

Nouveau Monde Reaches a Major Environmental Assessment Milestone

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SAINT-MICHEL-DES-SAINTS, Dec. 17, 2019 - [Nouveau Monde Graphite Inc.](#) (“Nouveau Monde” or “NMG”) (TSXV: NOU; OTCQX: NMGRF; Frankfurt: NM9) announces having obtained confirmation from the Government of Quebec of the eligibility of its Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) after it had been analyzed by 25 provincial ministries and bodies.

Benoit Charette, Minister of the Environment and the Fight Against Climate Change, asked the Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement (BAPE) to form a commission of inquiry to consult the population about the Matawinie project. The Minister has set the start date of the BAPE's mandate to January 27, 2020.

Nouveau Monde had already indicated its intention to use the new provisions of the law to present its project directly at public hearings and, therefore, have open and transparent consultations with stakeholders and more efficiently advance through the process of obtaining a ministerial decree authorizing the project.

The ESIA for the Matawinie project, which was filed in April 2019, was conducted by a multidisciplinary team from SNC-Lavalin and other partners and highlights the project's benefits and impacts on its physical, biological and human environments. It includes various measures to avoid, mitigate or compensate for these impacts or to enhance the project's benefits. Conducted per sustainable development principles, the study, as well as all related documentation and correspondence, can be consulted online or at Nouveau Monde's head office.

Since 2015, Nouveau Monde has been interacting and working with its host milieu and stakeholders, including an Accompanying Committee and the Atikamekw community of Manawan. The comments, concerns and ideas collected during these discussions have helped reduce the project's footprint, limit the impact on the surrounding environment, and innovate particularly when it comes to issues such as tailings, land integration, and an all-electric mining model.

“We have always placed a high priority on sustainable development, respect for the region's natural character, and the promotion of the interests of Upper Matawinie. The BAPE's review of our project will allow us to demonstrate the soundness of our approach and the seriousness of our commitment to this community, which is our community too,” said Éric Desaulniers, President and CEO, Nouveau Monde Graphite. “Responsibly developing this world-class graphite deposit will collectively enable us to support social development in the region, contribute to Quebec's economy, and propel the energy transition forward on a global scale.”

Overview of the ESIA's findings

The ESIA identified positive local socio-economic impacts on employment (over 130 new jobs during the operating period, average of 250 workers during the construction period, business opportunities for local and regional businesses, etc.). Thanks to the benefit-sharing program, the population will also enjoy additional economic spinoffs or improvements to their living environment. Many stakeholders are also looking at the project as an opportunity to diversify the economy and improve their quality of life by having services for the population be maintained and developed. These positive spinoffs are of great value, as the community is identified as disadvantaged according to the economic vitality index. The mine's life span (26 years) will provide long-term, sustainable benefits.

Quebec not only will get direct, indirect and induced impacts from the project and its tax revenues but can also develop the graphite mining sector is a promising niche. Opportunities in this market are excellent, particularly because of expected strong growth in the market for lithium-ion batteries for electric vehicles. The

project will therefore contribute to transportation electrification at the provincial, national and international level. In the context of Nouveau Monde's desire to operate an all-electric mine, the Matawinie project is making a positive contribution to the fight against climate change. The resulting technological innovation could benefit the mining sector and even other industrial sectors that need to use similar types of heavy machinery.

The Matawinie project also puts forward best practices that are intended to benefit the environment and society. These practices include managing tailings and waste rock without tailing ponds, prioritizing in-pit backfilling to limit the project's footprint on the natural environment, and gradually restoring the mining site throughout the project's period of operation.

The Matawinie project also shows NMG's desire for territorial integration, for example, with mining operations schedules adapted to the tourism context and through a Territorial Integration Plan (TIP) prepared with a committee of community representatives.

A mining project in the territory will still have impacts of varying intensities on the physical, biological and human environment. The ESIA addresses these impacts in turn and provides additional mitigation measures to minimize them.

With these mitigation measures in place, the main impacts of the project will generally be limited and controlled in the vicinity of the mine site so that the town cores, along with the tourist and resort sites in Upper Matawinie, will be protected from the main negative impacts. For landowners on the project's periphery (within a 1-km radius), Nouveau Monde has implemented a proactive voluntary acquisition program to prevent these landowners from being exposed to nuisances due to their proximity to the mine site. To date, agreements have been reached with all interested landowners in the area.

A technological risk analysis of the project indicates that there should be no consequences to the surrounding population or other sensitive components nearby, and that the project is adapted to climate change. Monitoring and follow-up programs will be in place to track the project's effects on the environment and ensure that any situation raised by the community is addressed.

Various initiatives for the Matawinie project aim to maximize its economic benefits and minimize its environmental and social impacts and risks. These initiatives are part of a responsible approach to social, economic and environmental performance that is increasingly valued by the public, authorities and graphite market clients, in alignment with Nouveau Monde's values.

More information about the project can be found at NouveauMonde.ca/Matawinie.

About Nouveau Monde Graphite

Nouveau Monde Graphite is developing the Matawinie graphite mining project, located in Saint-Michel-des-Saints, 150 km north of Montréal, QC. At the end of 2018, the Company published a Feasibility Study which revealed strong economics with projected graphite concentrate production of 100,000 tonnes per year, with an average concentrate purity of 97%, over a 26-year period. Production is expected to commence in 2022. Currently, Nouveau Monde operates a demonstration plant where it expects to produce 2,000 tonnes of concentrated flake graphite, which is being sent to potential North American and international clients for the qualification of its products. In a perspective of vertical integration and sustainable development within the electrical vehicle market, Nouveau Monde is planning to establish a large-scale secondary graphite transformation facility, catering to the needs of the booming lithium-ion battery industry, with its demo plant slated to operate in 2020. Dedicated to high standards of renewable energy and sustainability, the Matawinie graphite project will be the first of its kind to operate as an all-electric, zero-carbon mine.

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Further information regarding Corporation is available in the SEDAR database (www.sedar.com) and on the Corporation's website at: www.NouveauMonde.ca

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