

Federal Authority Advice Record Form

Spanish Mountain Gold Project – Spanish Mountain Gold Ltd.

Response due by May 6, 2022

Please submit the form to: SpanishMountain@iaac-aeic.gc.ca

Agency File: 005827 Registry Reference No.: 83495

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1. 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?

If yes, specify the Act of Parliament and that power, duty or function.

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

2. Is your department or agency in possession of specialist or expert information or knowledge that may be relevant to the conduct of an impact assessment of the Project?

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

3. Has your department or agency considered 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 that would allow the Project to proceed in whole or in part?

Specify as appropriate.

No.

4. Has your department or agency had previous contact or involvement with the proponent or other party in relation to the Project? (for example, enquiry about methodology, guidance, or data; introduction to the project)

Provide an overview of the information or advice exchanged.

WAGE attended a meeting with the Spanish Mountain Gold proponent who provided with an overview of the IPD ([Link](#))

5. Does your department or agency have additional information or knowledge not specified, above?

Specify as appropriate.

Based on the project's potential effects relating to women and the advancement of gender equality, the following are potential effects within federal jurisdiction on which WAGE focus:

- Section 2 of the Impact Assessment Act:
 - (c) With respect to the Indigenous people of Canada, an impact on: (i) physical and cultural heritage
 - (d) Any change occurring in Canada to the health, social or economic conditions of the Indigenous peoples of Canada
 - (e) Any change to a health, social or economic matter that is within the legislative authority of Parliament that is set out in Schedule 3.

6. From the perspective of the mandate and area(s) of expertise of your department or agency, what are the issues that should be addressed in the impact assessment of the Project, should the Agency determine that an impact assessment is required?

For each issue discussed, provide a concise, plain-language summary that is appropriate for inclusion in the Summary of Issues and Engagement.

The mandate of Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE) is to advance equality with respect to sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity or expression through the inclusion of people of all genders, including women, in Canada's economic, social, and political life. In addition to gender equality, WAGE is the Government of Canada lead on GBA Plus, which 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.

Application of GBA Plus within the Impact Assessment process helps unpack, contextualize, and address inequalities that are based on identity and other factors and their intersections. Factors include but are not limited to racialization, national and ethnic origin, Indigenous origin or identity, gender, age, sexual orientation, socio-economic condition, place of residence and disability.

From the perspective of WAGE's mandate and responsible areas, the following issues should be addressed in the impact assessment of the Project:

- **Assessing current realities:** Identify the position of various groups with respect to decision-making, participation, access and control over resources as well as norms, values, and rights. What are the barriers to equality?
- **Inclusion of disaggregated data:** Will data on benefits and negative impacts on diverse people be counted? If data is limited what steps will be taken to ensure that the needs of diverse people are understood and reflected in the Project design?
- **Analysis of differential impacts:** Do diverse populations get a fair share of the benefits associated with the Project? Are some disproportionately affected by the negative consequences (e.g., Gender - based violence)? Will historical gaps and perceptions prevent certain people from benefiting from the Project equally?
- **Engagement of diverse people in a culturally-sensitive manner:** Have people and particularly those who are marginalized been consulted? How will the views and perspectives of these people help shape the Project?
- **Are investments distributed across different groups:** What will be done to ensure that the Project serves to strengthen capacities and quality of life for diverse groups and individuals?
- **Mainstreaming equality:** Does the Project seek to address the identified needs of various people? Do project outcomes include a broader commitment to improving equality and not perpetuating norms and structures that contributed to these inequalities?

- **Information on those implementing the Project** . Does the business have equality, anti-harassment or other relevant policies in place? Is the current workforce diverse? Is there a history of abuses or infractions as it relates to social justice issues? Is training provided on issues related to equality, diversity and inclusion to ensure that the implementation team has **the skill, knowledge, and commitment to positive change** to bridge gaps in a lasting manner?
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Name of Departmental / Agency Responder

Title of Responder

Date

Introduction

The purpose of the Spanish Mountain Gold Project is to produce 2.1 million ounces of gold and 0.9 million ounces of silver over its projected operational life of 14 years. The Project justification includes the provision of jobs and economic opportunities for local First Nations, and the people of BC and Canada. In addition, the Project will contribute financially to the Provincial and Federal Governments through corporate taxes, Provincial net proceeds and net revenue taxes, and sales taxes. The Project is expected to provide between 2000 and 2500 person-years of employment during construction and at peak operations, the Project is expected to employ 360 people.

The Project is located in the Cariboo Mining Division and the Cariboo Regional District of central British Columbia. The Property is located approximately 70 km northeast of Williams Lake, BC, with the closest population centre being the village of Likely, located about 6 km northwest. The Project is centred at 52 degrees 35 minutes North, 121 degrees 26 minutes West. The area of disturbance estimated for the mine site is 27 km², along with approximately 37 km² of transmission line footprint and buffer, which primarily follows an existing road and power corridor.

The Project lies within the traditional territories of the following First Nations: Williams Lake First Nation (T'exelcenc), Xat'sull First Nation, and Lhtako Dene Nation (Red Bluff Indian Band). These First Nations make up the Northern Shuswap Tribal Council and the Carrier Chilcotin Tribal Council.

The point of interconnection of the powerline for the project, at McLeese Lake, occurs within the eastern margin of the asserted traditional territory of the Tsilhqot'in Nation. The Métis Nation British Columbia assert Aboriginal rights in and around the Project area. The Cariboo-Chilcotin Métis Association, a Chartered Métis community based in Williams Lake, asserts harvesting and hunting rights in the region. The Project is located on provincial crown land within mineral tenures held by SMG. The Project will not use any federal lands. The Williams Lake First Nation has signed a First Nations Land Management Act agreement with Canada, which enables the nation to opt-out of 40 sections of the Indian Act relating to land management. The nation can then develop their own laws about land use, the environment and natural resources and take advantage of cultural and economic development opportunities with their new land management authorities.

The Spanish Mountain deposit will be mined using a conventional drill and blast open pit mining method. The mining fleet will include hydraulic excavators and wheel loaders for mine loading, 140 tonne payload haul trucks and 40 tonne articulated trucks for production hauling. Ore will be hauled to a crusher 0.5 km west of the pit and crushed to feed the process plant. Waste rock will be deposited into waste rock storage facilities (WRSF) 0.5 to 2.0 km west of the pit or used as rockfill to construct a tailings dam embankment 4.0 km southwest of the pit.

The tailings storage facility (TSF) will comprise a north embankment (dam) and a south embankment (dam) with the east and west margins confined by local topography. The embankments will be built as earthfill/rockfill structures with a low-permeability core. The TSF embankments will be expanded in stages throughout the mine life using the centreline construction method, with each stage providing the required capacity for the period until the next stage of construction is completed. The TSF north embankment will be approximately 31 m high at the starter configuration and 58 m high at its ultimate height. The TSF south embankment will be approximately 17 m at the starter configuration and 44 m high at its ultimate height. Seven stages of construction are expected to be required to reach the final crest elevations. Each stage will be constructed in advance of the storage needs of the project, at approximately one-to two-year intervals.

Background

Review of the Project was initiated in 2011 under the former (2002) BCEAA and Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (1992). Detailed environmental and socio-economic baseline studies were conducted in 2010 and 2011. Advancement on the EA was halted by SMG in 2012 while project design updates were completed. Between 2012 and 2019, both provincial and federal reviews were kept open, with SMG providing annual updates regarding its intention to continue the process. In recognition of new provincial and federal EA legislation coming into force, the Project was withdrawn from environmental assessment in 2019. This document represents the Project's re-entry to the provincial and federal review processes. The impact assessment process will be initiated when the BCEAO and the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (IAAC) each accept the IPD and seek public comments on it. Regulators, agencies, Indigenous Nations, and the public will have an opportunity to provide comments.

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 analysing 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>
- <https://www.canada.ca/en/impact-assessment-agency/services/policy-guidance/practitioners-guide-impact-assessment-act/gender-based-analysis.html#toc9>

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 systematically marginalized 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 a diversity of 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 should demonstrate how engagement of community members has increased understanding of adverse impacts and informed mitigation measures to enhance positive impacts.

Access and control over resources

Access and control over resources relates to both the availability of resources, and the benefits that come from their use. The 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 describe who accesses these resources. For example, if traditional livelihoods are affected and certain groups lack the required skills for employment, the proponent might consider ways to remove barriers through targeted activities and supports. In addition to direct employment, the Proponent could consider inclusion of underrepresented groups through supply chain arrangements, like for example, procuring goods and services from businesses owned by local, Indigenous persons and/or women.

In addition, to understanding the constraints and barriers faced by certain individuals or groups, the Impact Statement should include a description of the social norms and broader social power structures. Social norms refer to the rules and accompanying behaviours that govern social behaviour and expectations. Both formal and informal rules govern market behaviours. The 'informal rules' include norms (or what we call "social norms") and relations (meaning the power dynamics between people). For example, women often occupy different economic spheres, due to social norms that define acceptable roles and behaviours for women. Across most contexts, women are more likely to work as unpaid family workers, in the informal sector or part-time so that they can combine work with care responsibilities. Even in formal employment, in many contexts women tend to work in "female" occupations for lower returns.

Economic opportunities

Economic opportunities and access to financial benefits of projects is often limited for some populations. Moreover, the Impact Statement should describe whether the project will generate significant benefits and opportunities for local communities (e.g., who from the communities will benefit) and the potential for differential benefits, including opportunities for women, persons with disabilities or Indigenous peoples in the Project workforce. It should also outline the current rates of employment and describe differences between and among subgroups 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 extraction development and infrastructure 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 systemically marginalized 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.