



SUMMARY REPORT

Information and Engagement Session with Indigenous Groups Environmental Impact Statement – Valentine Gold Project

BACKGROUND

On September 29, 2020, Marathon Gold Corporation (the proponent), submitted its Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (the Agency). The Agency held a 50-day public comment period on the EIS from November 3, 2020 to December 23, 2020.

In addition to the public comment period and as part of the engagement approach for the EIS phase of the environmental assessment (EA) process, the Agency hosted two virtual meetings. The Agency held the first session on November 25 exclusively for Indigenous groups and held the second session on November 26 for the public. Both sessions were held from 12:00 to 2:00 pm Newfoundland Standard Time.

This report is a summary of the November 25 session, including: highlights of the information shared by the Agency and Marathon Gold; comments and questions asked by the Indigenous groups; and the responses provided.

SESSION FORMAT/PURPOSE

The Agency used the Zoom platform for the session. All Indigenous groups being engaged on the Valentine Gold Project (the Project) were notified via e-mail on November 3, 2020 regarding the Agency's plans to host virtual information sessions in November. The final meeting package and instructions for accessing the Zoom platform were e-mailed to all groups with follow up reminders prior to the start of the session. The Agency also offered to host one-on-one virtual meetings with Indigenous groups throughout the public comment period.

The session included:

- An Agency presentation on the EA process



- A proponent presentation on the summary of the EIS including project effects, proposed mitigation measures and conclusions.
- An opportunity for comments, questions and feedback from the Indigenous participants on potential environmental effects of the Project on current use of lands and resources for traditional purposes, health and socio-economic conditions, and heritage resources as well as suggestions and recommendations for avoiding or mitigating any adverse impacts.

Three participants representing two Indigenous groups participated in the session. See Attachment A for a complete list of participants, including those representing the federal authorities and Marathon Gold Corporation.

PRESENTATION BY THE AGENCY

The Agency opened the session by presenting an update on the EA process; tasks completed to date; and the next steps leading up to the Minister’s decision. See the document titled “Impact Assessment Agency of Canada Virtual Engagement Session Presentation” posted on the Registry at <https://iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/document/138134?culture=en-CA>

PRESENTATION BY MARATHON GOLD CORPORATION

The Proponent presented an overview of content in the EIS, with a focus on the valued components (VCs) selected for inclusion; highlights of the effects assessment/analysis and examples of proposed mitigation measures. See the document titled “Proponent Virtual Engagement Session Presentation” posted on the Registry at <https://iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/document/138135?culture=en-CA>

FACILITATED QUESTION PERIOD

For approximately the last 45 minutes of the session, the Agency facilitated a question period with the Indigenous groups.

A summary of the comments/questions raised, responses from the Agency, federal authorities and the Proponent, and items for follow up is provided in the table below.



Questions/ Comments	Agency, Federal Authorities and Proponent- Responses	Follow up/Action Items
Will comments on the EIS Summary be accepted if submitted after the December 23 deadline for submission?	Agency: Yes but the Agency's ability to incorporate the comments begins to diminish as we move through the process. A submission shortly after Christmas will not be an issue. The Agency will work with Indigenous groups to help ensure that their comments are appropriately incorporated.	Indigenous groups and Agency to discuss options that could include a meeting to review comments.
Will the ongoing exploration in the area lead to an expansion of the Project?	Proponent: Although there is ongoing exploration with reasonably good preliminary results, it takes considerable time and drilling to determine if a deposit is economical. A decision point on the feasibility of a new open pit would probably be 5 to 8 years away and may require a new environmental assessment and subsequent permitting at that time.	None.
Is the feasibility study still expected in the first half of 2021?	Proponent: The Feasibility Study is expected to be published in March 2021. The Feasibility Study is not expected to result in significant changes to the site design/plan, however, the Project costs and engineering details will be refined.	None.
Was there any onsite archaeological exploration completed or was it all desktop?	Proponent: Any fieldwork conducted was reconnaissance only (i.e. not excavation). We have been working with the provincial archaeology office to determine what, if any, onsite work is needed. There are not a lot of potential for sites in the Project area due to the flooding of Victoria Lake for hydroelectric power. Baseline Study Appendix 10 is the historic resources baseline study. It	None.



Questions/ Comments	Agency, Federal Authorities and Proponent- Responses	Follow up/Action Items
	presents the work that has been done so far.	
Is there a conceptual fish compensation plan included in the EIS?	<p>Proponent: There is not. The fish habitat compensation plan is considered outside of the EIS. We have been consulting with DFO on potential options and that process usually moves in tandem with EIS review.</p> <p>Department of Fisheries and Oceans: We have discussed compensation and offsetting options. We will explore them in tandem with EIS, fisheries authorization cannot be completed until after the EA process is concluded.</p>	None.
The EA presents a good opportunity, at least from a conceptual level, to see what is being considered as part of the fisheries offset.	Proponent: We have and will continue to engage with Indigenous groups on that, we have sought some ideas and done engagement on it already.	None.
What site water management measures will be in place, will it be just for the tailings?	Proponent: All site contact water will be captured and managed. Some contact water, for example runoff from the waste rock or topsoil stock piles, that according to the water quality assessment do not require water treatment, will require sedimentation ponds to remove total suspended solids. Further assessment will be conducted to confirm if water treatment will be required, and water monitoring will be completed during operations to ensure compliance. The water around the plant area and all water	None.



Questions/ Comments	Agency, Federal Authorities and Proponent- Responses	Follow up/Action Items
	<p>around the Tailings Management Facility will be treated in a water treatment plant. Most of the water from the water treatment plant will be recycled within the process plant, somewhere between 97-98%. Treated water that is not recycled or reused within the process plant will be released to the environment.</p>	
<p>Is any water seepage, runoff or discharge, expected to occur in the Bay d'Espoir watershed?</p>	<p>Proponent: Some water runoff and discharge from the operation will go to Victoria Lake reservoir. An assessment and description of water quantity and quality is presented in Chapter 7 of the EIS. Victoria Lake Reservoir is massive with a large volume of water. Any residual water quality effects from the mine will be below environmental guidelines within a few hundred metres of the discharges to the lake. The potential for adverse effects on fish is low.</p>	<p>None.</p>
<p>Groups welcomed the offer by the proponent to continue working with them to determine how they use the land and resources in the vicinity of the Project and the larger area.</p>		<p>Proponent to contact Indigenous groups as required.</p>



Attachment A: List of Participants – November 25, 2020 Virtual Engagement Session

Participants Representing Indigenous Groups:

Organization/Community	Participating Representative(s)
Qalipu First Nation	Jonathan Strickland; Alyssa Hunter
Miawpukek First Nation	Keegan McGrath

Participants from Federal Authorities:

Department/Agency Name	Participating Representative(s)
Fisheries and Oceans Canada	Tonya Warren, Roger Johnson, Dwayne Reddick
Health Canada	Sara Rumbolt; Dae Young Lee; Pierre Pelletier; Rick O'Leary
Transport Canada	Jason Flanagan; Sylvie DesRoches
Environment and Climate Change Canada	Michael Hingston; Brian Drover; Jerry Pulchan
Natural Resources Canada	Walker Smith; Richard Goulet; Jennifer Cole

Marathon Gold Corporation- Participants/Presenters:

Name	Title
James Powell	VP Regulatory and Government Affairs
Tara Oak	Manager of Environmental Assessment
Mary Hatherly	Manager of Stakeholder Engagement

Agency- Participants/Presenters:

Name	Title and Role in Session
Jill Adams	Head, NL Satellite Office (Introduction)
Joanna Tombs	Senior Consultation Analyst (session facilitator)
Nicole Scotney	Senior Policy Analyst, Engagement Division (technical support)
Gehan Mabrouk	Team Lead, NL Satellite Office (observer)
Jillian Bieser	Project Manager (note taker)
Brent Keeping	Project Manager for the Valentine Gold Project (presenter)
Melanie Smith	Team Lead, Halifax Regional Office (Observer)

