

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT

Stage 3 of the Site C Clean Energy Project (Site C) is the environmental and regulatory review phase. As part of an environmental assessment of Site C, BC Hydro will identify and assess potential project effects — environmental, economic, social, heritage and health — and opportunities to provide lasting benefits for the region and First Nations. Where effects cannot be avoided, BC Hydro will identify and evaluate options for mitigation.

This study update provides an overview of work completed to date and currently underway and is current as of fall 2011. Studies may be changed or revised in scope or timing on the basis of input from regulators, government agencies, First Nations, stakeholders and the public as part of the pre-application stage of the environmental assessment process.

The Site C project requires environmental certification and other regulatory permits and approvals before it can proceed to construction. In addition, the Crown has a duty to consult and, where appropriate, accommodate Aboriginal groups.

### DEFINITION

A socio-economic assessment includes consideration of potential effects of the proposed Site C project on the social environment, including the economy, land and resource use, health, as well as on First Nation and non First Nation communities with respect to housing, transportation and access to services.

### STUDY PURPOSE

The overall study objective is to understand the potential interactions of the Site C Project with the social environment, complete a socio-economic assessment of the Site C project by identifying socio-economic issues in relation to the Site C project, completing an effects assessment, and recommending mitigation options where adverse effects may occur. This includes consideration of effects on communities in the vicinity of the project, as well as consideration of First Nation communities.

### STATUS OF STUDIES

#### Consultation

During Stage 2 consultation, local government representatives raised issues of the project adding pressure on local services and infrastructure, housing availability and cost, and the ability for communities to plan in relation to the timing of project decisions. These issues will be studied as part of the socio-economic assessment currently underway.

In 2011 BC Hydro began working directly with the local governments in the region about updated project definition, exchanging information relevant to understanding potential impacts of the project, and for establishing an understanding of current community conditions.

### **Stage 3 Work**

Topic areas within the socio-economic assessment include:

- Economic
- Land and Resource Use
- Socio-Community
- Visual & Aesthetics Resources
- Health
- First Nations Community Assessment

These are further described below.

#### ***Economic***

This assessment will consider the local, regional and provincial economy, including labour market and incomes, government finances, and regional economic development. The direct and indirect jobs created during the construction phase of the project are the key drivers on the labour market, incomes and regional economic development. Government finances are also influenced by the labour and business market outcomes through local, provincial and federal taxation, and by the provincial policy of grants-in-lieu payment formula that BC Hydro pays to local governments based on its facilities and assets.

#### ***Land and Resource Use***

This area will consider potential project-induced changes to land and resource use, including forestry, oil, gas and energy, minerals and aggregates, fishing and hunting, trapping and guide outfitting, outdoor recreation and tourism. Some of these uses may be affected by the temporary or permanent physical occupation of land by the project and/or changes in access. The study will assess projected future land and resource use, using information such as resource inventories, land use tenures, rights and zoning, and harvest planning.

#### ***Socio-Community***

This area will consider potential project-induced changes to social and community factors, many of which are driven by population and demographics: housing, regional services and infrastructure (emergency and health services, education, community and municipal services), and transportation. Social and community effects are driven primarily by the predicted population increase as a result of the project construction phase, with the potential direct use of services by the project workforce, or by disruption or enhancement of assets and infrastructure that provide community services. The assessment on the social setting and community services will include the current setting and the projected future scenario, using information such as local or provincial government planning

information, local land use planning, and population-based planning criteria for service delivery in areas such as health, education, emergency and municipal services.

### ***Visual & Aesthetic Resources***

This area will consider project-induced changes to visual and aesthetic resources, focusing on changes to scenic value as a result of project construction and operation activities.

### ***Health***

This area will consider both human health and healthy living. Human health considers potential changes to the environment that may affect human health, such as potential project-induced changes to air quality, water quality, noise, and electro-magnetic fields. Healthy living considers healthy lifestyle aspects of the project's workforce, the public and First Nations, for example by considering the ability to engage in outdoor recreational activities and a healthy lifestyle.

### ***First Nations Community Assessment***

This area will consider issues of specific interest to First Nation communities, such as the potential project-induced changes to traditional land use, community infrastructure and services, economics, and healthy living. BC Hydro has invited First Nations within the local area of the project to participate in this study area. BC Hydro will work with each First Nations community to plan the study and support community participation.

Additional studies in the socio-economic assessment include an agricultural assessment and a heritage study. A Study Update is available for these two study components.

## **LOOKING AHEAD**

The socio-economic and health assessment study team is working to update baseline information through data collection and interviews. Future steps will include identification of potential project effects and consideration of potential mitigation and enhancements. Discussions will continue with local and regional governments, as well as public, stakeholder and First Nations consultation.

### **Stage 3: Consultation**

The Site C project requires environmental certification and other regulatory permits and approvals before it can proceed to construction.

The Stage 3 environmental and regulatory review process will include opportunities for consultation and input by the public, Aboriginal groups, communities, property owners and stakeholders.

In addition to the consultation opportunities led by the environmental regulatory agencies within the environmental assessment process, BC Hydro will lead several streams of public and stakeholder consultation during Stage 3:

- Regional and Local Government Liaison
- Property Owner Liaison

- Local Area Consultation
- Preliminary Design Consultation

BC Hydro and Aboriginal groups are also engaged in a thorough consultation process that will continue through all stages of the project.

### How Input Will Be Used

A Consultation Summary Report will be prepared and released on the project website following each consultation period and Consideration Memos will be prepared, indicating how input has been considered, along with technical and financial information, for project designs or plans, including engineering and environmental mitigation plans.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

The following information can be found at [www.bchydro.com/sitec](http://www.bchydro.com/sitec):

1. Field Studies Notices – Monthly updates on field studies.
2. Site C Clean Energy Project: Project Description Report. 2011. (page 130).
3. Stage 2: Consultation and Technical Review. 2009 (pages 89-90).
4. Project Definition Consultation Discussion Guide and Feedback Form Round 2. October/November 2008. (pages 24-26).
5. Site C Feasibility Review: Stage 1 Completion Report. BC Hydro. 2007. (pages 50-52).

## INQUIRIES

Updates on field studies are available at [www.bchydro.com/sitec](http://www.bchydro.com/sitec) and in the Community Consultation offices in Fort St. John and Hudson's Hope.

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