

Socio-economic Setting

The Project studied the socio-economic setting consisting of the social, economic, health, cultural, and community aspects related to the development of a project. At a broad level, the Morrison Copper/Gold Project's socio-economic study area considers northwestern BC and, in particular, the Bulkley-Nechako Regional District and the asserted traditional territory of the Lake Babine Nation. At a community level, the socio-economic setting includes the Lake Babine Nation communities of Fort Babine, Old Fort, Tachet, Donald's Landing, and Woyenne in addition to the Village of Granisle, Topley, Topley Landing, and Smithers Landing.



Resource development is a key driver of British Columbia's economy. Northwestern BC's population has been declining in response to the forestry industry's downfall in recent years. Growing emphasis has been placed on tourism and mining industries to replace the void left by the forestry industry. There are signs that unemployment is on the rise and difficulties may be ahead for communities in the northwest if new employment opportunities do not arise. Relative to the province, unemployment levels were above average in the region, though the earnings of those employed were above the provincial median.

The Morrison proposed mine is on Crown Land within the traditional territory of the Lake Babine Nation. In 1957, the government merged the Fort Babine and Old Fort bands to form the "Lake Babine Band." Since that time, there has been a gradual decline in traditional activity participation and language use, which is currently being addressed through cultural revitalization initiatives. The well-being of the community has been ranked as slightly below average compared to other First Nations, which is in part a function of the drinking water quality concerns within the community.

The local communities have strong connections with resource industries and act as industry service providers. They are seeking new employment opportunities. .

Socio-economic Impacts

Determining the potential socio-economic effects of the Project, issues and considerations were identified in baseline studies. Meetings and interviews with local First Nations and non-Aboriginal leaders, professionals, land users, stakeholders, and community members were held to further understand and confirm the validity and representation of information collected from statistical and literature sources and modelling.



The Project will directly generate up to 360 direct and 422 indirect construction supply jobs. During operations, 251 jobs will be created directly with PBM. Employment is expected to increase income in local and regional communities. These increases are predicted to improve individual and collective self-esteem, reduce poverty, and lower financial dependencies on social assistance. It is estimated that the Project will generate a total of almost \$79 million in household income in each year of construction via salary and wage payments to direct, indirect, and induced employment.

An increased incentive is anticipated for local residents to pursue education and training in the interests of obtaining employment with the Project and there will be opportunities for on-the-job training for many positions (enabling less-skilled workers to obtain both employment and training). The regional community skill base is expected to grow among workers who receive training and on-the-job training and experience.

The Project and its employees are anticipated to provide local suppliers with business opportunities throughout the life of the mine. The Project hiring activities are expected to entice new people to move into the area for employment, increasing the population of the nearby communities, providing impetus to improve existing infrastructure and services.

Project-related in-migration of new employees and families to the surrounding communities may increase usage of and competition for infrastructure, services, amenities, and resources, thus generating increased demand for existing community infrastructure, programs, and services.

Cultural identity and sustainability refers exclusively to the culture and traditions of the Lake Babine Nation. With a worldview that espouses balance and interconnectedness, these aspects are integral to the well-being and vitality of First Nations groups. For some, the Project may lead to a decrease in business profits, personal incomes, and quality of life from Project-related deterioration in the natural environment.

The Project is expected to bring an overall increase in individual self-esteem as well as community pride and engagement through an increased overall sense of self-worth through hiring, training, and skills development, and salaries and benefits received.