

2025 Mary River Socio-Economic Monitoring Working Group Meeting

Meeting ID: MRSEMWG – 251009
Group / Organization: Baffinland and Consultants, QIA Consultant, Government of Nunavut, CIRNAC
Meeting Location: Iqaluit, Nunavut
Meeting Chair: Cortney Oliver

Organization Name	Participants
Baffinland Iron Mines Corporation (Baffinland)	Cortney Oliver (CO) Agnes Simonfalvy (AS)
Qikiqtani Inuit Association (QIA) and Consultant (Firelight)	Anuja Thapa (AT)
Government of Nunavut	Nellie Erkloo (NE)
CIRNAC	David Abernethy (DA)
Baffinland Consultants	
ERM	Sophie Wirzba (SW)

AGENDA

No.	Time	Item
1.	9:30 – 9:40	Welcome and Introductions
2.	9:40 – 10:00	Member Updates – Roundtable
3.	10:00 – 11:00	2024 Socio-Economic Monitoring Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identification of data gaps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Public Data Challenges ○ Data Interpretation Challenges ▪ Streamlined Approach ▪ Summary of IR comments for Discussion Questions
4.	11:00 – 11:15	Break
5.	11:15 – 11:30	2025 Inuit Employee Survey <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discussion of survey and feedback

6.	11:30 – 11:45	Looking Ahead
7.	11:45 – 11:55	Walk on Items
8.	11:55 – 12:00	Wrap-up

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS

Action ID	Responsibility	Item Description	Due Date	Status
Outstanding Action Items				
MRSEMWG – 2510 – 01	QIA	QIA to clarify why there are repeated IR questions year after year and how we can resolve seeing duplicate questions in IR comments going forward.	ASAP	
MRSEMWG – 2510 – 02	BIM/ERM	Consider including FTE and headcount analysis	2025 Report	
MRSEMWG – 2510 – 03	BIM	Explore process for integrating Inuit knowledge Holders into reporting	2026 Report	
Completed Action Items				
MRSEMWG – 2510 – 07	GN	QSCMC October meeting completed with strong community attendance.		Complete
MRSEMWG – 2510 – 08	QIA/Firelight	Completed TLMA interviews		Complete
MRSEMWG – 2510 – 09	QIA contractor	Business survey distributed to regional stakeholders		Complete
MRSEMWG – 2510 – 10	BIM	Inuit Employee Survey housing questions revised and finalized for review.		Completed
New Action Items				
MRSEMWG – 2510 – 11	BIM	Circulate the Inuit Employee Survey to WG members for final comments		Completed
MRSEMWG – 2510 – 12	QIA/Firelight	Send track-changes recommendations on the survey to BIM		Completed
MRSEMWG – 2510 – 13	BIM	Share survey copy to Nellie directly		Completed

MEETING SUMMARY

Item 2: Member Updates - Roundtable

- David (CIRNAC/Northern Affairs) opened with updates by noting that with the new Nunavut General Monitoring Plan. There is not yet a finalized plan, but work is moving in that direction. Because the program covers human and physical environments, there is opportunity to use and publicly share existing data in ways that complement both this committee and the regional committee. He emphasized the need to ensure that any data used is well understood and trusted, similar to Statistics Canada standards. He stated the value of cultivating close working relationships to avoid working in silos when reviewing materials.
- Cortney (BIM) agreed that the company has invested millions into monitoring programs, particularly environmental data such as noise and acoustics, and welcomed broader use of this information. She emphasized the benefit of meeting face-to-face and being accessible for discussion.
- Nellie (GN) reported that the recent QSCMC meeting on October 7–8 was successful, with 10 of 13 communities attending. Presenters had limited time but the information provided—especially by those in this working group—was strong. She also noted that Nunavut Bureau of Statistics expects to be fully staffed and begin updating its data. She confirmed that GN has Community Economic Development Officers (CEDOs) in all 13 communities and invited BIM to use GN’s regional office and CEDO network for outreach needs.
- QIA/Firelight (Anuja) updated the group that QIA is completing the Targeted Qikiqtani Labour Market Analysis (QLMA) required under the IIBA. Around ten interviews had been completed, with good information captured. Sophie (ERM) added that the QLMA interviews were insightful and that information aligns well with feedback from the QSCMC. Timelines shifted due to delays contacting interviewees, but results will inform next year’s SEMR.
- The group discussed a circulating contractor/business survey from QIA intended to identify challenges, opportunities, and training needs for Inuit firms. Firelight noted that Siobhan or Natilee at Baffinland will have more information.
- GN added that Kivalliq and Kitikmeot regional meetings were upcoming, and that QSCMC guidance included the need for earlier scheduling and translation of future meeting dates. BIM confirmed that the dates discussed for next year (October/November) would work.
- Cortney (BIM) further noted that for the 2025 SEMR, BIM has directed ERM to include Kinngait and Kimmirut. BIM is exploring ways to gather qualitative socioeconomic information from Inuit knowledge holders and community relations guides. QSCMC insights—such as key themes discussed at the meeting—will inform this qualitative component.
- The group agreed that earlier notice of future meeting dates would support travel and translation needs.

Item 3: 2024 Socio-Economic Monitoring Report

- Cortney (BIM) opened with contextual updates: BIM returned to an early revenue operational level and has Steensby construction planning underway. Last year’s shipping flexibility (up to ~6 Mt plus stranded ore) was tied to the Sustaining Operations Proposal, which has since ended; thus operations returned to the early revenue phase limit. Engagement around SOP2 (another amendment) was paused mid-last year.

- The Socio-Economic Monitoring Report (SEMR) follows project certificate requirements, assessing indicator data, trends, effects relative to predictions, and compliance with terms and conditions. Sophie (ERM) explained that the most robust narrative sections are those based on BIM-controlled datasets—employment, payroll, training, contracting—because public datasets remain outdated. She noted positive findings in employee ability to provide for themselves, payroll, training levels, and related indicators.
- Health, wellbeing, infrastructure, services, and crime remain difficult to interpret due to outdated or inconsistent public datasets. The RCMP noted crime statistics are complex and context-dependent. Sophie expressed optimism that updated data from Nunavut Bureau of Statistics would substantially improve analysis—particularly community health centre visits, social assistance proportions, and population-level indicators not updated since 2016–2018.
- Feedback from QSEMC highlighted food security, gas vouchers, and general household costs. BIM and ERM are considering how to capture additional information (given deficient public datasets) without making the survey overly burdensome.
- On land/resource use, ERM reviewed data on recorded visitor/person-days logged at Milne Port and site security checkpoints; numbers vary widely due to differing purposes (travel through site, harvesting, or group use). A spike in 2019 was noted, followed by variability. BIM also reports on wildlife compensation claims and uses survey questions about how project employment affects harvesting and land use. The group discussed that qualitative land-use studies previously conducted by QIA were incorporated heavily in the 2023 report; the 2024 SEMR streamlined content to reduce repetitive inclusion of outdated information.
- QIA submitted 16 comments during the annual report review period. BIM noted many of the questions repeat annually and suggested a collaborative discussion to reduce duplication going forward. QIA indicated they would look into which staff provided the comments given recent personnel changes.

Item 5: Inuit Employee Survey

- Cortney outlined that the survey is scheduled to be launched within the next couple of weeks. It will run for two full rotations, supported on-site by cultural resource liaisons and in communities by BCLOs. Posters and morning huddles are used to raise awareness. Surveys are available in English and Inuktitut. The current version is paper-based; an online option has been piloted but not yet adopted broadly.
- An incentive—entry into a draw for a \$250 Visa gift card—improved response rates in 2023.
- Regarding content, several housing-related questions were revised. Previously, the “change in housing” question confused respondents. It has now been simplified to:
 - Whether they moved houses (yes/no)
 - Whether the move was related to Mary River employment,
 - Whether the change was positive, negative, or neutral,
 - A comment box for explanation.
- The survey still asks about type of housing (public, private rental, owned, staff housing, etc.). In 2023, about half of Inuit employees lived in public housing; very few owned homes. A small number—about ten respondents—report living in the South (mainly Ottawa, one from Red Deer, some from Quebec).
- The group discussed whether the survey should include overcrowding/number-of-people-in-household questions. BIM acknowledged the idea but noted the need to keep the survey manageable and aligned with project certificate requirements, which focus on tracking changes

in housing status, type, and migration intentions. Suggestions for wording were welcomed for future consideration.

- Response rate history:
 - 2023: 22%
 - 2022: 18%
 - 2020: 32.5% (pre-COVID)

Item 6: Looking Ahead

The group discussed improvements for future SEMRs including:

- Incorporating Kinngait and Kimmirut beginning in 2026.
- Expanding qualitative insights through Inuit Knowledge Holders and Community Relations Guides.
- Continuing to streamline SEMR formatting to reduce redundant reporting.
- Enhancing collaboration with QIA to avoid repetitive questions & comments on future annual reports.
- Exploring cross-project alignment of Inuit Employee Survey questions through the Chamber of Mines.
- Continued anticipation of updated Nunavut Bureau of Statistics datasets, which will improve trend analysis.

BIM added that the Socio-Economic Management Plan is currently being updated and will be brought forward for discussion at the next meeting cycle.

Item 7: Walk-on Items

- BIM noted that the last two ships of the season were departing the RSA, and internal communications were ongoing around shipping closure.
- A request was made to confirm future QSEMC and SEWG dates earlier in the year to ensure member availability and translation readiness.
- BIM agreed to circulate the final draft of the Inuit Employee Survey for last comments.
- General discussion continued on aligning expectations between BIM and QIA regarding IR comment cycles and review efficiency.