



# A New Social Acceptability Framework

Your concerns evolving, and so are we!

The energy transition is a vast and ambitious undertaking and an inspiring collective project with a promising future for Québec. But to make this transition a success, we need more electrical equipment! Our transmission system needs to evolve, which requires modernizing it and adding new lines. Projects of this kind involve a number of several environmental, technical and financial constraints. Our customers want us to take those impacts into account and, more than ever before, they expect transparency, rigor, empathy and equity.

## A renewed approach for the benefit of the community

The public is becoming increasingly concerned about the environment, their quality of life, landscapes, and protecting farmland and heritage. We know that you want to be consulted upstream of our projects, to be heard and to see that your requests have been taken into account. To stay connected on the issues that affect you, we have improved our approach to social acceptability.

We are focusing more on listening, dialogue and being creative with our solutions, while continuing to strive for the broadest possible consensus for our projects. With this new social acceptability framework, we aim to make the energy transition a success, together with the community!

## A renewed commitment

We are also reaffirming our commitment to the First Nations and the Inuit Nation to deepen and strengthen the dialogue and build relationships based on mutual respect, partnership and the meaningful involvement of Indigenous communities in the projects.

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## Our Approach

### 1. Consultations earlier in the process

We are taking a more flexible, respectful and constructive approach to consultations, upstream of the project development process. As a result, we listen closely to what the community tells us before embarking on the preliminary project. Project managers are directly involved in these exchanges.

### 2. Possibility of undergrounding a line in certain situations

In some cases, starting at the transmission line project planning stage, we examine the possibility of undergrounding the line according to criteria that we have established. For the underground option to be chosen, there must be highly sensitive environmental and other constraining elements that a line could not avoid. Some examples of this include insufficient space, an impassable obstacle, an exceptional forest ecosystem, a biodiversity reserve, a national park, a place of national historic significance or an urban area.

Our structured and uniform approach takes into account the technical constraints of the underground option and the significant costs it entails. To be fair to all Quebecers and limit the impact on their electricity bill, our framework considers the technical constraints and significant cost of the underground option. Under this framework, undergrounding high-voltage lines will remain an exception, as is the case around the world.

### 3. Personalized support for property owners living along waterways

Plant screens, right-of-way layouts, targeted positioning of towers ... we now have many solutions to ensure the optimal integration of our transmission lines into the environment. We also follow a specific process to support eligible owners. They can now choose from several possible solutions, such as selecting tree species to create a visual screen.

### 4. Landscapes and significant territorial elements at the heart of our decisions

When planning a project, we take the landscape and other community-recognized elements in the area into account. To do this, we are consulting communities earlier in the process with local specialists and planners to assess landscape, environmental and recreational tourism issues that are not officially documented.

### 5. Technical optimization of our projects

We aim to design towers that are better adapted to the environment, either by reducing their height, modifying the type of material used, minimizing the visibility of accessories, or reducing the width of the right-of-way and cutting down as few trees as possible. In this perspective, we always try to reconstruct a line in its existing location before all else. Since it is already deforested, it is usually the best way to create the least impact.