consult Indigenous communities to adapt the plan.

Birds and Bird Habitat

Information requests directed to the proponent

IAAC-2-14 – Use of Databases and Indigenous Knowledge in Bird Baseline Surveys

References

CEAA, August 2018. Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, Part 2. Section 7.1.7 (Birds and bird habitat).

Tetra Tech, February 2023. Timiskaming Dam-Bridge of Quebec Replacement Project (Quebec) Environmental Impact Statement. Section 12.1.9.

PSPC, March 2024. PSPC Response to Information Request No. 1 (Part 1). Response to question IAAC-1-44.

Context

In response to question IAAC-1-44, the proponent considers that the information provided from existing data, field observations and Indigenous knowledge is sufficient for the description of current conditions for birds in the study area. However, the avian surveys carried out by the proponent are considered limited. As stated in the context of the question, the eBird data does not seem to have been used for the nesting period and would provide a clearer view of the presence of birds in the study area.

Additionally, although the proponent states Indigenous knowledge was used in the EIS, this is not verified by the information provided.

The Agency instructs the proponent to:

A) Provide an analysis of data from the eBird database.
B) Describe how Indigenous knowledge and Indigenous-led studies (e.g., SART report on avian surveys) was sought to inform bird surveys and describe how and if it was incorporated into methods and if not, explain the reasons why.

IAAC-2-15 – Bird Nesting Survey on the Existing Dam-Bridge

References

CEAA, August 2018. Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, Part 2. Sections 7.1.7 (Birds and bird habitat), 7.3.2 (Birds and bird habitat), 7.4 (Mitigation measures) and 9 (Follow-up and monitoring programs).

Tetra Tech, February 2023. Timiskaming Dam-Bridge of Quebec Replacement Project (Quebec) Environmental Impact Statement. Sections 12.1.9.4 and 12.2.8.

PSPC, March 2024. PSPC Response to Information Request No. 1 (Part 1). Response to question IAAC-1-45.

Context

As stated in response to question IAAC-1-45, ECCC and the Agency understand that a complementary avian nesting survey will be conducted on the existing dam-bridge structure during the final design phase.

The Agency instructs the proponent to:

A) Provide a complete and detailed methodology, including, but not limited to, how the dam-bridge will be checked, at what time of day the inventories will take place, at what time(s) of the year, and for how many days.
B) Provide in greater details the mitigation measures that will be put in place to avoid negative effects on birds if the existing dam-bridge is used by avian fauna for nesting.

Comments and advice for the proponent

Comment 2-8 –Birds other than Migratory Birds and not of Precarious Status

References

CEAA, August 2018. Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, Part 2. Section 7.3.2 (Birds and bird habitat).

Tetra Tech, February 2023. Timiskaming Dam-Bridge of Quebec Replacement Project (Quebec) Environmental Impact Statement. Section 12.2.7.

PSPC, March 2024. PSPC Response to Information Request No. 1 (Part 1). Response to question IAAC-1-53.

Comments and advice

Construction work may cause disturbance beyond federal lands. Although the project is on federal land, it is expected that the same measures will be applied to all bird species not protected by the *Migratory Birds Convention Act* (1994).

Species at Risk

Information requests directed to the proponent

IAAC-2-16 – Assessment of Species at Risk

References

CEAA, August 2018. Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, Part 2. Section 7.3.3 (Species at Risk).

Tetra Tech, February 2023. Timiskaming Dam-Bridge of Quebec Replacement Project (Quebec) Environmental Impact Statement. Sections 12.2.6. and 12.2.8.

PSPC, March 2024. PSPC Response to Information Request No. 1 (Part 1). Response to questions IAAC-1-54 and 1-58 and Appendix G (Table 1).

Context

In Table 1 of Appendix G, a column entitled “Permanent or temporary habitat loss” has been added. However, effects other than habitat loss are not described, such as disturbance that could be caused by noise during construction of the new dam-bridge and dismantling the existing dam-bridge, including blasting.

All potential effects of the project on species at risk must be described. In addition, the Eastern Red bat, Hoary bat and Silver bat, identified during the inventory carried out by SART, are species that have been assigned endangered status by COSEWIC in 2023.

Among the measures implemented for birds and bats at risk, the avoidance of the nesting period for clearing and grading works is not included in Table 1. However, in response to question IAAC-1-54, the proponent undertook to avoid this period for clearing and grading during nesting period. ECCC believes this is a key measure to avoid harming migratory birds, bird and bat species at risk, and that it should be included in Table 1.

The Agency instructs the proponent to:

A) Assess the potential effects of the project on Eastern Red, Hoary and Silver bats, and evaluate the potential to recover habitat for these species in the study area. Map where appropriate. Provide a description of this assessment.
B) Provide a description of all potential project effects on species at risk and mitigation measures planned to limit them.
C) Provide a justification as to why avoidance of the nesting period was not provided as a mitigation measure. In the case that it was an omission, include this mitigation measures.

IAAC-2-17 – Results of the Bat Survey - Old Power Plant

References

CEAA, August 2018. Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, Part 2. Section 7.1.8 (Species at Risk).

Tetra Tech, February 2023. Timiskaming Dam-Bridge of Quebec Replacement Project (Quebec) Environmental Impact Statement. Sections 12.1.8.5 and 12.2.

PSPC, March 2024. PSPC Response to Information Request No. 1 (Part 1). Response to questions IAAC-1-59 and 1-61 and Appendix F.

Context

According to the bat survey report produced by SART (Appendix F), the former power station is a site where bats hibernate. However, very few buildings are used as a bat hibernaculum in Quebec, as it is difficult to maintain a cool and constant temperature for bat hibernation. In addition, there is no evidence of winter use of the site since the survey was carried out in August. It is more likely that this building is used as a maternity roost site.

The bat recording devices installed in the building would have captured eight bat species. However, the results for guano only indicate the presence of the Big Brown bat. According to the MELCCFP, the presence of the Eastern Pygmy bat has never been recorded in Abitibi-Témiscamingue. It is uncommon to be able to link all bat calls to species, as there may be overlap in the call frequencies of some species. A validation of this information should be done and further information on the methods used to better interpret the data.

The Agency instructs the proponent to:

A) Provide a validation of the information and results. For example, but not limited to, confirm that the results have been carried out and verified by more than one specialist.
B) Provide a detailed version of the methodology used in SART survey.
C) Confirm whether recorders were positioned to capture bats feeding over water.
D) Provide the recordings from the bat recording devices.

IAAC-2-18 - Bat Survey on the Existing Dam-Bridge

References

CEAA, August 2018. Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, Part 2. Section 7.3.3 (Species at Risk).

Tetra Tech, February 2023. Timiskaming Dam-Bridge of Quebec Replacement Project (Quebec) Environmental Impact Statement. Sections 12.2.6. and 12.2.8.

PSPC, March 2024. PSPC Response to Information Request No. 1 (Part 1). Response to questions IAAC-1-58 and 1-59 and Appendix G (Table 1).

Context

Table 1 of Appendix G mentions that the proponent will conduct a bat survey in the current dam-bridge prior to its dismantling.

The Agency instructs the proponent to:

A) Provide a complete and detailed methodology, including, but not limited to, how the crevasses will be checked, at what time of day the inventories will take place, at what time(s) of the year, and for how many days.

IAAC-2-19 – Monitoring Effects on Bats

References

CEAA, August 2018. Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, Part 2. Sections 7.3.3 (Species at Risk) and 9 (Follow-up and monitoring programs).

Tetra Tech, February 2023. Timiskaming Dam-Bridge of Quebec Replacement Project (Quebec) Environmental Impact Statement. Sections 12.2.5.2.2, 12.2.5.5 and 12.2.6.1, chapter 19 and section 23.5.

PSPC, March 2024. PSPC Response to Information Request No. 1 (Part 1). Response to questions IAAC-1-60 and IAAC-1-63 and Appendices F and G.

Context

In response to questions IAAC-1-60 and 1-63, the proponent intends to monitor the abandoned building located 1 km from the project, which serves as a habitat for bats, with additional efforts during periods of high noise levels. The proponent also intends to avoid bats before undertaking demolition work on the existing dam-bridge. It is unclear how the data collected would be used to verify whether the project has an effect on bats that are considered species at risk. The proponent does not explain additional mitigation measures that could be implemented if monitoring results reveal effects on bat species, for example due to noise during construction of the new dam-bridge and dismantling of the existing dam-bridge.

If it is determined that the existing dam-bridge structure is used as a maternity roost or resting sites by bats, the proponent will install nets at least 1 year before demolition works begin. The proponent is also planning to integrate structures for bats on the new dam-bridge.

The Agency instructs the proponent to:

A) Explain how data from the monitoring program will be analyzed to verify if the project affects bats, particularly those using the old building and the dam-bridge.
B) Specify whether additional mitigation measures will be implemented if adverse effects are observed on bats that are considered species at risk, particularly those using the old building or the new dam-bridge structure. If so, provide a description of those mitigation measures.
C) Discuss any exclusion measures, other than installing a net, that is considered and how they would be implemented over time.

D) Specify when the structures for bats on the new dam-bridge will be operational and confirm whether this will be before the demolition of the existing dam-bridge.

IAAC-2-20 - Mitigation Measures for Turtles during Operation

References

CEAA, August 2018. Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, Part 2. Section 7.3.3 (Species at Risk).

Tetra Tech, February 2023. Timiskaming Dam-Bridge of Quebec Replacement Project (Quebec) Environmental Impact Statement. Sections 12.2.5. and 12.2.6.

PSPC, March 2024. PSPC Response to Information Request No. 1 (Part 1). Response to question IAAC-1-68.

Context

Response to question IAAC-1-68 states that the risks associated with the operation of the dam for turtles are the opening and closing of the locks, and that turtles could be injured or killed. However, the proponent mentions that, since most turtles prefer shallow water, their presence at the opening and closing of the locks is considered unlikely, and the risk negligible.

The proponent also states that the operation of the dam follows a protocol developed with the support of DFO to limit risks to fish, and that this protocol will be updated for the operation of the new dam. Mitigation measures for turtles will be explored as part of the protocol update.

The Agency instructs the proponent to:

A) Provide a description of mitigation measures that could be implemented to reduce the risk of effects on turtles associated with the opening and closing of locks during operation of the dam.

Comments and advice for the proponent

Comment 2-9 – Species Status Changes

References

CEAA, August 2018. Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, Part 2. Section 7.1.8 (Species at Risk).

Tetra Tech, February 2023. Timiskaming Dam-Bridge of Quebec Replacement Project (Quebec) Environmental Impact Statement. Section 4.2.1.5.

PSPC, March 2024. PSPC Response to Information Request No. 1 (Part 1). Response to question IAAC-1-55.

Comments and advice

The Agency asks the proponent to consider the changing status of species at risk at every stage of the project, and to ensure that the necessary measures are implemented to protect species at risk.

Comment 2-10 – Turtles - Wildlife Management Plan

References

CEAA, August 2018. Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, Part 2. Sections 7.3.3 (Species at Risk),7.4 (Mitigation measures) and 9.2 (Monitoring program).

Tetra Tech, February 2023. Timiskaming Dam-Bridge of Quebec Replacement Project (Quebec) Environmental Impact Statement. Sections 7.1.2, 7.1.3, 12.2.6.1, 19 and 22.4.

Tetra Tech, February 2023. Timiskaming Dam-Bridge of Quebec Replacement Project (Quebec), Summary Environmental Impact Statement. Section 6.2.

PSPC, March 2024. PSPC Response to Information Request No. 1 (Part 1). Response to questions IAAC-1-67 and 1-69.

Comments and advice

The proponent will have to provide its wildlife management plan to ECCC prior to the start of construction, mentioning all the measures that would be implemented if turtles are found in the project area and justifying the location(s) where the turtles would be relocated.

Indigenous Peoples

Comments and advice for the proponent

Comment 2-11- Effects on the Health of Indigenous Peoples

References

CEAA, August 2018. Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, Part 2. Section 7.3.4 (Indigenous peoples –health and socio-economic conditions).

Tetra Tech, February 2023. Timiskaming Dam-Bridge of Quebec Replacement Project (Quebec) Environmental Impact Statement. Section 13.1 and Appendix 13.1.

PSPC, March 2024. PSPC Response to Information Request No. 1 (Part 1). Response to questions IAAC-1-71 and 1-72.

Comments and advice

In response to questions IAAC-1-71 and IAAC-1-72, and according to chapter 13.6 of the EIS, the proponent states that the project presents a very low risk of contamination of wild-collected foods or from other routes of exposure for human health. The proponent is therefore of the opinion that it was unnecessary to conduct a human health risk assessment. However, among the Indigenous peoples impacted by the project, there is a significant perception of risk of contamination of traditional foods (see SART's Bio-Cultural Impact Pathways Study).

Comment 2-12 – Concerns about Traditional Food

References

CEAA, August 2018. Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, Part 2. Sections 7.3.4 (Indigenous Peoples) and 7.4 (Mitigation Measures).

Tetra Tech, February 2023. Timiskaming Dam-Bridge of Quebec Replacement Project (Quebec) Environmental Impact Statement. Sections 11.2.2.1, 13.2.4.3.1.2, 13.2.4.3.5.1, 13.3.4.3.1, 13.5.4.3.2, 13.4.4.7.1 and 22.5.

PSPC, March 2024. PSPC Response to Information Request No. 1 (Part 1). Response to question IAAC-1-72.

Comments and advice

Communities likely to consume fish are on both sides of the provincial boundary between Quebec and Ontario. The proponent refers to Ontario's safe consumption rates for fish. However, Ontario's guidelines are not site-specific.

Health Canada encourages the proponent to consult provincial government information sources related to the place of residence in order to have specific follow-up activities.

Health Canada also encourages the proponent to involve provincial public health departments in follow-up activities and communication plans. These plans should be developed prior to the start of construction. This would ensure that local communities have access to complete and up-to-date information (e.g., communication of the proponent's analysis results and applicable consumption advice from the provincial public health authorities).

Comment 2-13- Compliance with Internal Nation-to-Nation Protocols

References

PSPC, March 2024. PSPC Response to Information Request No. 1 (Part 1). Response to question IAAC-1-82.

Department of Justice Canada, 2023. United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan. https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/declaration/ap-pa/ah/pdf/unda-action-plan-digital-eng.pdf

Comments and advice

AOPFN and SART pointed out that ''cultural activities'' is more appropriate than ''ceremony'' to capture all cultural activities.

SART also requests that the proponent follow the Algonquin protocol.

Comment 2-14- Effects on Potential or Established Aboriginal and Treaty Rights

References

CEAA, August 2018. Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, Part 2. Section 6 (Impacts to potential or established Aboriginal or treaty rights)

Tetra Tech, February 2023. Timiskaming Dam-Bridge of Quebec Replacement Project (Quebec) Environmental Impact Statement, section 13.1

Services publics et Approvisionnement Canada, mars 2024. Public Services and Procurement Canada Response to the Information Request No. 1 (Part 1). Response to question IAAC-1-70.

Comments and advice

The proponent should consider biocultural loss, because of depletion and contamination of Indigenous fisheries food sources, as an effect on potential and established treaty rights.

Human Environment

Comments and advice for the proponent

Comment 2-15- Noise Management Plan

References

CEAA, August 2018. Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, Part 2. Sections 7.1.1 (Atmospheric, light and noise environment), 7.1.9 (Indigenous peoples), 7.2.1 (Changes to atmospheric, sound and light environments), 7.3.4 (Indigenous peoples), 7.3.5 (Other valued components that may be affected by the project) and 7.4 (Mitigation measures).

Tetra Tech, February 2023. Timiskaming Dam-Bridge of Quebec Replacement Project (Quebec) Environmental Impact Statement. Sections 8.1.4.6.3, 8.1.6.4.1.4, 11.2.1.1.2, 11.2.1.3.3.2.4.6 and 11.2.1.3.3.2.16.

PSPC, March 2024. PSPC Response to Information Request No. 1 (Part 1). Response to questions IAAC-1-83 and 1-84.

Comments and advice

Indigenous communities are concerned about the project's potential effects on the sound environment. The proponent should provide the Noise Management plan for review and input by Health Canada and Indigenous communities involved. The Agency recommends that the proponent develop the Noise Management Plan in consultation with Indigenous communities and that reasonable timelines are discussed and established with them in terms of its implementation.

The Noise Management plan should justify the choice of noise impact indicators applicable to the project and their sources (e.g. Health Canada guidelines or provincial guidelines) as well as describe steps to be taken to resolve noise complaints, including opportunities for establishing dispute resolution processes.

Archaeological Resources

Information requests directed to the proponent

IAAC-2-21 –Archaeological Chance-find Protocol

References

CEAA, August 2018. Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, Part 2. Sections 7.1.9. (Indigenous peoples) and 7.1.11. (Human environment).

Tetra Tech, February 2023. Timiskaming Dam-Bridge of Quebec Replacement Project (Quebec) Environmental Impact Statement. Chapter 13.

PSPC, March 2024. PSPC Response to Information Request No. 1 (Part 1). Response to question IAAC-1-87, comment 1-39 and Appendix M-4 – Chance Find Protocol – Task 4.

Context

As mentioned in the response to question IAAC-1-87, the proponent plans to implement a chance-find protocol in lieu of active archaeological monitoring of the work, given the low underwater archaeological potential in the work area. According to Parks Canada, this approach is appropriate. However, the protocol itself (chance-find protocol or marine archaeological protocol, Appendix M-4) was missing. The terrestrial chance-find protocol also was not presented.

Parks Canada points out that the protocol should apply to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous archaeological resources whether underwater or on land.

The Agency instructs the proponent to:

A) Provide the chance-find protocol (marine and terrestrial) for archaeological work.
B) Describe the underwater or terrestrial measures that will be put in place to ensure that accidental archaeological finds are recognized by workers during construction, reported to the appropriate people, and then protected until they can be evaluated by experts.
C) Describe how the protocol will respect, implement, and integrate Indigenous' protocols with the project chance-find procedures.

IAAC-2-22 – Archaeological Collections Management

References

CEAA, August 2018. Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, Part 2. Sections 7.3.4 (Indigenous peoples) and 7.3.5 (Other valued components that may be affected by the project).

Tetra Tech, February 2023. Timiskaming Dam-Bridge of Quebec Replacement Project (Quebec) Environmental Impact Statement. Section 13.

PSPC, March 2024. PSPC Response to Information Request No. 1 (Part 1). Response to question IAAC-1-86.

Context

In response to question IAAC-1-86, the proponent referred to Ontario's legislation. However, Treasury Board's Directive on the Management of Material applies on federal lands in lieu of Ontario regulations. In keeping with the directive, federal custodians may have repositories for archaeological artifacts. If a federal custodian determines that it is not appropriate or does not have the resources to conserve a collected archaeological resource, it may decide to transfer it to a federal institution or museum, to a museum of another level of government, to an Indigenous organization or public institution whose mission is related to the nature of the collected resource, or to a public authority, as defined in the Cultural Property Export and Import Act (1985) [subsection 4.2.22 of the Directive on the Management of Materiel].

The Agency instructs the proponent to:

A) Describe how the archaeological documentation and the conservation of collections will be managed in accordance with the requirements under the Treasury Board's Directive on the Management of Materiel.

IAAC-2-23 – Potential Cultural Value of the Existing Dam-Bridge

References

CEAA, August 2018. Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, Part 2. Sections 7.1.9. (Indigenous peoples) and 7.1.11 (Human environment).

Tetra Tech, February 2023. Timiskaming Dam-Bridge of Quebec Replacement Project (Quebec) Environmental Impact Statement. Chapter 13.

PSPC, March 2024. PSPC Response to Information Request No. 1 (Part 1). Response to question IAAC-1-88 and Appendices M-1 and M-2.

Context

As stated in response to question IAAC-1-86, the *Heritage Impact Assessment* recommends that the remains of the old dam-bridge be thoroughly documented. The *Marine Archaeological Survey* (2023) noted remains adjacent to their southwestern study section along the eastern shore of Long Sault Island, but did not document them, as they were considered terrestrial archaeological resources.

The *Marine Archaeology Assessment* (2023) noted that a wooden structure identified by Archéotec could be linked to the construction of the 1934 dam. Archaeological Research Associates were unable to locate this structure. Archéotec did not provide a precise location, so it is possible that this structure is located outside the study area.

The Agency instructs the proponent to:

A) If possible, confirm whether the wooden structure identified by Archéotech is located within the project area. If so, identify and describe the measures that will be taken to investigate and assess the heritage value.
B) Specify what measures will be taken to document the remains of the old dam-bridge.

Comments and advice for the proponent

Comment 2-16 – Archaeological Survey

References

CEAA, August 2018. Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, Part 2. Sections 7.1.9. (Indigenous peoples) and 7.1.11. (Human environment).

Tetra Tech, February 2023. Timiskaming Dam-Bridge of Quebec Replacement Project (Quebec) Environmental Impact Statement. Section 13.

PSPC, March 2024. PSPC Response to Information Request No. 1 (Part 1). Response to question IAAC-1-87.

Comments and advice

AOPFN recommends that an additional archaeological survey be undertaken once the cofferdams are installed if deemed necessary.

Comment 2-17 – Potential Heritage Sites

References

CEAA, August 2018. Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, Part 2. Sections 7.1.9. (Indigenous peoples) and 7.1.11 (Human environment).

Tetra Tech, February 2023. Timiskaming Dam-Bridge of Quebec Replacement Project (Quebec) Environmental Impact Statement. Section 13.

PSPC, March 2024. PSPC Response to Information Request No. 1 (Part 1). Response to questions IAAC-1-88.

Comments and advice

In response to question IAAC-1-88, SART suggests considering the Algonquin Canoe Company store, boat rack and shed as a heritage site considering the importance of this company for the Algonquin people.

Accidents or Failures

Comments and advice for the proponent

Comment 2-18 – Emergency Response Plan and Petroleum Products

References

CEAA, August 2018. Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, Part 2. Section 7.6.1 (Effects of potential accidents or malfunctions).

Tetra Tech, February 2023. Timiskaming Dam-Bridge of Quebec Replacement Project (Quebec) Environmental Impact Statement. Sections 11.2.2.2.2, 11.2.3.3.2.3, 15.1, 15.2 and 15.3.

PSPC, March 2024. PSPC Response to Information Request No. 1 (Part 1). Response to question IAAC-1-89.

Comments and advice

Response to question IAAC-1-89 indicates that up to 4,500 litres of fuel may be stored on site, and that a tanker truck may be used to refuel equipment on site. Given these activities and the project's proximity to the aquatic environment, there is a potential for effect on various environmental receptors in the event of accidents or malfunctions during the construction phase.

ECCC recommends the proponent to follow the instructions described in comment 1-41 concerning the development of an emergency plan and a spill response plan for all activities to be undertaken during the project, including those involving the storage of fuel products.

In addition, Wolf Lake First Nation requests consultation on fuel storage.

Cumulative Effects

Information requests directed to the proponent

IAAC-2-24 – Cumulative Effects of Air Quality

References

CEAA, August 2018. Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, Part 2. Section 7.6.3 (Cumulative effects assessment).

Tetra Tech, February 2023. Timiskaming Dam-Bridge of Quebec Replacement Project (Quebec) Environmental Impact Statement. Section 17.

PSPC, March 2024. PSPC Response to Information Request No. 1 (Part 1). Response to questions IAAC-1-94.

Context

Although the proponent followed the sequence of steps required for the assessment of cumulative effects on air quality in its response to question IAAC-1-94, the content remains minimal, especially regarding mitigation measures.

The proponent's response mentions that a monitoring program will be implemented to assess compliance with “set limits” for air and noise emissions during construction. However, the chapters on monitoring and follow-up (chapters 22 and 23) do not include “set limits for air quality”.

The Agency instructs the proponent to:

A) Clarify what is meant by “set limit” and provide an explanation of what these set limits are for air emissions.

IAAC-2-25 - Mercury levels

References

CEAA, August 2018. Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, Part 2. Sections 7.1.5 (Surface water), 7.3.1 (Fish and fish habitat) and 7.6.3 (Cumulative effects assessment).

Tetra Tech, February 2023. Timiskaming Dam-Bridge of Quebec Replacement Project (Quebec) Environmental Impact Statement. Section 17.5.1.

PSPC, March 2024. PSPC Response to Information Request No. 1 (Part 1). Response to questions IAAC-1-98.

Context

In response to IAAC-1-98, the proponent has only provided general “grey literature” concerning the suspension of mercury in water overtime and have not provided primary evidence on current concentrations of mercury in water within and in proximity to the project area. Given Indigenous communities member’s concerns with the potential for mercury in the water, in fish and in sediments, further investigation is required.

The Agency instructs the proponent to:

A) Provide data to support the claim that mercury concentrations in fish, water, and sediments have returned to pre-dam-bridge levels at the project site.

IAAC-2-26 – Cumulative Effects on Culture, Heritage, and Traditional Practices

References

CEAA, August 2018. Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, Part 2. Section 7.6.3 (Cumulative effects assessment)

Tetra Tech, February 2023. Timiskaming Dam-Bridge of Quebec Replacement Project (Quebec) Environmental Impact Statement. Section 17.

PSPC, March 2024. PSPC Response to Information Request No. 1 (Part 1). Response to questions IAAC-1-94 and IAAC-1-95.

Context

In response to questions IAAC-1-94 and IAAC-1-95, the proponent lists several activities to capture the scope of cumulative effects on Algonquin lands and waters. However, the proponent has not described how or if they have considered recommendations for measures from the AOPFN Cumulative Effects Study (CES). This study indicates that existing levels of effect in the Kíchí-Síbí (Ottawa River) already severely constrain and significantly impact where and how AOPFN members practice rights, maintain critical connections to land, and pass on knowledge to younger generations.

The Agency instructs the proponent to:

A) Describe how Indigenous-led studies were considered and incorporated in the assessment, most notably in Table 17.1 of the EIS.
B) Provide mitigation measures for cumulative impacts on Indigenous culture, heritage, and traditional practices.

Monitoring and Follow-up Programs

Information requests directed to the proponent

IAAC-2-27 - pH Monitoring during Demolition

References

CEAA, August 2018. Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, Part 2. Sections 7.2.2 (Changes to surface water), 7.4 (Mitigation measures) and 9 (Follow-up and monitoring programs).

Tetra Tech, February 2023. Timiskaming Dam-Bridge of Quebec Replacement Project (Quebec) Environmental Impact Statement. Section 22.4.

PSPC, March 2024. PSPC Response to Information Request No. 1 (Part 1). Response to questions IAAC-1-101.

Context

Response to question IAAC-1-101 lists the commonly used products that could be used to lower the pH. The proponent has also committed to engage with Indigenous communities should pH levels rise above 9. AOPFN is concerned about being notified only after there has been a substantial rise in pH.

ECCC believes that the product used to lower the pH and the demolition method should be determined and included in the EIS to avoid a delay and minimize effects on water quality in the receiving environment. AOPFN would also prefer to plan and discuss adaptative measures prior to worst-case scenarios.

The Agency instructs the proponent to:

A) Specify the product and describe the methodology that would be used to lower the pH of the water located between the new dam-bridge and the containment curtain during demolition of the existing structure.
B) Describe how the proponent will work with impacted Indigenous communities to identify monitoring thresholds, notification procedures, and collaboration on adaptive responses.

IAAC-2-28 - Surface Monitoring Program

References

CEAA, August 2018. Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, Part 2. Sections 7.2.2 (Changes to surface water), 7.4 (Mitigation measures) and 9 (Follow-up and monitoring programs).

Tetra Tech, February 2023. Timiskaming Dam-Bridge of Quebec Replacement Project (Quebec) Environmental Impact Statement. Sections 7.1.2, 11.2.3.4 and 22.4.

PSPC, March 2024. PSPC Response to Information Request No. 1 (Part 1). Response to questions IAAC-1-100.

Context

AOPFN members have expressed great concern for the protection of water. Response to question IAAC-100 states that the surface monitoring program will be extended to begin before start of construction work (4 to 6 months) to set baseline conditions and extend after demolition work (4 to 6 months) to assess return to initial conditions. AOPFN is concerned that six months following demolition is an inadequate period for monitoring given concerns for disturbance to mercury and other contaminants that could still be present following that timeframe.

The Agency instructs the proponent to:

A) Provide a description of what will be done if the contaminants are still detected after the 6-month post-demolition monitoring period.

Comments and advice for the proponent

Comment 2-19- Involvement of Indigenous Peoples into Monitoring and Follow-up Programs

References

CEAA, August 2018. Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, Part 2. Sections 7.4 (Mitigation measures) and *9 (Follow-up and monitoring programs).*

Tetra Tech, February 2023. Timiskaming Dam-Bridge of Quebec Replacement Project (Quebec) Environmental Impact Statement. Chapters 22 and 23.

PSPC, March 2024. PSPC Response to Information Request No. 1 (Part 1). Response to questions IAAC-1-66, 1-72, 1-95, 1-100, 1-101, and comment 1-23.

Comments and advice

The proponent should engage in culturally appropriate communication plans and commit to co-develop protocols, monitoring, mitigation and follow-up measures with SART, AOPFN, and other affected Indigenous communities. This commitment should include, but not be limited to, wildlife protocols, archaeological chance-find protocols, cumulative effect assessment, fish passage planning as well as risk communication plans related to mercury concerns.

For instance, AOPFN has been undergoing sturgeon and eel studies, under DFO's Aboriginal Fund for Species at Risk, and expects the proponent to work with AOPFN to incorporate study findings into monitoring and management plans. Likewise, SART has conducted several reports (Neme Biocultural Study, Bio-Cultural Impact Pathways, Algonquin Canoe Company: Business Impact Analysis, Fish Survey Protocols). Results and recommendations from these studies should be discussed and integrated into the design of future monitoring and management plans.

Comment 2-20 - Hiring of Indigenous Peoples

References

CEAA, August 2018. Guidelines for the Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, Part 2, section 7.3.4 (Indigenous peoples – Health and socio-economic conditions)

Tetra Tech, February 2023. Timiskaming Dam-Bridge of Quebec Replacement Project (Quebec) Environmental Impact Statement, section 13.1 and Appendix 13.1

PSPC, March 2024. PSPC Response to Information Request No. 1 (Part 1). Response to questions IAAC-1-73.

Comments and advice

In its response to question IAAC-1-73, the proponent mentions job opportunities for members of Indigenous communities. It is important to distinguish section 35 of the Constitution Act (1982) right holders from other groups. Therefore, the Agency encourages to prioritize the hiring of First Nations members from SART and AOPFN and to favor the hiring of members from AOO, MNO and Antoine Nation at every stage of the project, from construction-demolition phase, to monitoring and follow-up programs.