Indigenous Services Canada
September 29th, 2026

Federal Authority Advice Record (FAAR)
Eastern Bridge Project – Public Services and Procurement Canada – Ontario and Quebec
Canadian Impact Assessment Registry (CIAR) Reference Number: 90709

Department/Agency	**Indigenous Services Canada**
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Indigenous Services Canada in the Impact Assessment of the Eastern Bridge Project
Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) has a mandate to support Indigenous peoples (First Nations, Inuit and Métis) in their efforts to improve their social well-being, health and economic prosperity, to develop healthier and more sustainable communities, and to participate more fully in the political, social and economic development of Canada.

At this stage of the Impact Assessment process, IAAC has invited federal authorities to review the Initial Project Description (IPD) and provide project-specific concerns or priorities within their respective departmental mandates.

The main Indigenous communities most likely affected by the project and identified by the Proponent are the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation (AOPFN) and the Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation (KZA). To date, the main concerns raised by the First Nation communities are the potential impacts to traditional and current use of the Kichi SIbi (Ottawa River) and the surrounding land and resources, to cultural and physical heritage like archeological sites, to water quality and flow of the river, and the potential impacts to the ecological integrity of the area, both terrestrial and aquatic environments, as well as the overall potential impacts of the project on the cumulative effects of the area. Broader concerns regarding barriers to the socio-economic and health conditions of the local Indigenous population has also been raised.

Main Documents Consulted for Analysis
Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) & National Capital Commission (NCC). (2026). *Eastern Bridge Project –Initial Project Description.* Eastern Bridge Project Initial Project Description |

Scope of Analysis

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Given the nature of the project, the concerns raised to date by Indigenous communities and ISC's expertise, our analysis has been oriented towards:

- The potential effects of the project on the health, social and economic conditions of Indigenous peoples;
- The cumulative effect of project works and activities on the health and well-being of Indigenous peoples, as well as on socio-economic aspects affecting them;
- Potential impacts of the project on the exercise or practice of Aboriginal or treaty rights in the project area.

Results of Analysis

ISC's Impact Assessment team, comprised of analysts with expertise in health, socio-economic and environmental affairs, reviewed the Initial Project Description and provided comments related to ISC's mandate in table 1 below.

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1. Will your department or agency exercise a **power, perform a duty or function**, or provide **financial assistance**, related to the project to enable it to be carried out in whole or in part?

   No. Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) will not be required to exercise any authority or perform any task or function related to the project, as the department is not responsible for approving or issuing licenses, permits or authorizations for proposed projects that are not located on reserve lands. ISC is not providing financial assistance for the project.

2. **Using Table 1**, identify project- and context- specific **key issues**, based on the expertise within your mandate[1] and the information in your possession, including the Initial Project Description, any exchanges with the proponent or others related to the project and known means to address the effects of the project.

   See table 1 for additional comments and information.

Yassmine Boctor-Moghaddam
Name and title of Departmental / Agency Responder

2026-09-29
Date

[1] Refer to the Memoranda of Understanding with IAAC.

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Table 1: Key Issues to inform the impact assessment process

Comment ID	a) Key issue	b) Project component or activity	c)(i) Biophysical effect pathway(s)	c)(ii) Concern unique to the project or a priority within your mandate	c)(iii) Material to federal decision-making	d) Means for issue resolution	e) Additional information from the proponent
ISC-01	Potential non-negligible adverse effects on the health, social and economic conditions of Indigenous Peoples, as it relates to the cumulative effects of the Project.	All phases of the project.	The cumulative effects associated with the project's construction and operation along the Ottawa River may have potential negative effects on the health, social and economic conditions of Indigenous peoples.	There are concerns on the potential impacts on resources and traditional land use areas along the Ottawa River and surrounding area, including potential restrictions to access and travel resulting from the cumulative effects of an additional bridge over the Ottawa River. The river and its tributaries are already under anthropogenic pressure from other human-related activities such as dams, municipal and industrial wastewater, urban stormwater, agriculture, floodplain, and shoreline development.	Potential adverse effect within federal jurisdiction, specifically the health, social and economic conditions of Indigenous Peoples. The Kichi Sibi (Ottawa River) is of great importance to the local Indigenous communities, and continues to be an important resource for harvesting and fishing, commerce, and transportation. The issue of cumulative effects in the Project's area, including the river and its tributaries, has been raised by First Nation communities potentially impacted by the project. The addition of new infrastructure across the river may cause potential adverse effects to Indigenous peoples, including impacts to sustainable living practices of community members, continued alterations to the shoreline, and impacts to culturally significant terrestrial and aquatic species and their habitats. As such, the cumulative effects assessment of the Eastern Bridge project should consider impacts to cultural and treaty rights across a large landscape and across the full extent of a Nation's traditional territory. Cultural cumulative effects should therefore include the consideration of more than just "local" impacts (FNMPC, p.33).	The proponent should: • Engage communities who have expressed interest in supporting, participating, and leading, their own studies and impact assessments, as well as contributing Indigenous knowledge in support of the proponent's cumulative effects assessment of the project; • Describe, identify and document (with the community and knowledge holders' consent) what matters most to the community, including cultural rights that are most at risk and priorities for revitalization; • Ensure that the valued components and their spatial and temporal boundaries identified as by Indigenous communities are included in the effects analysis, as outlined in IAAC's Policy Framework for Assessing Cumulative Effects under the Impact Assessment Act - Canada.ca;	The proponent indicates in the Initial Project Description, that "the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation (AOPFN) has received federal funding through a collaboration agreement to undertake Project-specific studies" (PSPC, 2026 p.247), however it is not clear if Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation and other Indigenous communities have or will receive the same type of funding to undergo similar studies that would contribute to the drafting of the Project's cumulative effects assessment.
ISC-02	Potential non-negligible adverse effects on the health, social and economic conditions of Indigenous Peoples, as it relates to the	All phases of the project.	The Project's construction and operational phase may have potential negative effects on on the health, social and economic	Potentially impacted First Nations have emphasized the importance of collaboratively developing mitigation, protection and enhancement measures,	Potential adverse effect within federal jurisdiction, specifically the health, social and economic conditions of Indigenous Peoples. The Ottawa River is consistently recognized as a valued environmental and cultural component to local Indigenous communities. It's protection and preservation should be	The proponent should: • Support for Indigenous-led mitigations, conditions, and follow-up/monitoring as it relates to impacts to Indigenous Peoples, including: ○ Physical and cultural heritage, and structures,	Similar to the above point, the IPD mentions that AOPFN-led studies "are intended to identify community values and potential effects of the Project

	implementation of mitigation measures.		conditions of Indigenous peoples.	as well as habitat and ecological restoration plans for potentially affected wildlife and aquatic species.	highlighted and at the fore-front of all proposed mitigation strategies throughout Project planning and implementation. Indigenous communities should be included, and where possible, lead the development and implementation of avoidance, mitigation, and restitution measures to ensure that the measures meet their needs and requirements (FNMPC, p.54). Many different approaches may be taken by the community, and the proponent should ensure that this is reflected in determining and identifying the appropriate mitigation measures for each potential significant adverse effect that may impact the Indigenous community.	sites or things of significance; ○ Current use of lands and resources for traditional purposes; ○ Health, social and economic conditions of Indigenous Peoples; and ○ Rights of Indigenous Peoples. • Where avoidance and mitigation are not possible, restitution practices should be led, planned, managed, and implemented by the affected Indigenous community themselves.	on health, culture, well-being and the exercise of rights. The results will inform the evaluation of […] the development of mitigation measures"(PSPC, 2026, p.247). It is unclear if other specific First Nation-led studies will also contribute and feed into the development of mitigation measures, seeing as though on p.214 the IPD states that "Communities have expressed interest in participating in ecological studies, contributing Indigenous knowledge, and ensuring that cumulative effects are considered."
ISC-03	Potential non-negligible adverse effects on the health, social and economic conditions of Indigenous Peoples. Lack of resources and opportunities for First Nations communities to participate in or lead monitoring activities and mitigation measures.	All phases of the project.	Example of effect pathway: Strengthened capacity of First Nation communities in health impact monitoring and mitigation measures. ↓ Better monitoring of key issues that may influence First Nations communities health and well-being (e.g., impacts on land use, archaeological	Giving the First Nations communities the opportunity to participate actively in monitoring activities is consistent with the right to own, use, develop and control their lands, territories and resources, as set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN, 2018).	Potential adverse effect within federal jurisdiction, specifically the health, social and economic conditions of Indigenous Peoples. There is potential for the project to impact the health and well-being of First Nations communities.	ISC recommends providing opportunities and resources (financial and time) to First Nations communities (especially Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg and Algonquins of Pikwàkanagàn First Nation) that would like to lead monitoring activities and results communication activities to their community in regard to the effects of the project on aspects that may influence their health and well-being (fisheries, water quality, species of importance, archelogy, ecosystem integrity of *Kichi Sibi* (Ottawa River), etc.).	Nil.

			heritage, cultural activities, fisheries, economic activities). ↓ Ability for First Nations communities to better control monitoring activities and mitigations measures so their health and well-being are better protected or enhanced. ↓ Influence on health, social or economic conditions of First Nations communities.				
ISC-04	Potential non-negligible adverse effects on the health, social and economic conditions of Indigenous Peoples. Lack of engagement, resources and leadership opportunities for First Nations communities to participate in health impact assessment processes to identify and mitigate key health and well-being issues.	All phases of the project.	Example of effect pathway: Strengthened capacity of First Nation communities to engage in the impact assessment process. ↓ Better consideration of First Nation communities key issues that may influence their health and well-being (e.g., potential impacts on land use, archaeological heritage, cultural activities, fisheries, economic activities) ↓ Ability of First Nations communities	Some members of First Nations communities have underlined the importance to have the capacity and the opportunity to participate meaningfully to the impact assessment process: “-Financial resources are needed by Indigenous communities to meaningfully participate in consultation.” .” (PSPC, 2026, p.38) “-Algonquins wish to be involved in developing Terms of Reference for archaeological	Potential adverse effect within federal jurisdiction, specifically the health, social and economic conditions of Indigenous Peoples. There is potential for the project to impact the health and well-being of First Nations communities.	ISC recommends providing opportunities and resources (financial and time) to First Nations communities that wish to assess the project's potential impacts, including the cumulative effects, on their key issues that may influence their health and well-being (e.g., land use, archaeological sites, cultural activities, fisheries). As mentioned in the project description, ISC is in the opinion that the First Nations communities must have the possibility to validate the information in regard to the impact assessment (PSPC, 2026, p.246). ISC supports the proponent’s commitment to offer funding for the Indigenous communities and organization through the collaboration agreements (PSPC, 2026, p.40), so they can meaningfully participate to the impact	Nil.

			to influence the importance of the potential impacts of the project on their health and well-being (e.g., better maximization of the positive effects and better elimination/mitigation of the negative effects). ↓ Influence on health, social or economic conditions of First Nations communities.	studies." (PSPC, 2026, p.38) "-Algonquins wish to participate in developing a communications plan for their communities." (PSPC, 2026, p.38) There is still a significant gap between the state of health and well-being of First Nations communities and the state of health and well-being of the general Canadian population. The impact assessment process could contribute to reducing this gap.		assessment process and be able to organize community-led activities (e. g. Indigenous led studies, Indigenous led monitoring, develop communication plans) (PSPC, 2026, p.39; 42; 248). The document "*A quick guide to indigenous-led health impact assessment*" published by the Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources (CIER, 2026) could be useful for communities that would like to conduct their own health impact assessment, that would target their own health determinants, according to their own methodologies and realities.	

ISC-05	Potential non-negligible adverse effects on the economic conditions of Indigenous Peoples.	Project construction and operation.	The Project's construction and operational phases could have potential positive impacts to the economic conditions of Indigenous peoples and businesses in the local project area.	The IPD mentions that "AOPFN has previously requested involvement in the assessment and development of infrastructure improvements" (PSPC, 2026, p.247).	Prioritizing Indigenous individuals and/or businesses in the project area can contribute to economic reconciliation.
					
					Job creation could have a variety of impacts on the economies in affected First Nations, which may vary based on, for example: the kinds of jobs, the duration of those jobs, and the income levels associated with those jobs (and how that compares with average incomes in the affected First Nations). Simply stating that job creation will have a positive impact on the economy does not indicate how it will have an impact and the extent to which it will have an impact, and the impact of job creation may depend, at least in part, on the characteristics of those jobs.
					
					The greater the match between the pool of jobs to be created and the availability of workers able to work in those jobs, the
						In addition to the tools developed by PSPC to provide economic participation support to Indigenous communities, the proponent should:
						• Ensure the Indigenous participation plan includes:
						  ○ Prioritizing Indigenous individuals and/or businesses and identifying how the proponent plans to do this;
						  ○ Providing enough detail on how the characteristics of the jobs to be created as part of the project will impact the economies in affected communities;
						  ○ Describing how the approximate budget for the project (broken down by project phase) and how much of that budget
							Nil.

					greater the economic value to Indigenous workers and their communities. Proponents may assume that their project will attract workers, but not all workers seeking employment in the area will be interested in or able to obtain jobs in that sector.	would be spent in local Indigenous communities (both the total amount and as a proportion of the budget); and ○ Identifying if and how Indigenous peoples will be prioritized in the training plans both prior to employment and on-the-job. • Search the Indigenous Business Directory for information on Indigenous owned and/or sourced businesses within the project area. • Use ISC's economic impact estimator tool to understand preliminary estimates of potential direct, indirect, and induced economic impacts that could be generated by proposed projects or planned investments and realized by the Indigenous and non-Indigenous labour forces.	
ISC-06	Potential non-negligible adverse effects on the health, social and economic conditions of Indigenous Peoples, including potential effects on the food security and culture of local First Nations communities.	All phases of the project.	Example of effect pathway: Potential effects on fish and fish habitat, wildlife, flora, etc. ↓ Potential effects on fisheries (up and downstream the Ottawa River). ↓ Potential effects on First Nations communities food	The project description mentions that "Fisheries and archaeological sites are of importance to Indigenous peoples." (PSPC, 2026, p.38). Moreover, according to the *First Nations Food, Nutrition and Environment Study* (FNFNES), between 24-60% of First Nations experience food insecurity, which is three to five times higher than the general Canadian population. "Over half of all adults reported that the harvesting of	Potential adverse effect within federal jurisdiction, specifically the health, social and economic conditions of Indigenous Peoples. There is potential for the project to impact the food security and culture of First Nations communities.	Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) recommends providing opportunities and resources (financial and time) to First Nations communities that would like to assess the potential impact of the project (including cumulative effects) on the integrity of *Kichi Sibi* (Ottawa River) ecosystem, which may influence fisheries and their food security and culture. The proponent's commitment to fund community-led activities and studies (PSPC, 2026, p.41; 248) may contribute to a better assessment of the potential effects of the project on food security and the culture of First Nations communities.	Nil.

			security and diabetes level. ↓ Influence on the health, social and economic conditions of First Nations communities.	traditional food is impacted by industry-related activities, as well as climate change." Source: https://afn.ca/all-news/news/decade-long-mega-study-finds-barriers-to-access-to-healthy-traditional-foods-are-eroding-food-security-for-first-nations/			
ISC-07	Potential non-negligible adverse effects on the health, social and economic conditions of Indigenous Peoples, including potential effects on culture and mental health of local First Nation communities.	All phases of the project.	Example of effect pathway: Potential effects on land use, landscape, and sites of significance - including on archaeological heritage. ↓ Potential influence on culture and mental health of First Nations communities. ↓ Influence on health, social or economic conditions of First Nations communities.	The project description (PSPC, 2026) underlines the great cultural importance of *Kichi Sibi* (Ottawa River) for First Nations communities: "-Significant concerns regarding potential impacts to Kettle Island, including its ecological value, protected status, and cultural significance, as well as request for transparency on bridge alignment, pier locations, and mitigation measures." (PSPC, 2026, p.22) "-Islands in the Ottawa River are of significance to Indigenous peoples." (PSPC, 2026, p.38) "-Fisheries and archaeological sites	Potential adverse effect within federal jurisdiction, specifically the health, social and economic conditions of Indigenous Peoples. There is potential for the project to impact the culture and mental health of First Nations communities.	ISC recommends providing opportunities and resources (financial and time) to First Nations communities that would like to assess the potential impact of the project on their culture and mental health. As described in the project description, the proponent will support First Nations communities to participate in the impact assessment process, including topics of importance such as culture and mental health, through diverse engagements, notably by: -Involving the First Nations communities interested in the development of the terms of reference for archaeological studies (PSPC, 2026, p.38). -Funding community-led activities and studies (PSPC, 2026, p.41; 248). -Respecting the protocol between National Capital Commission (NCC), Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg and Algonquins of Pikwàkanagàn First Nation for all stages of	Nil.

				are of importance to Indigenous peoples." (PSPC, 2026, p.38) "-Location and design of the new crossing should be based on archaeological studies." (PSPC, 2026, p.38) "-The Ottawa River and its islands are of historical, cultural, and spiritual importance to Indigenous peoples." (PSPC, 2026, p.38)		archaeological investigation undertaken on NCC land (PSPC, 2026, p.187). Those engagements may contribute to a better assessment of the potential effects of the project on the culture and mental health of First Nations communities.	

References

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