



**NIRB File No.: 24YN025**  
 NPC File No.: 150413

June 13, 2024

Marianne Marcoux  
 Fisheries and Oceans Canada  
 501 University Crescent  
 Winnipeg MB, R3T 2N6

Sent via email: [marianne.marcoux@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:marianne.marcoux@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)

**Re: Notice of Screening for Fisheries and Oceans Canada’s “Kinngait beluga and walrus biopsy, tagging, camera, and drone work” project proposal**

Dear Marianne Marcoux:

On May 23, 2024 the Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB) received a referral to screen Fisheries and Oceans Canada’s (DFO) “Kinngait beluga and walrus biopsy, tagging, camera, and drone work” project proposal from the Nunavut Planning Commission (Commission), which noted that the project proposal is outside the area of an applicable regional land use plan. On June 6, 2024 the NIRB received the complete application from the Proponent.

Pursuant to Article 12, Sections 12.4.1 and 12.4.4 of the *Agreement between the Inuit of the Nunavut Settlement Area and Her Majesty the Queen in right of Canada (Nunavut Agreement)* and s. 87 of the *Nunavut Planning and Project Assessment Act*, S.C. 2013, c. 14, s. 2 (*NuPPAA*), the NIRB has commenced screening this project proposal and has assigned it file number **24YN025** - please reference this file number in all future related correspondence.

**PROJECT OVERVIEW**

***Project Scope:***

All documents received and pertaining to this project proposal can be accessed from the NIRB’s online public registry at [www.nirb.ca/project/125972](http://www.nirb.ca/project/125972).

<b>Project:</b>	Kinngait beluga and walrus biopsy, tagging, camera, and drone work		
<b>Region:</b>	Qikiqtani		
<b>Location:</b>	Hudson Strait		
<b>Closest Community:</b>	Kinngait	<b>Distance (approximate)</b>	200 kilometres (km)

<b>Summary of Project Description:</b>	The Proponent intends to conduct scientific research on beluga and walrus around Kinngait.
<b>Project Proposed Timeline:</b>	September to October 2024

According to the project proposal, the scope of the project includes the following undertakings, works or activities:

- Sampling of skin and blubber of walrus and beluga using airguns;
- Tagging animals with satellite tracking tags using crossbows;
- Use of drones for imagery;
- Deployment of hydrophones to monitor marine mammal presence; and
- Daily transportation by small boat from Kinngait.

### ***Inclusion or Exclusion of Scoping List***

The NIRB has identified no additional works or activities in relation to the project proposal. As a result, the NIRB proceeded with screening the project based on the scope as described above.

## REQUEST FOR COMMENTS

All documents received can be accessed from the NIRB's online public registry at [www.nirb.ca/project/125972](http://www.nirb.ca/project/125972) and include:

- *NPC Application*
- *NPC Conformity Determination*
- *NIRB Application*
- *Project Description*
- *Aiviq HTO Letter of Support*
- *Signed Contract*

The NIRB will copy you on screening process related correspondence and upload related documents to the NIRB's online registry for public access. The NIRB may request additional information at any time during the process.

The NIRB is copying parties and municipalities potentially affected by DFO's project proposal with this letter, and we invite interested parties to comment directly to the NIRB by **June 24, 2024**.

The NIRB would like parties to provide comments regarding:

- Whether the project proposal is likely to arouse significant public concern; and if so, why;
- Whether the project proposal is likely to cause significant adverse eco-systemic or socio-economic effects; and if so, why;
- Whether the project proposal is likely to cause significant adverse impacts on wildlife habitat or Inuit harvest activities; and if so, why;

- Whether the project proposal is of a type where the potential adverse effects are highly predictable and mitigable with known technology, (and providing any recommended mitigation measures); and
- Any matter of importance to the Party related to the project proposal.

Please note that *proposed* project-specific terms and conditions, should the project proceed, have been attached for consideration and comment ([Appendix A](#)).

#### CONTACT INFORMATION

Please send your comments to the NIRB via email at [info@nirb.ca](mailto:info@nirb.ca), via fax at (867) 983-2594 or via the individual project dashboard for this assessment on the NIRB's online public registry at [www.nirb.ca/project/125972](http://www.nirb.ca/project/125972).

If you have any questions or require clarification, feel free to contact the undersigned at 867-983-4617 or [kmorrison@nirb.ca](mailto:kmorrison@nirb.ca).

Sincerely,



Keith Morrison  
Manager Impact Assessment  
Nunavut Impact Review Board

Attachments: Appendix A: *Proposed* Project Specific Terms and Conditions

Enclosures (4): Public Notice of Screening (English, and Inuktitut)  
Comment Forms (English, Inuktitut)

cc: Distribution List  
Alasdair Beattie, Fisheries and Oceans Canada  
Fisheries Protection Program, Fisheries and Oceans Canada  
Mosha Cote, Nunavut Research Institute  
Jared Ottenhof, Qikiqtani Inuit Association  
Chris Spencer, Qikiqtani Inuit Association  
Conor Goddard, Qikiqtani Inuit Association  
Joel Fortier, Qikiqtani Inuit Association  
Assol Kubeisinova, Qikiqtani Inuit Association  
Hamlet of Kinngait  
Aiviq Hunters and Trappers Organization

## Appendix A: Proposed Project Specific Terms and Conditions

The following is a list of project-specific terms and conditions which, should the project proceed, may be recommended to be attached to any approval.

### General

1. Fisheries and Oceans Canada (the Proponent) shall maintain a copy of the Project Terms and Conditions at the site of operation at all times and make it accessible to enforcement officers upon request.
2. The Proponent shall operate in accordance with all commitments stated in correspondence provided to the Nunavut Planning Commission (NPC File No.: 150413), and the NIRB (Online Application Form, June 6, 2024). This information should be accessible to enforcement officers upon request.
3. The Proponent shall operate the site in accordance with all applicable Acts, Regulations and Guidelines.
4. The Proponent shall ensure that it meets the standards and/or limits as set out in the authorizing agencies' permits or licences as required for this project.
5. The Proponent shall ensure that all personnel, staff and contractors are adequately trained prior to commencement of all project activities, and shall be made aware of all operational plans, management plans, guidelines and Proponent commitments relating to the project.

### Water courses/Water bodies (including fresh and marine waters)

6. The Proponent shall not deposit, nor permit the deposit of any fuel, chemicals, wastes (including wastewater) or sediment into any water body. The Proponent should have in place an Emergency Spill Response Plan that is approved by the appropriate authorizing agency(ies).

### Waste Management

7. The Proponent shall manage all hazardous and non-hazardous waste including food, domestic wastes, debris and petroleum-based chemicals (e.g., greases, gasoline, glycol-based antifreeze) in such a manner to avoid release into the environment and access to wildlife at all times until disposed of appropriately or at an approved facility.

### Fuel and Chemical Storage

8. The Proponent shall locate all fuel and other hazardous materials a minimum distance away from the high-water mark of any water body and environmentally sensitive areas as required by the appropriate authorizing agencies. The materials shall be stored in such a manner as to prevent their release into the environment.
9. All fuel and chemical storage containers must be clearly marked with the Proponent's name for ease of identification.
10. The Proponent shall have a Spill Contingency Plan in place at all fuel storage or transfer locations and shall ensure that appropriate spill response equipment and clean-up materials (e.g., shovels, pumps, barrels, drip pans, and absorbents) are readily available.

11. The Proponent shall follow the authorizing agencies' direction for management and removal of hazardous materials and wastes (e.g., contaminated soils, sediment and waste oil).
12. The Proponent shall ensure that all spills of fuel or other deleterious materials of 100 litres or more must be reported immediately to the 24-hour Spill Line at (867) 920-8130.

### **Wildlife – General**

13. The Proponent shall not substantially alter or damage or destroy any wildlife habitat in conducting this operation unless otherwise authorized by the appropriate authorizing agencies.
14. The Proponent shall not chase, weary, harass or molest wildlife. This includes persistently circling, chasing, hovering over, pursuing or in any other way harass wildlife, or disturbing large groups of animals.
15. The Proponent shall not hunt or fish, unless proper Nunavut authorizations have been acquired.

### **Migratory Birds and Raptors Disturbance**

16. The Proponent shall carry out all phases of the project in a manner that protects migratory birds and avoids harming, killing or disturbing migratory birds or destroying, disturbing or taking their nests or eggs. In this regard, the Proponent shall take into account Environment and Climate Change Canada's *Avoidance Guidelines*. The Proponent's actions in applying the *Avoidance Guidelines* shall be in compliance with the *Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994* and with the *Species at Risk Act*.
17. The Proponent shall avoid the seaward site of seabird colonies and areas used by flocks of migrating waterfowl, a minimum distance away on the recommendation of the appropriate authorizing agencies.
18. The Proponent shall not pursue seabirds or waterbirds swimming on the water surface and shall avoid concentrations of these birds if encountered on the water.

### **Marine-Based Activities**

19. When marine mammals appear to be trapped or disturbed by vessel movements, the Proponent shall implement appropriate measures to mitigate disturbance, including stoppage of movement until wildlife have moved away from the immediate area.
20. The Proponent shall maintain a distance of 100 metres if a Polar Bear is encountered on land or ice while conducting activities from a zodiac or other small craft; all interaction with Polar Bears should be avoided if possible.
21. The Proponent shall suspend all project activities should any dead fish or wildlife (both marine and terrestrial), or any injured wildlife be observed during any works or activities in and around the marine waters. Activities may only be resumed on the recommendation of the authorizing agencies.
22. The Proponent shall report all incidents, injuries or sightings of marine mammals to the appropriate authorizing agencies.

### **Other**

23. The Proponent should engage with local residents regarding planned activities in the area and should solicit available Inuit Qaujimaningit and information regarding current recreational and

traditional usage of the project area which may inform project activities. Posting of translated public notices and direct engagement with potentially interested groups and individuals prior to undertaking project activities is strongly encouraged.

24. The Proponent should consult with local residents regarding their activities in the area and solicit available Inuit Qaujimaningit and information that can inform project activities.
25. The Proponent shall ensure that project activities do not interfere with Inuit wildlife harvesting or traditional land use activities.
26. The Proponent should, to the extent possible, hire local people and access local services where possible.