

ATTACHMENT: June 30, 2021
Provincial Advice Record: Designation Request under IAA
Response requested by July 20, 2021
Lake Diefenbaker Irrigation Expansion Projects

Department/Agency	Department for Women and Gender Equality Canada
Lead Contact	Denise Gareau
Full Address	22 Eddy St, Gatineau QC
Email	CFC.EvaluationImpacts-ImpactsAssessment.SWC@cfc-swc.gc.ca
Telephone	<personal information removed>
Alternate Departmental Contact	Catherine Adams

-
1. Has your department or agency considered whether it has an interest in the Project; exercised a power or performed a duty or function under any Act of Parliament in relation to the Project; or taken any course of action (including provision of financial assistance) that would allow the Project to proceed in whole or in part?

WAGE does not hold any regulatory power, function, or duties.

-
2. Is it probable that your department or agency may be required to exercise a power or perform a duty or function related to the Project to enable it to proceed?

No.

-
3. If your department or agency will exercise a power or perform a duty or function under any Act of Parliament in relation to the Project, will it involve public and Indigenous consultation?

No.

-
4. Is your department or agency in possession of specialist or expert information or knowledge that may be relevant to any potential adverse effects within federal jurisdiction caused by the Project or adverse direct or incidental effects stemming from the Project?

WAGE has expertise in the application of GBA Plus and intersectional analysis as well as information related to gender-based violence.

5. Has your department or agency had previous contact or involvement with the proponent or other parties in relation to the Project?

N/A

6. From the perspective of the mandate and area(s) of expertise of your department or agency, does the Project have the potential to cause adverse effects within federal jurisdiction or adverse direct or incidental effects as described in section 2 of IAA? Could any of those effects be managed through legislative or regulatory mechanisms administered by your department or agency? If a licence, permit, authorization or approval may be issued, could it include conditions in relation to those effects?

No.

7. Does your department or agency have a program or additional authority that may be relevant and could be considered as a potential solution to concerns expressed about the Project? In particular, the following issues have been raised by the requestor:
- a. Potential effects on Inherent and Treaty Rights in Saskatchewan
 - b. Potential impacts to sacred sites and other cultural and heritage-sensitive areas
 - c. Potential effects to food and water security including climate change impacts
 - d. Potential long-term cumulative impacts of water withdrawals and agrochemical inputs to the Saskatchewan River and the Saskatchewan River Delta that flow into Manitoba
 - e. Effects to the following:
 - i. fish and fish habitat
 - ii. migratory birds
 - iii. wildlife and wildlife habitat including federally listed species at risk
 - iv. contaminants from agricultural inputs

WAGE has expertise in the application of GBA Plus and this will include input relating to (b) potential impacts to sacred sites and other cultural and heritage-sensitive areas, and (c) potential effects to food and water security including climate change impact.

8. If your department has guidance material that would be helpful to the proponent or the Agency, please include these as attachments or hyperlinks in your response.

See below.

<Original signed by>

Title of responder

Date

Introduction

The Water Security Agency is proposing an irrigation projects surrounding Lake Diefenbaker, a reservoir in Saskatchewan. The Lake Diefenbaker Irrigation Expansion Projects (the Project) includes three phases of expansion. Phase 1 Westside Irrigation Project proposes to expand across three villages south-west of Saskatoon, Macrorie, Conquest, and Milden. This phase includes the rehabilitation of present infrastructure, built in the 1970s, to increase capacity and meet current standards. Phase 2 Westside Irrigation Project proposes to expand across several villages south-west of Saskatoon, including Zealandia, Delisle, Vanscoy, and Asquith. Phase 3 Qu'Appelle Irrigation Project seeks to expand across three villages south of Saskatoon, including Tugaske, Eyebrow, and Marquis. A letter requesting federal impact assessment was initiated by Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN). The FSIN requested that First Nations be engaged, consulted, and accommodated in a meaningful way in relation to impacts on Inherent and Treaty Rights, and transparency of the project proposal, design, short and long term impacts, as well as associated economic opportunities over the lifecycle of any project proposed. FSIN concerns, as it relates to WAGE's mandate, includes impact to sacred sites, access and control of resources, and impact to cultural heritage.

In agricultural industries, including with irrigation expansion and development projects, women, men, and gender diverse persons and people from a range of groups and communities can often have vastly different experiences of the risks, benefits and impacts of the project – from access to benefits in terms of jobs, compensation or benefits and community investment; to decision making roles for new innovation and technologies; to access to services and programs that account for the perspective, knowledges and experiences of diverse individuals and communities.

The following are the Department for Women and Gender Equality's (WAGE) key suggested areas/issues for the proponent to consider should the project progress to the Impact Statement phase. Guidance is provided on applying Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) to understand the differential impacts of agricultural industries on diverse populations and adapt the project design so that project benefits are widely shared, and negative disproportional impacts are minimized.

Overview of Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus)

GBA Plus is an analytical tool to support the development of responsive and inclusive initiatives, including policies, programs, and other initiatives. GBA Plus is a process for understanding who is impacted by the issue being addressed by the initiative; identifying how the initiative could be tailored to meet diverse needs of the people most impacted; and anticipating and mitigating any barriers to accessing or benefitting from the initiative. GBA Plus is also an ongoing process that does not stop once an initiative has been developed. GBA Plus is an analytical tool that can be applied to all stages of initiative development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Applying GBA Plus early in the policy development process ensures that diversity considerations are embedded in the decision-making process, allowing for responsive and inclusive initiatives that meet the needs of diverse groups of people.

GBA Plus also involves consideration of the context within which people live, including systems and structures of power. When we consider how these factors work together, we recognize that there are as many differences within groups of people as there are between groups. This recognition is important for doing GBA Plus well and thoroughly.

Some key questions to consider as data and information are gathered at all stages of GBA Plus include, but are not limited to:

- What disaggregated data is available to understand the various intersecting dimensions of the issue?
- Am I prioritizing certain factors and/or data over others? If so why?
- Who should be involved in gathering and analyzing data?
- How does age, culture, disability, education, ethnicity, geography, gender, economic status, language, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation shape who is impacted by this issue? How do these factors change the nature and extent of the impacts?
- How might I engage those who are affected by this issue in my analysis and in the development, implementation and monitoring of the initiative including those who are not traditionally represented?
- Are there any gaps in data in identifying differences and inequalities?

Additional information on GBA Plus and diversity analysis is available at the following:

<https://research-groups.usask.ca/reed/documents/CEAA%20Report.FINAL.%20Walker%20Reed%20Thiessen.%20Gender%20Diversity%20in%20IA.Feb%208%202019.pdf>

Documenting the context – Creating a baseline

If an Impact Statement is required, there would be a need to document baseline information about the community potentially impacted by the project. This would include basic data and gender analysis as it related to the social, economic and health impacts, such as gender and poverty, division of labour, the differential situation of women and men vis-à-vis indicators (such as literacy, land access, participation in fishing/ agriculture, political participation, etc.). This information should bring to the surface gender and other differences and disparities related to a core problem or issue demonstrating that some groups face different, distinct or greater barriers and risks than others. The analysis should move beyond the descriptive (e.g. percentage of low-income people) to ask critical questions about norms, roles and relations and how that influences power relations (e.g. who has what, who does what, etc.) in a particular context. It should also demonstrate linkages between the economic and legal environment where norms and rules in organizations or in other societal structures become obstacles for certain groups (e.g. historical and contextual issues that have limited access to opportunities).

Disaggregated data

Detailed overview of the target population group(s) and local context will be necessary in the Impact Statement. This will allow to clearly identify the segments of the population that will either benefit or be negatively impacted by the project. Information should be updated and disaggregated at minimum by sex, gender, age and ethnicity. Where possible, data should be further disaggregated to include information such as on the impact to diverse groups within the project's area of influence, such as Indigenous peoples, women, low income, under or unemployed, disabled, seniors and vulnerable groups. Disaggregated baseline information will be essential in the Impact Statement to demonstrate changes over the life of the project and to provide a reference point for assessing gender equality results. Extracting this data normally involves consulting a range of sources, such as government statistics, administrative reports or previous studies. If data gaps exist, this should be mentioned up front in the Impact Statement and additional steps should be taken to fill gaps in information. For instance, while there is a

rise in census participation from Indigenous communities, the information may not always be available or shared.

The quantitative information, including gender sensitive data, should also be complemented by qualitative insights from studies or consultations and from various sources. For example, the Impact Statement should provide a detailed profile of the socio-economic conditions of the households and communities that may be affected by the project.

Public Engagement and decision making

Consultation with various groups and individuals, including residents and Indigenous groups, are an important element of the GBA Plus process. The initial project description discussed engagement activities to date, however further detail is required on the participants in the engagement plan to ensure transparent and inclusive processes. Companies often fail to adequately consult with women or diverse groups when negotiating access to land, compensation or benefit-sharing agreements. In addition, language and information materials should be accessible to all. If not adequately consulted, this can disempower and disadvantage individuals as groups, and many also undermine traditional decision-making structures. Communities also have different social, economic and political conditions and cultural specificities that combine in different ways to enable or constrain women's agency and leadership. It is important to understand decision making processes and abilities of individuals or groups in the local area – not only who, but also different kinds of decisions people make, particularly related to the use of resources.

Ultimately, the Impact Statement should allow for a better understanding of people's decision-making abilities about development in the community, particularly on the use of resources. An Impact Statement can provide information on how the project intends to support culturally sensitive participation of women and diverse groups in decision making.

Social needs and well-being

The Impact Statement should also include information on what was heard through the engagement or consultation process on social needs and well-being. Including diverse perspectives in engagement and consultation processes supports the identification of different needs, particularly as it relates to social needs such as health or social services. For example, when barriers are identified to women's participation such as lack of childcare services, measures can be considered to provide childcare services or creating child-friendly spaces during meetings. Similarly, there are cases where men gain employment in industrial projects and withdraw their labour from traditional subsistence activities such as hunting, fishing, gathering and/or trapping, which can create – and exacerbate existing – gender inequalities in the communities. The Impact Statement will also need to demonstrate how engaging community members helps ensure the specific needs of men, women and diverse groups of people are understood and adverse impacts are mitigated, or positive impacts enhanced.

Access and control over resources

Access and control over resources is concerned with both the availability of resources, and the benefits that come from the use of these resources. The project proponent may wish to include information in the Impact Statement on how access and use of resources, such as education, information and services will be impacted by the implementation of the proposed project. The Impact Statement should elaborate on how the proponent plans to implement local employment and policies and planning, while using local skills and supporting local initiatives.

For the project to be sustainable and inclusive, the Impact Statement should identify resources in the community, and then describe who accesses these resources. For example, if traditional livelihoods are affected and women are unable to access employment due to skill shortages, the project can consider ways to support women's employment in the industry or hire business owned by local and/or Indigenous women in the supply chain.

In addition, to understand the constraints and barriers faced by certain individuals or groups in access to and use of resources, the Impact Statement should describe the social norms and broader social power structures, such as legal frameworks that can impact women, men and diverse groups of people's ability to equally benefit from the opportunities in the agriculture sector.

Economic opportunities

Economic opportunities and access to the financial benefits of projects is often limited for women and for a range of diverse groups. Moreover, the Impact Statement should describe whether the project will generate significant benefits and opportunities for local communities, such as who from the communities will benefit and the potential for diverse labour force and considerations, including women's employment or entrepreneurship opportunities in the sector. It should also outline employment rates in the area and describe the level of nature of unemployment in the local area (e.g., people with low levels of educational attainment,).

As the project proponent develops the Impact Statement, information should be included on how women and men and diverse groups of people are employed either as wage earners in the labour market or in customary livelihood occupations. This is particularly relevant for Indigenous communities where "pluri-activity" often characterizes household incomes. The proponent may wish to include information on what potential it has for increasing employment for women and other under-represented groups in the sector and for local workers more generally. The proponent may wish to identify measures that will be undertaken to support the recruitment, development and retention of those workers. Information on the training opportunities that will be made available for the prospective workers may also be of relevance. This could include collaboration with local learning institutions to deliver training targeted to these populations. Measures related to the supply chain may also be considered for example, the creation of incentives or criteria that favour local suppliers. Additional detail on how the project can have positive implications on the local economy more broadly should be included (e.g., supplying food, accommodations or potentially as it related to purchasing construction materials). The proponent may also wish to describe in the Impact Statement its own workforce development plans as they related to diversity and inclusion.

Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

In certain cases, projects can generate and result in increasing migration and influx of transient workers. In most cases, men remain over-represented in the agricultural sector. The Impact Statement should identify and assess the potential issues of gender-based violence (e.g. sexual harassment, violence against women, human trafficking). The Impact Statement will need to explore these potential issues and increased risks such as gender-based violence, which can make women feel less safe in their homes and communities. The Impact Statement will need to identify the specific vulnerable groups among women (e.g. Indigenous, younger women, youth), that are often disproportionately affected by these health and safety risks, including intimidation and

discrimination. Risks and negative impacts can also be experienced by groups that are not specifically targeted by the project.

GBV is a persistent problem in all societies and should be explored in the assessment, for example, to ensure that the proponent and worksite contractors take measures to prevent sexual harassment and violence. The Impact Statement should include an overview of the legal framework, such as relevant labour laws and policies related to GBV. For example, Canada's laws governing domestic violence and the jurisdictions to address the problems differ from province to province. The Impact Statement should also consider mitigation measures, where relevant, such as programs to support the safety and security of people, including codes of conduct and programs to engage men as change agents – arguably one of the most challenging aspects of promoting gender equality. If temporary infrastructure is required, such infrastructure should include washroom facilities that are safe spaces for all workers. Should it be relevant, the proponent should include in the Impact Statement background information on GBV in the impacted communities and how project interventions may have unintended impact or increased risk in the development of the project.

Conclusion

While GBA Plus should be embedded throughout the Impact Statement and Impact Assessment, a specific section that summarizes key issues and identifies mitigating measures to address these issues can be useful as it helps form the basis for a GBA Plus implementation framework. It is recommended that key issues and practical measures be prioritized, rather than devising an exhaustive list that might not be realistic to implement. Underpinning these key actions with indicators of success and monitoring progress regularly also helps institutionalize gender equality and inclusion in the project management.