



Service Area: Environmental and Social Monitoring
Project: Scope Of Work & Business Plan For A Community Based Environmental Monitoring Program
Client: Athabasca Tribal Council – All Parties Core Ad Hoc Committee
Location: Alberta, Canada

In response to the concerns about the long term protection of land and water resources, numerous environmental and health related studies and monitoring programs have been initiated and implemented by multistakeholder organizations in Alberta's northeastern oil sands region.

In the context of these monitoring activities, communities, government, and industry acknowledge the importance of involving Aboriginal communities in a meaningful way so that they may effectively participate in the environmental management programs and processes that affect traditional territories.

The Athabasca Tribal Council (ATC) has identified "community-based monitoring" as a means of addressing some of the challenges associated with increasing community involvement, and the use of local and traditional knowledge in the region's environmental monitoring programs.

The ATC (working with an ad hoc committee that includes industry participants) retained the **human environment group (HEG)** to facilitate the development of a vision, scope of work and ultimately a business plan for initiating a community based monitoring program in the region. The business plan outlined four strategies that might be implemented to undertake some form of community based monitoring in the region. Consultations with individuals and organizations representing First Nation communities (Mikisew Cree, Athabasca Chipewyan, Fort McKay, Fort McMurray, and Chipewyan Prairie Dene First Nations), provincial government, industry and various monitoring agencies provided the basis for making recommendations for each strategy; including the financial and human resources that may be required for each strategy.

The end result was a modular plan that accommodated the needs and visions of each First Nation, and allowed them to participate to the degree they felt appropriate.