

## News Release

July 19, 2013

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### **The Gahcho Kué Panel releases its Report of Environmental Impact Review for the Gahcho Kué Diamond Project**

YELLOWKNIFE – The Gahcho Kué Panel (Panel) recommends to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) that the Gahcho Kué Diamond Project can proceed to the regulatory phase for approvals, subject to measures that minimize adverse environmental impacts.

The *Report of Environmental Impact Review and Reasons for Decision* for the Gahcho Kué Project is released by the Panel today, July 19, 2013. This report describes the Panel's findings on the Project.

The Gahcho Kué Project is a proposed diamond mine at Kennady Lake located 280 NE of Yellowknife. The Project consists of:

- Constructing operating and closing an open pit diamond mine to recover diamonds from 3 open pits over an 11 year mine life
- Dewatering portions of Kennady Lake to access the open pits
- Backfilling one open pit and portions of a second open pit with waste rock and processed waste material from the mill
- Re-filling Kennady Lake at end of mine life and allowing fish to re-populate the lake

The developer of the Project is De Beers Canada Inc.

After careful consideration, the Panel concludes that the Project is likely to cause significant adverse environmental impacts. The Report of Environmental Impact Review sets out measures required by the Panel to mitigate these impacts so that they are no longer significant. These measures will:

- Reduce the impacts of the mine site and winter access road on caribou and caribou habitat
- Minimize the Project's contribution to cumulative effects on caribou
- Require follow-up programs to address impacts to water, fish, caribou, other wildlife and species at risk and socio-economic components,

The Panel's *Report of Environmental Impact Review and Reasons for Decision* document for the Gahcho Kué Project, EIR0607-001 is available online in the public registry at:  
<http://www.reviewboard.ca/>

De Beers made important commitments to minimize impacts from the Project on the environment including water quality, fish, caribou, other wildlife, air quality, and people. These commitments form part of the Project and need to be implemented.

In the opinion of the Panel, the measures, follow-up programs and commitments described in the Report of Environmental Impact Review will mitigate significant adverse impacts and address public concern. The Panel recommends approval subject to these measures and follow-up programs as well as implementation of the developer's commitments.

The *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act* allows the Panel to recommend follow-up programs. The Panel has recommended follow-up programs to ensure the adaptive management of this Project.

The Report has been sent to the Minister of AANDC for his consideration. Once the Report is accepted by the Minister of AANDC, the Gahcho Kué Project can move to the permitting and licensing phase.

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### **About the Gahcho Kué Panel**

The Gahcho Kué Panel was established by the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board. The Panel is responsible for conducting an environmental impact review of the Gahcho Kué Diamond Mine.

The Panel is composed of five members. Although members are appointed by the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board, the Panel is an independent body. It is tasked with conducting the environmental impact review of the proposed development, having regard to the protection of the environment from the significant adverse impacts, and to the protection of the existing and future social, cultural and economic well-being of Mackenzie Valley residents and communities.

The Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board was established by the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act* in 1998 as an independent administrative tribunal responsible for the environmental impact assessment process in the Mackenzie Valley, Northwest Territories. As a co-management board, aboriginal land claim organizations nominate half of the board members, and the federal and territorial governments nominate the other half of the board members. The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development appoints all members to the Review Board.