



GICHI OZHIBI'IGE OGAAMIC
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

June 14, 2024

Great Bear Gold Project
Impact Assessment Agency of Canada
55 York Street, 6th Floor
Toronto, Ontario
M5J 1R7

RE: GCT3 Comments on the Draft Tailored Impact Statement Guidelines and Draft Indigenous Engagement and Partnership Plan

The Territorial Planning Unit (TPU) of Grand Council Treaty #3 (GCT3) has reviewed the Draft Tailored Impact Statement Guidelines and the Draft Indigenous Engagement and Partnership Plan, respectfully. In response to this notification, the TPU provides the following comments.

Background: The comments below are representative of the Territorial Planning Unit (TPU) of Grand Council Treaty #3. Grand Council Treaty #3 is the Traditional Government of the Anishinaabe Nation of Treaty #3 (comprised of 28 First Nations). Grand Council's mandate is to protect the future of the Anishinaabe people by ensuring the protection, preservation, and enhancement of inherent and treaty rights. The TPU is a department within the Grand Council that works with the Treaty #3 Leadership to protect the lands, water, and resources within the 55,000 square miles of Treaty #3 Territory. The TPU is guided by Anishinaabe Inakonigaawin - Manito Aki Inakonigaawin (Great Earth Law) and Treaty #3 Nibi (water) Declaration.

Governance: Treaty #3 territory is governed by Anishinaabe law, called Manito Aki Inakonigaawin (Great Earth Law), and the Nibi declaration. Manito Aki Inakonigaawin represents respect, reciprocity, and responsibilities with all relations in regards to Mother Earth. The law signifies the duty to respect and protect lands affected by over-usage, degradation, and unethical processes. The law is unique to Treaty #3 territory and passed on through our elders and knowledge keepers.

The Nibi Declaration represents respect, love, and the sacred relationship with nibi (water) and the life that it brings. It is based on teachings about water, lands, other elements like air and wind, and creation. The declaration is meant to preserve and share knowledge with youth and future generations. The declaration guides us in our relationship with nibi so we can take action

individually, in our communities, and as a nation to help ensure healthy, living nibi for all creation.

Comments on the Draft Indigenous Engagement and Partnership Plan

Section 4: Indigenous Communities

- IAAC's Indigenous Communities Identification process needs to be outlined in more detail. Is it assumed that the identification process consists only of researching the Government of Canada's Aboriginal and Treaty Rights Information System (ATRIS)? If so, exactly what is involved in the research and what does this process consist of? Can we see the results of the how 4.1 List of Indigenous Communities was identified?
- GCT3 should be involved in the identification of which communities may be potentially impacted by the Project. The ATRIS system could be used as a "first step," but GCT3 should then be involved in the identification process to confirm if the "list" is correct or not. The process of community identification would be facilitated by GCT3, but would ultimately be decided by our Chiefs in Assembly as per GTC3 governance protocol.
- Currently, there is no mention of Grand Council Treaty #3 within the draft. Although GCT3 is not a "rights-bearing First Nation community," GCT3 is still a governance body that needs to be consulted with. GCT3 has technical staff who are able review and access projects at a high level and assist our member communities where applicable. That being said, GCT3 needs to receive the same notifications as our First Nation communities that we represent. Is there a reason why GCT3 is not consulted with for all projects within Treaty #3 that may require an Impact Assessment? Within the Draft it states, "*Meaningful engagement with Indigenous communities.*" However, where is the meaningful engagement with Indigenous government organizations? We feel like that is missing.

Section 7: Participant Funding

- We strongly feel that the participant funding that IAAC proposes via the Participant Funding Program (for a project) is severely lacking in capacity (funding amounts). The available funding is too small, and applying for funding at various stages of the project is tedious and time consuming. A better approach would be to have sustained funding upfront and throughout the project so that GCT3 technical staff can continuously work on the project. This would also maintain meaningful consultation, engagement and capacity building. GCT3 wants to work with IAAC and proponents on projects that could potentially require and IA. Therefore, we need appropriate funding to do so. Conducting research, reading reports, attending meetings, etc... all take time to complete. GCT3

technical staff salary should be appropriately compensated for the cost of their time to do a full review of the documentation that IAAC and the proponent provide and to provide meaningful comments and recommendations.

Comments on the Draft Tailored Impact Statement Guidelines

It is crucial to ensure that engagement continues to be presented at the earliest reasonable opportunity and that the engagement is meaningful and not insincere.

- The engagement process should respect Treaty 3 protocols and community guidance. Indigenous communities have distinct cultural protocols and decision-making processes that must be respected and understood by the proponent. An example of this can include presenting information in various formats preferred by individual communities.
- It's important to recognize that Indigenous Knowledge can be shared differently from scientific knowledge. Oral communication and sharing verse written documentation are examples. Incorporating Indigenous Knowledge into impact assessments is essential for meaningful engagement and participation as well as building stronger relationships. The process should ensure respect for of both types of knowledge to be carried forward.
- The proponent must demonstrate their best efforts at collaboration, even if not all Indigenous communities are willing or interested in engagement. Detailed documentation of these efforts is essential accountability for multiple parties.

Comments and questions regarding Section 12 Indigenous Peoples

- It's positive to see the requirement for engagement with Indigenous communities, but how will the Great Bear Gold Project and the Tailored Impact Statement Guideline ensure that engagement is truly meaningful and respectful of Indigenous protocols and decision-making processes?
- Will there be mechanisms in place to ensure that traditional knowledge will be given equal consideration alongside scientific data?
- The Tailored Impact Statement Guideline mentions the encouragement for Indigenous communities to draft sections of the Impact Statement concerning them. How will the proponent ensure that voices are heard and respected throughout this process? How will the proponent support Indigenous communities in this process, especially considering potential language and capacity barriers?
- Engagement and consultation with Treaty #3 communities regarding heritage resources should be transparently documented, this will ensuring meaningful participation and consideration of Indigenous Knowledge in the assessment process.

Key Recommendations

- Ensure that Indigenous consultation is meaningful and genuine, including Indigenous perspectives and knowledge into the decision-making processes.
- Approach mitigation measures collaboratively, by recognizing specific concerns from individual communities to avoid disproportionate impacts.
- Prioritize Indigenous environmental stewardship and cultural heritage protection, work to integrating climate change adaptation and monitoring processes that are informed by Indigenous knowledge and participation.

These comments are prepared by the Territorial Planning Unit of Grand Council Treaty #3. These comments shall be without prejudice of any interests or rights of Treaty #3 First Nation communities nor derogate from the protection of existing inherent and Treaty rights. GCT3's mandate is the protection and preservation of inherent and Treaty rights and individual Treaty #3 communities will designate their position as guided by Manito Aki Inaakonigewin.

If you require further information, please do not hesitate to reach out to the TPU at tpudirector@treaty3.ca or call us at 807.548.4214.

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Marney Ritchot
Junior Policy Analyst, Territorial Planning Unit
Grand Council Treaty #3
marney.ritchot@treaty3.ca

