



**XAT'SŪLL T'MICW  
RESOURCES LLP.**

**Xat'sūll First Nation's**

# **Participation in the Proposed Spanish Mountain Gold Environmental Assessment Process**

# Have Your Say

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**Dear Xatśúll First Nation Community Members,**

*The Natural Resources Department has been advised that the proposed Spanish Mountain Gold Project in Xatśúll First Nation territory will require an Environmental Assessment to proceed.*

*As the assessment process proceeds, all community members will have the opportunity to share their opinions on the proposed project.*

*Working closely with Chief, Council, and Xatśúll Tmicw Resources LLP, the Natural Resources Department will ensure our community's inherent rights and title are understood and respected by government, regulatory bodies, and Spanish Mountain Gold.*

*As we participate in the Environmental Assessment process, we all have a responsibility to consider how we as a community view its benefits and drawbacks. Decision-making factors include impacts on Xatśúll First Nation's community health, society, culture, environment, and economy.*

*In closing, this brochure was developed by the Natural Resources Department to begin the process of community engagement and consultation on the Spanish Mountain Gold Project. We look forward to hearing from everyone in the coming months.*

Sincerely,

The Xatśúll First Nation Natural Resources Department Team

# The Proposed Spanish Mountain Gold Project

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## What is the Spanish Mountain Gold Project?

The Spanish Mountain Gold Project is a proposed open pit gold mine located 6 km east of the village of Likely B.C., in Xatśúll First Nation's traditional territory. The proposed mine would have a 14-year mining operation. The estimated annual production of the mine is around 180k ounces of gold for the first 6 years and reduces to 150k ounces of gold over the remaining 8 year lifespan of the mine.



## Working with Xatśúll First Nation

Spanish Mountain Gold wants to work with Xatśúll First Nation to develop an Impact Benefit Agreement (IBA). This agreement would be legally binding and would outline aspects of a relationship between our community and the mine, whether they be mitigating negative impacts, providing compensation, or otherwise ensuring Xatśúll First Nation generally benefits from the proposed project, if it is approved.

## Spanish Mountain Gold was approved before: Why am I hearing about it again?

An earlier environmental assessment process started in 2011. In 2019, Spanish Mountain Gold decided to withdraw from the process and change their proposal to be more environmentally sustainable. The Province of B.C.'s Environmental Assessment Office will now review the mine's new plan, along with the federal government's Impact Assessment Agency of Canada.

### Now is the time to be heard!

The revamped Spanish Mountain Gold Project has recently started the first steps of a new assessment process. This means the federal and provincial governments will be looking for the valuable opinions of experts, the public, and, importantly, First Nations. Xatśúll community members have the chance to let their voices be heard on the Project as part of the new assessment process.

For more information, please visit [www.spanishmountaingold.com](http://www.spanishmountaingold.com)

## What is the EAO?

The Environmental Assessment Office (EAO) is a neutral regulatory agency within the government of British Columbia. Their job is to conduct thorough and timely environmental assessments for all new major projects in B.C.

## What is an Environmental Assessment?

It is a process to assess both the positive and negative effects of proposed major projects on the environment, economy, society, health, and culture. Each assessment is customized for each project to ensure all known impacts and identified issues are addressed. Environmental assessments also ensure that proposed projects look at impacts on Indigenous Nations and their rights. Once an environmental assessment process is complete, it is up to the B.C. Government to approve or reject a project, based on its impacts and the consent of locally impacted First Nations. Without provincial approval, the proposed project cannot go forward.

In British Columbia, environmental assessments are required for all new major projects related to:

- Industrial
- Electricity
- Water Management
- Transportation
- Mining
- Petroleum and Natural Gas
- Waste Disposal
- Tourism Resorts

## Updating the Environmental Assessment Process

In 2018, the B.C. Government updated the Environmental Assessment Act. Importantly, the process now includes implementing the United Nations Declaration of the Rights on Indigenous Peoples to ensure First Nations' consent is considered before approving any project. Consensus will also be sought with Xat'sull First Nation throughout the Environmental Assessment process.

## Steps of an Environmental Assessment

There are 8 steps to an environmental assessment. Steps 1, 3, 4, and 6 all offer opportunities for members of the public to comment on a project. If there is enough interest, a Community Advisory Committee can also be established.





# Impact Assessment Agency Of Canada (IAAC) Process

## What is the IAAC?

The Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (IAAC) is a neutral regulatory agency within the Government of Canada. Their job is to conduct thorough and timely impact assessments for all new major projects in Canada.

## What is an Impact Assessment?

An impact assessment is the federal government's environmental assessment process. It looks at the impacts of a proposed major project on the environment, Indigenous Peoples, the economy, culture, and health.

There are 5 steps to an Impact Assessment:



## **What is a Cooperative Impact Assessment?**

Whenever possible, the IAAC likes to work together with provincial governments to make the dual assessments more efficient. The IAAC takes a “one project, one assessment” approach. This means instead of running two assessment processes the government of Canada will work in cooperation with the government of B.C. This way, there is less repetition of tasks. The provincial and federal governments will work together to coordinate outreach efforts, delegate responsibilities between governments, run joint review panels, and at times even substitute aspects of the federal process with one from the province. Both the federal government and the provincial government still must approve the project, but they can share the data collected from the public, scientific experts, and Indigenous Nations.

## **What is Substitution?**

At times, the IAAC is willing to substitute parts of their process with a similar process from the B.C.’s environmental assessment. In the case of Spanish Mountain Gold, the B.C. government has requested that their environmental assessment process replace the federal impact assessment. If approved, this would mean both the province and the federal governments would use the provincial environmental assessment structure for their assessments.

## **Xatśūll First Nation Participation to Date**

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Under the Act, all Indigenous nations that may be adversely affected by a project can opt to be a participating Indigenous nation.

Participating Indigenous nations are afforded specific procedural rights within the Act, including capacity funding, consensus seeking processes, a procedure to communicate consent or withhold consent at specific decision points, and access to facilitated dispute resolution.

Xatśūll First Nation is currently negotiating a Relationship Agreement that will commit resources from Spanish Mountain Gold to fund the Nation’s participation in the Environmental Assessment process.

It is important to note that the framework and current negotiations do not represent support or opposition to the proposed Spanish Mountain Gold Project by Xatśūll First Nation. Rather, the agreements have been established to ensure that our Nation’s interests are being represented in each stage of the proposed project’s developments.

Since April 2022, Xat̓s̓ull First Nation's Natural Resource Department and XTR have also been meeting with the EAO and IAAC to set up a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) consisting of staff from the Natural Resources Department and XTR. The TAC will be a forum which Xat̓s̓ull First Nation can participate in throughout the entire Environmental Assessment process. As the Environmental Assessment process moves forward, the TAC team will also provide regular updates to Xat̓s̓ull First Nation leadership and community members.

## How to Get Involved

Xat̓s̓ull First Nation wants to hear from community members on the proposed Spanish Mountain Gold Project. To get people involved we will be sending out surveys, organizing community meetings, and conducting studies through the Natural Resources Department. Dates for engagement events will be released once plans have been confirmed.

To begin, Xat̓s̓ull First Nation in partnership with Xat̓s̓ull T'micw Resources LLP, the Nation's majority-owned environmental and cultural heritage services company, will be conducting a Cultural Knowledge and Use Studies (CKUS). The CKUS will help identify hunting sites, plant harvest sites, fishing sites, villages, and other significant cultural sites important to the Nation. The study will also be used to design mitigation strategies should the mine be approved.

To conclude, feedback from meetings, survey input, interviews, and the CKUS results will be used to guide how Xat̓s̓ull First Nation participates in the Environmental Assessment process.

If you are interested in getting involved feel free to reach out to Mike Stinson and Ange-Aimée Quesnel.

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