



SCREENING DECISION REPORT NIRB FILE No.:

NPC File No.: 150863

December 19, 2025

Following the Nunavut Impact Review Board's (NIRB or Board) assessment of all materials provided, the NIRB is recommending that a review of Government of Nunavut – Department of Transportation & Infrastructure (GN-TIN)'s "Kivalliq-Baffin Connector Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) Feasibility Study" is not required pursuant to Article 12, Section 12.4.4(a) of the *Agreement between the Inuit of the Nunavut Settlement Area and Her Majesty the Queen in right of Canada (Nunavut Agreement)* and s. 92(1)(a) of the *Nunavut Planning and Project Assessment Act*, S.C. 2013, c. 14, s. 2 (*NuPPAA*).

Subject to the Proponent's compliance with the terms and conditions as set out in below, issued in accordance with s. 92(2)(a) of *NuPPAA*, the NIRB is of the view that the project proposal is not likely to cause significant public concerns, and it is unlikely to result in significant adverse environmental and social impacts. The NIRB therefore recommends that the responsible Minister accepts this Screening Decision Report.

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REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The primary objectives of the NIRB are set out in Article 12, Section 12.2.5 of the *Nunavut Agreement* and are confirmed by s. 23 of the *NuPPAA*. The purpose of screening is provided for under Article 12, Section 12.4.1 of the *Nunavut Agreement* and s. 88 of the *NuPPAA*.

As set out under Article 12, Section 12.4.4 of the *Nunavut Agreement* and s. 92(1) of the *NuPPAA*, upon conclusion of the screening process, the Board must provide its written report the Minister indicating one of three options:

- (a) a review of the project is not required;
- (b) a review of the project is required; or
- (c) the project should be modified or abandoned.

PROJECT OVERVIEW & THE NIRB ASSESSMENT PROCESS

On September 17, 2025, the NIRB received a referral to screen GN-TIN's "Kivalliq-Baffin Connector Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) Feasibility Study" project proposal (NIRB File No: 25YN061) from the Nunavut Planning Commission (Commission), with an accompanying positive conformity determination with the Keewatin Regional Land Use Plan. All documents received and pertaining to this project proposal can be accessed from the NIRB's Public Registry by using any of the following search criteria or www.nirb.ca/project/126222.

- Project Name: Kivalliq-Baffin Connector Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) Feasibility Study
- NIRB File No.: 25YN061
- NIRB Application No.: 126222

Table 1: NIRB's Assessment Process

Date	Stage
July 23, 2025	Receipt of project proposal and positive conformity determination (Keewatin Regional Land Use Plan) from the Commission; and referral from the Commission
July 23, 2025	Pursuant to s. 144(1) of the <i>NuPPAA</i> the NIRB requested the Proponent complete an online application to address information required for Screening
August 11, 2025	Receipt of online application from Proponent
September 17, 2025	Request(s) to Proponent for additional information in order to carry out screening pursuant to s. s. 144(1) of the <i>NuPPAA</i>
September 17, 2025	Proponent responded to information request(s) and provided additional information
September 17, 2025	Scoping pursuant to s. 86(1) of the <i>NuPPAA</i>
September 29, 2025	Public engagement and comment request was issued in English with translations provided once available
October 28, 2025	Receipt of public comments
November 17, 2025	Proponent provided with an opportunity to address comments/concerns raised by public
November 24, 2025	Proponent responded to comments/concerns raised by public

Date	Stage
November 21, 2025	Pursuant to Article 12 s 12.4.5 of the <i>Nunavut Agreement</i> and s. 92(3) of the <i>NuPPAA</i> , an extension to the 45-day timeline for the provision of the Board's Report was requested from the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations
December 19, 2025	Issuance of Screening Decision Report

1. Project Scope

Location	Southern Nunavut: Iqaluit, Kimmirut, Kinngait (Qikiqtani Region) and Coral Harbour/Salliq (Kivalliq Region); connecting to the Branching Unit at Salluit, Nunavik (EAUFON Project)
Objective	The Proponent intends to conduct an HDD Engineering Support Program to assess the technical feasibility and engineering design of potential landing sites. This includes geotechnical, geophysical, topographic, and biological investigations required to support the future construction of the fibre optic subsea cable connecting southern Nunavut communities with Nunavik.
Timeline	August 15, 2025 – October 26, 2026, with activities scheduled during seasonal open-water and iced-ocean periods, approximately 30–40 days per community over multiple deployments

As required under s. 86(1) of the *NuPPAA*, the Board accepted the scope of the project as set out by GN-TIN in the proposal. The scope of the project proposal includes the following undertakings, works, or activities:

Land-Based Activities

- Borehole drilling (10–40 metre (m) depth at Beach Manhole and Punch-In sites) using CME45/55 mounted drill.
- Thermistor installation (ground temperature / permafrost monitoring).
- Electrical Resistivity Tomography (ERT) with surface electrodes and cables.
- Seismic Refraction and Reflection surveys with surface geophones.
- Multichannel Analysis of Surface Waves (MASW).
- Downhole logging with Optical Televiwer (OTV) and/or Acoustic Televiwer.
- Borehole caliper measurements.
- Visual site assessments (shoreline, BMH, PI).
- Topographic surveys:
 - LiDAR.
 - Ortho imagery.
 - Drone surveys.
- Use of handheld field tools/cameras for documentation.
- Local transport and support: use of All Terrain Vehicles (ATV), trucks, and community accommodations.
- Community participation: local field assistants, wildlife monitors, ATV /truck operators.

Marine-Based Activities

- Offshore borehole drilling (through open water or iced ocean) using marine-mounted drill rig.

- Cone Penetration Tests (CPTs) on seabed using CPT rig.
- Swath bathymetry (Multibeam Echosounder, MBES).
- Side Scan Sonar (SSS).
- Magnetometer surveys.
- Seismic Reflection and Refraction using airgun (90 cm x 9 m).
- Sub-bottom profiling (SBP).
- Sound Velocity Profiling (SVP).
- Downhole logging in marine boreholes (OTV/ Acoustic Televiewer).
- Borehole caliper measurements in marine boreholes.
- Biological/environmental surveys:
 - Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) seabed inspection.
 - Drop camera seabed video.
 - Underwater video (potential).
 - Hydrophone deployment (potential; marine mammal and noise monitoring).
- Marine transport and support: use of vessels, barges, and ice platforms for offshore operations.
- Community participation: local boat operators and marine support crews.

Logistics & Support (General)

- Community accommodations for project personnel.
- Use of local ATV, trucks, and boats where available.
- Use of barges and ice platforms for offshore operations.
- Local participation opportunities identified: wildlife monitors, field assistants, boat operators, ATV /truck support.
- Fuel sourced from each community
- All garbage would be disposed of appropriately at the community.

2. Inclusion or Exclusion to Scoping List

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

3. Public Comments and Concerns

As outlined in Table 1 above, notices regarding the NIRB's screening of this project proposal were distributed to community organizations as well as to relevant federal and territorial government agencies, Inuit organizations and other parties with a request for interested parties to provide the Board with any comments or concerns 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.

On or before November 24, 2025, the NIRB received comments from the following interested parties:

Table 2: Comments Received

Commenting Party	NIRB Doc ID No.
Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC)	357777
Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC)	357791
Transport Canada (TC)	357775

a. Summary of Comments and Concerns Received

The following provides a summary of the comments and concerns received by the NIRB in relation to the Kivalliq-Baffin Connector Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) Feasibility Study project proposal:

CIRNAC Comments:

- HDD work near shorelines may cause sediment/drilling fluid releases; monitoring details are unclear.
- Waste management plan lacks specifics on storage, handling, and disposal.
- Continued consultation with the Municipality of Resolute Bay and other parties is needed, especially regarding Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit, wildlife, cultural sites, and community impacts.

Recommendations:

- Establish **baseline water quality**, monitor turbidity, and **track drilling fluid returns**.
- Store wastes in **designated areas away from water**, contain/stabilize drilling fluids and cuttings, and **confirm disposal pathways**.
- Maintain ongoing consultation addressing:
 - Integration of **Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit**
 - Wildlife and environmental protection
 - Cultural/archaeological site protection
 - **Inuit training/employment** opportunities
 - Local/Inuit-owned business procurement
 - Municipal solid waste facility closure planning
 - **Regular project updates** to the community

ECCC Comments:

- Equipment near communities should meet **Tier 3–4 emission standards**.
- Drilling mud additive name appears incorrect; should likely be **xanthan gum**.
- Turbidity monitoring plan lacks detail, risk of sediment plumes from drill cuttings.
- Species at Risk list is incomplete; adverse effects not fully identified.
- Project activities occur during **migratory bird nesting season** (mid-May to mid-August).
- Fuel/hazardous material management poses risks to waterbodies used by migratory birds.
- Potential for pollution incidents affecting birds (e.g., oil spills).
- Drone/aircraft operations may disturb large bird concentrations.
- Proponent did not list **ECCC as a required contact** for migratory bird incidents.

Recommendations:

- Use equipment with **Tier 3–4 engines** where feasible.
- Confirm correct drilling mud additive (**xanthan gum**).
- Explain how drill cuttings will be discharged and propose sediment-plume mitigation.
- Provide detailed **turbidity monitoring methods**, instruments, and frequency.
- Identify all **Species at Risk**, assess adverse effects, and align mitigation with Species at Risk Act (SARA) recovery documents.
- Avoid habitat disturbance during **nesting season**; if unavoidable, halt nearby work when nests are found and establish protective buffers.
- Ensure staff follow strict fuel/hazardous material protocols to prevent contamination.
- Add steps in the emergency response plan to **protect wildlife during pollution incidents** and keep birds out of contaminated areas.
- For drone/aircraft use: avoid bird colonies by **1.5–3 km**, minimize circling, and maintain **1100 m** altitude if avoidance isn't possible.
- Add ECCC Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) as a **required contact** for all migratory bird interactions, incidents, and monitoring reports.

TC Comments:

- No concerns with the feasibility study itself.
- Project is in navigable Arctic waters, so Canadian Navigable Waters Act (CNWA) requirements apply.
- If the HDD work does not meet the Minor Works Order, a CNWA approval is required.
- Vessel and marine activity must comply with CSA 2001, AWPPA (zero discharge), ASSPPR/Polar Code, Marine Liability Act, Marine Transportation Security Act.

Recommendations:

- Engage early with TC's Navigation Protection Program to confirm regulatory requirements.
- Consult Canadian Coast Guard and Canadian Hydrographic Services to:
 - Identify impacts on navigational aids.
 - Ensure marine traffic is properly notified

4. b. Comments and Concerns with respect to Inuit Qaujimaningit, Indigenous and Community Knowledge

No concerns or comments were received with respect to Inuit Qaujimaningit or Indigenous or Community Knowledge in relation to the proposed project. However, Inuit Qaujimaningit and Indigenous and Community Knowledge is incorporated into the terms and conditions recommended below based on information collected from prior and similar projects, data collected and mapped by the Commission, and other available sources.

5. Proponent's Response to Public Comments and Concerns

Due to the comments, and questions received from parties, the NIRB provided an opportunity for the Proponent to respond. The following is a summary of the Proponent's response to concerns:

CIRNAC

- Acknowledged CIRNAC's recommendations (sediment/water quality, waste, consultation).
- Stated the Environmental Management Plan (EMP) already includes required mitigation.
- Turbidity monitoring not feasible in iced conditions; past drilling showed no plumes.
- Drill mud is environmentally friendly; waste would be contained, labelled, and transported per EMP.
- Committed to continued engagement with Coral Harbour, Kinngait, Kimmirut, and Iqaluit.
- Reaffirmed commitments to:
 - Integrating Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit
 - Protecting wildlife and archaeological sites
 - Supporting Inuit hiring/procurement
 - Providing regular project updates
- Clarified differences between the HDD Support Program and the future fibre project.
- Remains available for further discussion.

ECCC

- Acknowledges ECCC's recommendations; stated EMP included appropriate mitigation.
- Equipment would meet air-emission standards where practical.
- Drilling mud is xanthan-based, non-toxic.
- Turbidity monitoring not feasible in iced conditions; impacts expected to be negligible.
- Updated Species at Risk listings and mitigation.
- Strengthened measures for spill prevention, wildlife protection, and drone-use precautions.
- Added ECCC-CWS as a required contact for wildlife incidents.
- Noted broader, long-term measures would be addressed in the full EMP for the main fibre project.

TC

- Confirmed full compliance with all TC legislative requirements.
- HDD work uses only small vessels during open water season, no navigation concerns.
- Engagement with TC already occurred (meeting on May 16, 2025).
- TC advised HDD activities would fall under the Minor Works Order.
- Proponent commits to continued coordination with TC.

In determining whether a review of the project is required, the Board considered whether the project proposal had potential to result in significant ecosystemic or socio-economic impacts. Table 3. The Board took particular care to consider Inuit Qaujimaningit, Indigenous and Community Knowledge in carrying out its assessment and determination of the significance of impacts.

Table 3: Summary of the Board's Assessment of Factors s. 90 *NuPPAA*

Factor	Comment
The size of the geographic area, including the size of wildlife habitats, likely to be affected by the impacts.	The geographic area likely to be affected consists of a 150-metre-wide study corridor along each HDD alignment, extending 100 metres into the marine environment , plus very small terrestrial footprints at the Beach Manhole (BMH) and Punch-In (PI) locations. All potential impacts occur within this narrow corridor , and no critical habitats occur inside it. Regional wildlife areas (Ecologically and Biologically Significant Area (EBSA) , Important Bird Area (IBA) , Migratory Bird Sanctuary (MBS)) are located 10–110 km away , meaning impacts to wildlife habitat are localized and minimal .
The ecosystemic sensitivity of that area.	The broader region exhibits high ecosystemic sensitivity due to nearby EBSAs, IBAs, migratory bird sanctuaries, and key seasonal wildlife habitats used by marine mammals and migratory birds. However, the actual project footprint lies outside these high-sensitivity zones and is restricted to a narrow 150-m corridor with minimal seabed disturbance. As a result, the ecosystemic sensitivity within the direct footprint is low to moderate , while the surrounding region remains highly sensitive, particularly during spring and summer wildlife activity periods.
The historical, cultural and archaeological significance of that area.	The HDD study areas are not known to contain archaeological or paleontological features, and the proponent identified no recorded heritage sites within the project footprint . While the surrounding regions, particularly Coral Harbour, Kimmirut, Kinngait, and Iqaluit, hold strong historical and cultural significance for Inuit , these culturally important landscapes lie outside the narrow 150-m study corridor where work would occur. As such, archaeological sensitivity within the direct project footprint is considered low , and the program is not expected to affect historical or cultural resources.

Factor	Comment
The size of the human and the animal populations likely to be affected by the impacts.	Human Population Impact Zone • Directly affected: Fewer than 40 individuals per community (primarily monitors, harvesters, and project workers). • Indirectly adjacent: Approximately 10, 500 residents, but no community-level effects are anticipated. Animal Population Impact Zone • Marine mammals: Tens to low hundreds seasonally may pass through the broader acoustic zone. • Fish: Tens to low hundreds potentially present within the 150 m project corridor. • Birds: Dozens may pass near the corridor, though regional populations are much larger. The project footprint is very small and localized, meaning only a minimal subset of nearby human users and regional wildlife populations may experience short-term, mitigatable effects.
The nature, magnitude and complexity of the impacts; the probability of the impacts occurring; the frequency and duration of the impacts; and the reversibility or irreversibility of the impacts.	The impacts of the HDD Engineering Support Program are low-magnitude, short-term, and simple in nature, occurring only within a very narrow 150-m study corridor. They are probable but minor, with effects limited to temporary noise, brief wildlife displacement, and minimal turbidity. Impacts occur intermittently during field activities and stop immediately once operations cease. All effects are fully reversible, and no irreversible or significant adverse impacts are expected.
The cumulative impacts that could result from the impacts of the project combined with those of any other project that has been carried out, is being carried out or is likely to be carried out.	Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects in the region include marine traffic, community harvesting, small-scale scientific surveys, and future phases of the Kivalliq Broadband Connectivity (KBC) fibre optic cable installation. These activities would occur within a region that regularly accommodates marine and coastal use but do not overlap in a manner that would increase or compound the minimal, localized impacts expected from the HDD Engineering Support Program. No significant cumulative effects are anticipated.
Any other factor that the Board considers relevant to the assessment of the significance of impacts.	No other relevant factors were identified; however, see below for Regulatory Requirements mandating mitigation and/or reporting.

Regulatory Requirements

The Proponent is also advised that the following legislation may apply to the Project:

Acts and Regulations

The Fisheries Act <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/F-14/index.html>

The Nunavut Waters and Nunavut Surface Rights Tribunal Act
<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/n-28.8/>

The Migratory Birds Convention Act (<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/M-7.01/>), the
Migratory Birds Regulations

(https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/C.R.C.,_c._1035/index.html) and the
Migratory Bird Sanctuary Regulations (https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/C.R.C.,_c._1036/index.html). The Species at Risk Act
(SARA)
<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/s-15.3/>

The Wildlife Act (Nunavut) and Corresponding Regulations
<http://www.canlii.org/en/nu/laws/stat/snu-2003-c-26/latest/snu-2003-c-26.html>

The Nunavut Act
<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/N-28.6/>
Proponents must comply with proposed terms and conditions in Appendix B.

The Canada National Parks Act
<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/n-14.01/>

The Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act
<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-7.3/FullText.html>

Wildlife Area Regulations under the Canada Wildlife Act
https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/C.R.C.,_c._1609/FullText.html

The Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act and Transportation of Dangerous Goods Regulations Act: <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/t-19.01/>
Regulations: <http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/tdg/clear-tofc-211.htm>

The Canadian Environmental Protection Act (CEPA)
<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-15.31/>

Note: Calcium chloride (CaCl) is listed as a toxic substance. Alternatives should be assessed.

Storage Tank Systems for Petroleum Products and Allied Petroleum Products Regulations
<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-2008-197/FullText.html>
Tank systems must be identified to ECCC and meet design requirements.

Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME) Standards for Dioxins, Furans, and Mercury (Incineration Standards)

Dioxins & Furans: https://www.ccme.ca/en/resources/air/dioxins_furans.html

Mercury: <https://www.ccme.ca/en/resources/air/mercury.html>

The Aeronautics Act and Canadian Aviation Regulations

Act: <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/A-2/>

Regulations: <https://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/acts-regulations/regulations-sor96-433.html>

The Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act and Arctic Shipping Safety and Pollution Prevention Regulations

Act: <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/A-12/>

Regulations: <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-2017-286/index.html>

The Canada Shipping Act, 2001

<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-10.15/>

The Marine Liability Act

<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/M-0.7/>

The Marine Transportation Security Act

<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/m-0.8/index.html>

The Canadian Navigable Waters Act

<https://laws.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/N-22/>

The Territorial Quarrying Regulations (or equivalent)

<http://www.canlii.org/en/ca/laws/regu/crc-c-1527/latest/crc-c-1527.html>

The Explosives Act and Explosives Regulations

Act: <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/e-17/>

Regulations: <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-2013-211/index.html>

Other Applicable Guidelines

Guidance Document for Passenger Vessels Operating in the Canadian Arctic

<https://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/marinesafety/tp-tp13670-menu-2315.htm>

Guidelines for the Use of Explosives In or Near Canadian Fisheries Waters

<http://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/82558/publication.html>

DFO Protocol for Winter Water Withdrawal from Ice-covered Waterbodies (NWT & Nunavut)

http://registry.mvlwb.ca/Documents/W2010C0005/W2010C0005%20-%20Land%20Use%20Permit%20Application%20-%20DFO%20Water%20Withdrawal%20Protocol%20-%20Aug%2025_10.pdf

Northern Land Use Guidelines, Volume 07: Pits and Quarries

<http://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/360991/publication.html>

Federal Guidelines for Landfarming Petroleum Hydrocarbon Contaminated Soils

https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/ecccc/migration/fcs-scf/B15E990A-C0A8-4780-9124-07650F3A68EA/Landfarming_en.pdf

Solid Waste Management for Northern and Remote Communities (ECCC, 2017)

<https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/managing-reducing-waste/municipal-solid/environment/northern-remote-communities.html>

Canadian Guidelines for the Management of Naturally Occurring Radioactive Materials (NORM)

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/publications/health-risks-safety/canadian-guidelines-management-naturally-occurring-radioactive-materials.html>

Guidance Document for Canadian Jurisdictions on Open-Air Burning

http://www.ccme.ca/files/Resources/air/wood_burning/pn_1548_CCME%20Guidance%20Document%20on%20Open%20Air%20Burning%20FINAL.pdf

Environmental Guideline for the Burning and Incineration of Solid Waste (GN, 2012)

https://www.gov.nu.ca/sites/default/files/guideline_-_burning_and_incineration_of_solid_waste_2012.pdf

Environmental Guidelines for the Management of Contaminated Sites (GN, 2014)

https://www.gov.nu.ca/sites/default/files/contaminated_sites_remediation_2014.pdf

Environmental Guidelines for the Management of Hazardous Waste (GN, 2010)

https://www.gov.nu.ca/sites/default/files/Guideline%20-%20General%20Management%20of%20Hazardous%20Waste%20%28revised%20Oct%202010%29_0.pdf

VIEWS OF THE BOARD

In considering the above factors, the Board has identified the following and respectfully provides its views regarding whether or not the proposed project has the potential to result in significant impacts. The NIRB has also proposed terms and conditions that would mitigate the potential adverse impacts identified.

Ecosystem, wildlife habitat and Inuit harvesting activities:

Valued Component	Ecosystem - Marine and Coastal Environment
Potential Effects:	Minimal potential interaction with migratory and non-migratory birds, terrestrial wildlife, and Species at Risk. The project is primarily offshore; however, limited and brief terrestrial interaction may occur indirectly through vessel operations or logistical activities in already disturbed areas (e.g., ports). Temporary disturbance may occur during short deployment and retrieval periods only.
Nature of Impacts:	Low magnitude, infrequent, and short duration. Any potential disturbance to wildlife is expected to be localized, temporary, and reversible, with no long-term displacement or habitat alteration anticipated.
Mitigating Factors:	Low-impact tools; slow vessel speeds; spill prevention; erosion and sediment controls; trained crew; timing to avoid sensitive periods.
Proposed Terms and Conditions:	General: 1–5; Water courses/Water bodies: 6–7; Waste Management: 8; Fuel and Chemical Storage: 9–16; Wildlife – General: 17–18; Migratory Birds and Raptors Disturbance: 19–21; Marine-Based Activities: 22–32; Other: 33

Valued Component	Marine Wildlife Habitat - Fish, Marine Mammals, Birds
Potential Effects:	Temporary avoidance by marine mammals; minor disturbance to nearshore fish; brief displacement of marine birds from vessel presence; no habitat loss.
Nature of Impacts:	Behavioral and non-injurious; short-lived; limited to small nearshore zones; reversible once vessels leave; no critical habitat overlap.
Mitigating Factors:	Shutdown procedures; timing to reduce wildlife interactions; minimized noise; no anchoring; small seabed footprint. -report any concerns or issues to Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Proposed Terms and Conditions:	General: 1–5; Water courses/Water bodies: 6–7; Waste Management: 8; Fuel and Chemical Storage: 9–16; Wildlife – General: 17–18; Migratory Birds and Raptors Disturbance: 19–21; Marine-Based Activities: 22–32

Valued Component	Inuit Harvesting Activities
Potential Effects:	Short-term disturbance near harvesting areas; temporary wildlife movement (seal, char); minor interference with boat routes near landing sites.

Nature of Impacts:	Localized; low magnitude; short duration; reversible; no long-term effect on species availability or harvesting success.
Mitigating Factors:	Advance notice to Hunters and Trappers Organizations/Associations; local monitors; communication of vessel movements; timing to avoid peak harvesting.
Proposed Terms and Conditions:	General: 1–5; Wildlife – General: 17–18; Marine-Based Activities: 22–32; Other: 33

Socio-economic effects on northerners:

Valued Component	Socio-economic Effects on Northerners
Potential Effects:	Short-term employment benefits; minimal vessel presence near communities; no effect on local services or infrastructure.
Nature of Impacts:	Positive or neutral; temporary; small scale; reversible; no risks to public safety or community operations.
Mitigating Factors:	Local hiring; coordination with hamlets and HTOs; safe vessel operations; adherence to environmental and safety practices.
Proposed Terms and Conditions:	General: 1–5; Marine-Based Activities: 22–32; Other: 33–34

Technological innovations for which the effects are unknown:

- No specific issues have been identified associated with this project proposal.

Administrative Conditions:

To encourage compliance with applicable regulatory requirements and assist the Board and responsible authorities with compliance and effects monitoring for project activities, the following project-specific terms and conditions have been recommended: 1-5.

In considering the above factors and subject to the Proponent's compliance with regulatory requirements and the terms and conditions necessary to mitigate against the potential adverse environmental and social effects, the Board is of the view that the proposed project is unlikely to cause significant public concern and its adverse ecosystemic and socioeconomic impacts are unlikely to be significant, or are highly predictable and can be adequately mitigated by known technologies.

RECOMMENDED PROJECT-SPECIFIC TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The Board is recommending the following specific terms and conditions to apply in respect of the project:

General

1. GN-TIN (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.: 150863), and the NIRB (Online Application Form, September 17, 2025). 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 ensure that no disturbance of the stream bed, lakebed or the banks of any definable watercourse be permitted, except where deemed necessary for maintaining project-specific operational commitments or approved by a responsible authority in cases of spill management.
7. 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

8. 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

9. The Proponent shall use adequate secondary containment or a surface liner (e.g., self-supporting insta-berms and fold-a-tanks) when storing barreled fuel and chemicals at all locations.
10. The Proponent shall ensure that re-fuelling of all equipment occurs a minimum distance away from the high-water mark of any water body as required by the appropriate authorizing agencies.
11. All fuel and chemical storage containers must be clearly marked with the Proponent's name for ease of identification.
12. The Proponent shall routinely inspect and document the conditions of fuel and hazardous material storage containers and containment areas as required by the appropriate authorizing agencies. Fuel containment areas shall be kept clear of debris, water and snow to facilitate inspections for leaks.

13. 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.
14. 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).
15. The Proponent shall ensure that wildlife deterrent systems are utilized at the time of a spill incident in order to avoid wildlife (terrestrial or marine) and migratory birds from being contaminated.
16. 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

17. 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.
18. 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.

Migratory Birds and Raptors Disturbance

19. The Proponent shall not disturb or destroy the nests or eggs of any birds. If active nests of any birds are discovered or located (i.e., with eggs or young), the Proponent shall avoid these areas until nesting is complete, and the young have naturally left the vicinity of the nest by establishing a protection buffer zone appropriate for the species and the surrounding habitat.
20. 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.
21. 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

22. The Proponent shall, where practicable, coordinate with other vessels to minimize simultaneous vessel traffic in critical wildlife habitat areas allowing the wildlife to continue to use the habitat undisturbed (e.g., Navy Board Inlet, Lancaster Sound, Milne Inlet, Bellot Strait).
23. The Proponent shall ensure that noise be kept to a minimum and shall refrain from making sharp or loud noises, blowing horns or whistles and shall maintain constant engine noise levels.
24. The Proponent shall anchor large vessels, such as cruise ships at least 500 metres away from seabird and seaduck breeding colonies except Ivory gull breeding sites which requires a setback distance of 2,000 metres. Further, the Proponent shall ensure small launch vessels (e.g., zodiacs, kayaks) maintain a distance of 100 metres from the seabird colonies.

25. The Proponent shall not attempt to intersect or interfere with the movements of marine mammals. This includes ensuring that there are no wake zones within 250 metres and a minimum of 100 metre no go zone around marine mammals. Strategic positioning of vessels ahead of the path being traveled by mobile mammals and waiting for the mammals to pass is also prohibited.
26. 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.
27. 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.
28. The Proponent shall maintain a distance of 500 metres of a walrus haul out while conducting activities from a zodiac or other small craft.
29. 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.
30. The Proponent shall report all incidents, injuries or sightings of marine mammals to the appropriate authorizing agencies.
31. The Proponent shall implement measures designed to minimize disturbance to seabed sediments and benthic communities and marine wildlife when carrying out project activities within the marine environment.
32. Construction shall be carried out during periods when wind, wave and tidal conditions minimize the dispersion of silt and sediment from the work site.

Other

33. 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.
34. The Proponent should, to the extent possible, hire local people and access local services where possible.

MONITORING AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

- 1- Prior to the start of project activities, the Proponent shall implement a general wildlife monitoring approach during project activities, including maintaining a simple log of wildlife observations and applying basic avoidance measures if wildlife is encountered. Consultation with the Government of Nunavut Department of Environment may be undertaken, as appropriate, to ensure wildlife interactions are minimized.

OTHER NIRB CONCERNS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to the project-specific terms and conditions, the Board is recommending the following:

Change in Project Scope

1. Responsible authorities or Proponent shall notify the Nunavut Planning Commission and/or Parks Canada as appropriate, and the NIRB of any changes in operating plans or conditions, including phase advancement, associated with this project prior to any such change.

Copy of licences, etc. to the Board and Commission

2. The NIRB respectfully requests that responsible authorities submit a copy of each licence, permit or other authorization issued for the Project to the NIRB to assist in enabling possible project monitoring that may be required. Please forward a copy of the licences, permits and/or other authorizations to the NIRB directly at info@nirb.ca or upload a copy to the NIRB's online registry at www.nirb.ca.

Use of Inuit Qaujimaningit

3. The Proponent is encouraged to work with local communities and knowledge holders to inform project design, to carry out the project, and to confirm or validate the perspectives represented in publications, and reports as part of the project. Care should be taken to ensure that Inuit Qaujimaningit and local knowledge collected for the project is used with permission and is accurately represented.

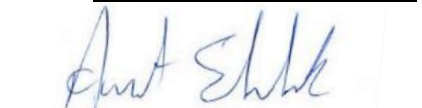
Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems, Unmanned Air Vehicles and Non-Recreational Drones

4. The Proponent should review Transport Canada's site on the rules for flying drones in Canada at <https://www.tc.gc.ca/en/services/aviation/drone-safety/new-rules/drones.html>.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing constitutes the Board's screening decision with respect to the GN-TIN's "Kivalliq-Baffin Connector Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) Feasibility Study". The NIRB remains available for consultation with the Minister regarding this report as necessary.

Dated December 19, 2025 at Iqaluit, NU.



Albert Ehloak, *Acting* Chairperson

Attachments: Appendix A: Species at Risk in Nunavut

APPENDIX A: SPECIES AT RISK IN NUNAVUT

Due to the requirements of Section 79(2) of the *Species at Risk Act*, S.C. 2002, c. 29 (*SARA*), and the potential for project-specific adverse effects on listed wildlife species and its critical habitat, measures should be taken as appropriate to avoid or lessen those effects, and the effects need to be monitored. Project effects could include species disturbance, attraction to operations and destruction of habitat. This section applies to all species listed on Schedule 1 of *SARA*, as listed in the table below, or have been assessed by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC), which may be encountered in the project area. This list may not include all species identified as at risk by the Territorial Government. The following points provide clarification on the applicability of the species outlined in the table.

- Schedule 1 is the official legal list of Species at Risk for *SARA*. *SARA* applies to all species on Schedule 1. The term “listed” species refers to species on Schedule 1.
- Schedule 2 and 3 of *SARA* identify species that were designated at risk by the COSEWIC prior to October 1999 and must be reassessed using revised criteria before they can be considered for addition to Schedule 1.
- Some species identified at risk by COSEWIC are “pending” addition to Schedule 1 of *SARA*. These species are under consideration for addition to Schedule 1, subject to further consultation or assessment.

If species at risk are encountered or affected, the primary mitigation measure should be avoidance. The Proponent should avoid contact with or disturbance to each species, its habitat and/or its residence. All direct, indirect, and cumulative effects should be considered. Refer to species status reports and other information on the Species at Risk Registry at <http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca> for information on specific species.

Monitoring should be undertaken by the Proponent to determine the effectiveness of mitigation and/or identify where further mitigation is required. As a minimum, this monitoring should include recording the locations and dates of any observations of Species at Risk, behaviour or actions taken by the animals when project activities were encountered, and any actions taken by the proponent to avoid contact or disturbance to the species, its habitat, and/or its residence. This information should be submitted to the appropriate regulators and organizations with management responsibility for that species, as requested.

For species primarily managed by the Territorial Government, the Territorial Government should be consulted to identify other appropriate mitigation and/or monitoring measures to minimize effects to these species from the project.

Mitigation and monitoring measures must be undertaken in a way that is consistent with applicable recovery strategies and action/management plans.

Schedules of *SARA* are amended on a regular basis, so it is important to check the *SARA* registry (www.sararegistry.gc.ca) to get the current status of a species.

Updated: September 2024

Terrestrial Species at Risk¹	COSEWIC Designation	Schedule of SARA	Government Organization with Primary Management Responsibility²
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Special Concern	Schedule 1	Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC)
Common Nighthawk	Threatened	Schedule 1	ECCC
Eskimo Curlew	Endangered	Schedule 1	ECCC
Harlequin Duck	Special Concern	Schedule 1	ECCC
Harris's Sparrow	Special Concern	Schedule 1	ECCC
Horned Grebe	Special Concern	Schedule 1	ECCC
Ivory Gull	Endangered	Schedule 1	ECCC
Olive-sided Flycatcher	Threatened	Schedule 1	ECCC
Peregrine Falcon	Special Concern	Schedule 1	ECCC
Red Knot Islandica Subspecies	Special Concern	Schedule 1	ECCC
Red-necked Phalarope	Special Concern	Schedule 1	ECCC
Ross's Gull	Threatened	Schedule 1	ECCC
Rusty Blackbird	Special Concern	Schedule 1	ECCC
Short-eared Owl	Special Concern	Schedule 1	ECCC
Porsild's Bryum	Threatened	Schedule 1	Government of Nunavut (GN)
Transverse Lady Beetle	Special Concern	No Schedule	GN
Caribou (Dolphin and Union Population)	Endangered	Schedule 1	GN
Caribou (Barren-ground Population)	Threatened	No Schedule	GN
Caribou (Torngat Mountains Population)	Endangered	No Schedule	GN
Grizzly Bear (Western Population)	Special Concern	Schedule 1	ECCC
Peary Caribou	Endangered	Schedule 1	GN
Polar Bear	Special Concern	Schedule 1	ECCC
Wolverine	Special Concern	Schedule 1	GN
Atlantic Walrus (High Arctic Population)	Special Concern	No Schedule	Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO)
Atlantic Walrus (Central/Low Arctic Population)	Special Concern	No Schedule	DFO
Beluga Whale (Cumberland Sound Population)	Threatened	Schedule 1	DFO
Beluga Whale (Eastern Hudson Bay Population)	Endangered	No Schedule	DFO
Beluga Whale (Eastern High Arctic-Baffin Bay Population)	Special Concern	No Schedule	DFO
Beluga Whale (Western Hudson Bay Population)	Special Concern	No Schedule	DFO
Atlantic Cod (Arctic Lakes Population)	Special Concern	No Schedule	DFO
Fourhorn Sculpin (Freshwater Form)	Data Deficient	Schedule 3	DFO
Lumpfish	Threatened	No Schedule	DFO
Thorny Skate	Special Concern	No Schedule	DFO

¹ The Department of Fisheries and Oceans has responsibility for aquatic species.

² Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) has a national role to play in the conservation and recovery of Species at Risk in Canada, as well as responsibility for management of birds described in the Migratory Birds Convention Act (MBCA). Day-to-day management of terrestrial species not covered in the MBCA is the responsibility of the Territorial Government. Populations that exist in National Parks are also managed under the authority of the Parks Canada Agency.