

Executive Summary

Summary

The Cree Development Corporation (CDC) has issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) in order to retain the services of an Engineering Consulting Firm, with capacity in economic, social and environmental research, to conduct a regional Feasibility Study on the following proposed infrastructures, all located in the Eeyou Istchee-Baie-James region of northern Québec:

- A new railway corridor following, as much as possible, the alignment of the Billy-Diamond Highway (BDH) between km 0, located at the current trans-shipment area for the town of Matagami, Qc, to km 257 (Rupert River bridge).
- The return to service for the former railway line located between Grevet (near Lebel-sur-Quévillon, Qc) and Chapais, Qc.
- New trans-shipment areas along the BDH km 0 – km 257 and Grevet-Chapais lines, specifically one located at km 257 for the railway line along the BDH.
- The upgrading and paving of the access roads connecting the Cree communities of Waskaganish, Eastmain and Wemindji, all along the James Bay coast, with the Billy-Diamond Highway.
- The upgrading and paving of the access road connecting the Cree community of Nemaska with the Route-du-Nord.

The RFP document will outline all requirements regarding the work to be carried out as part of the Feasibility Study for Phase I – Transportation Infrastructure for La Grande Alliance.

Components and Duration

The Feasibility Study will be composed of the following components, all described in detail in the RFP Document:

1. A Market Survey examining the economic needs of the region as a function of the proposed infrastructures.
2. A Technical Feasibility Study examining all technical aspects of the infrastructures under study.
3. A Socio-Environmental Feasibility Study examining the major social and environmental elements related to the proposed infrastructures.
4. A critical and exhaustive examination of all potential risks related to the proposed infrastructures accompanied by a preliminary mitigation plan to be developed in close collaboration with the Cree communities and land users directly impacted by the infrastructures

The proposed duration of the study will be one year. It will begin no later than March 31, 2021 and end no later than March 31, 2022. All proposed modifications to the project and to the timeline, with justification, shall be subject to negotiation with the Cree Development Corporation and will be addressed in corresponding addenda, if necessary.

Deliverables

1. An Interim Report containing a preliminary rail corridor for the BDH km 0 – km 257 railway and trans-shipment area(s). **Due date: October 15, 2021.**
2. A Market Survey Report providing a detailed account of the study conducted. **Due dates: January 15, 2022 for first draft and March 31, 2022 for final draft.**
3. A Socio-Environmental Feasibility Report providing a detailed account of the study conducted. **Due dates: February 15, 2022 for first draft and March 31, 2022 for final draft.**
4. A summary table and PowerPoint presentation for the final inventory of risks and potential mitigation solutions. **Due dates: February 15, 2022 for first draft and March 31, 2022 for final draft.**
5. A final Feasibility Study Report summarizing the findings from the Market Survey and the Socio-Environmental Feasibility Reports and detailing the work carried out as part of the Technical Feasibility Report. **February 15, 2022 for first draft and March 31, 2022 for final draft.**

Philosophy and Scope of Mandate

The Feasibility Study seeks to apply the highest standards of public participation and engagement, as well as innovating in terms of the engagement of local actors in the vision, co-design and approach applied in developing the proposed infrastructures. Cree communities and Cree land users must play a key role throughout the Feasibility Study process, as shall be the case in all subsequent steps as they may arise. With this in mind, the CDC will create and coordinate, at their cost, a network of Grande Alliance Community Information Officers (GACIOs) in each of the nine Cree communities, to assist in the coordination of all consultation and community engagement work. The GACIOs will work closely with a designated Liaison Officer from the selected firm to ensure that the stated objectives are met throughout the Feasibility Study.