

# GOVERNANCE OPTIONS FOR A CANADIAN NORTHERN CORRIDOR\*

Andrei Sulzenko and Katharina Koch

## KEY MESSAGES

- Governance issues should be considered at an early stage of CNC development in order to facilitate the establishment of a consensus on substantive questions that include corridor routing, Indigenous participation, implementation and oversight.
- CNC planning and implementation will involve a large stakeholder network spanning most provinces and territories and consisting of federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments, as well as Indigenous communities, private corporations and the Canadian public.
- The experiences learned from previous Canadian and international infrastructure projects can provide valuable insights into effective policy frameworks, timelines and costs, routings, and implementation procedures, as well as engagement of relevant stakeholders.
- Five operating principles inform the governance strategies laid out in the paper: the initial policy framework cannot be developed without the support of the federal government; implementation should be based on a cooperative relationship between governments, Indigenous communities and private corporations; stakeholder involvement must be a central focus during all stages of corridor development; CNC implementation is a long-term process that may take place in various segments and timeframes; the CNC governance framework must be flexible enough to withstand political, economic and social transformations beyond legislative mandates.
- CNC governance can be divided into four stages of development and implementation: beginning with the development of the policy framework; deciding on a corridor route; reviewing and implementing project proposals; and managing operations and oversight. The stages are not necessarily consecutive; some may overlap.
- There are different approaches to CNC governance that vary from centralized, top-down to disaggregated, bottom-up sets of structure and processes. Most of the options throughout the four stages include a choice between new federal/provincial crown corporations, not-for-profit corporations or the deployment of existing institutions and regulatory processes.

---

\*

The case studies presented in the Annex were prepared with the assistance of Liam Plunkett, currently a research intern at the School of Public Policy and pursuing a bachelor of commerce at McGill University.

- Developing a policy framework will most likely involve the federal government as it is the ultimate articulator of national goals and can serve as a broker among stakeholders with a view to achieving acceptable outcomes.
- In order to make corridor routing negotiations manageable, they could be divided into segments, concentrating on relevant key stakeholders within a dedicated geographic area. This would also divide CNC implementation into segments.
- At the project proposal stage there is a choice to be made on governance structures and processes: deploy existing institutions and regulatory processes; or establish a special corridor agency that reviews all projects within the designated right-of-way. Approval of proposals and their subsequent oversight would similarly be vested in the special agency or existing bodies.
- Further research related to CNC governance should focus on the creation of detailed scenarios for CNC development in terms of geographic and modal priorities, an up-to-date inventory and assessment of actual and proposed transportation infrastructure projects along the notional CNC route; an in-depth assessment of the views of Indigenous communities; detailing the relative merits of a crown corporation or a not-for-profit as the key governance structure.