



**NIRB File No.: 25YN062**  
Commission File No.: 150872

September 17, 2025

Kevin Hedges  
Fisheries and Oceans Canada  
501 University Crescent  
Winnipeg, MB  
R3T 2N6

Sent via email: [kevin.hedges@dfo-mp.gc.ca](mailto:kevin.hedges@dfo-mp.gc.ca)

**Re: Notice of Screening for Fisheries and Oceans Canada’s “Ocean Tracking Network: Marine fish tracking in Baffin Bay and connected waters onboard the RV Kiviug 1” project proposal**

Dear Kevin Hedges:

On July 24, 2025 the Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB) received a referral to screen Fisheries and Oceans Canada’s “Ocean Tracking Network: Marine fish tracking in Baffin Bay and connected waters onboard the RV Kiviug 1” 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 August 27, 2025, 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 **25YN062** - 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/126223](http://www.nirb.ca/project/126223).

<b>Project:</b>	Ocean Tracking Network: Marine fish tracking in Baffin Bay and connected waters onboard the RV Kiviug 1
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<b>Location:</b>	Qikiqtani Region and Davis Strait, including Cumberland Sound
<b>Summary of Project Description:</b>	The Proponent intends to conduct scientific research to understand the movement patterns and ecology of Greenland Shark, Greenland Halibut and Arctic Skate.
<b>Project Proposed Timeline:</b>	August 15, 2025 to October 31, 2025

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

- Use of fishing vessel (F.V.) Kiviuaq I to conduct marine research activities:
  - Management and treatment of sewage, greywater, and non-combustible and combustible wastes on board the cruise vessel according to Canadian legislation;
- Retrieval of fish tracking moorings near Clyde River and Qikiqtarjuaq, near the Disco Fan Conservation Area and along the shelf break in Baffin Bay. Moorings would be refitted and redeployed;
- Deployment of new set of mooring in the outer half of Cumberland Sound;
- Setting of bottom set longline on the ocean floor for twelve (12) hours to assess the distribution and relative abundance of commercially sized Greenland Halibut in inshore waters near Clyde River and Qikiqtarjuaq;
  - Identification of all captured fishes and invertebrates;
  - Collection of tissues for chemical tracer analyses, gonad samples and morphometric measurements from a subset of specimens of all species;
  - Implant EMCO acoustic transmitters in the body cavities of captured and healthy Greenland Halibut (number [n]=300), Greenland Sharks (n=60) and Arctic Skate (n=60);
- Deployment of VEMCO acoustic monitors arrays near Pond Inlet, Clyde River, Qikiqtarjuaq and in Cumberland Sound. Monitors to be secured using fixed 200 pound weights, sub-surface floats and an acoustic release mechanism; to be triggered the following year for data downloads. Monitors to be use for:
  - Tracking animal movements;
  - Collecting water temperature, salinity, and depth;
- Use of chemicals and hazardous materials; and,
- Use of local accommodations in Iqaluit prior to and end of the research activities.

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

It is noted that portions of this proposal would occur outside of the Nunavut Settlement Area (NSA); however, the NIRB will proceed with screening the project based on the scope as described above and only those located within the Nunavut Settlement Area. The NIRB advises the Proponent to contact authorizing agencies outside the NSA for any additional information or requirements that might be applicable.

## REQUEST FOR COMMENTS

All documents received can be accessed from the NIRB's online public registry at [www.nirb.ca/project/126223](http://www.nirb.ca/project/126223) and include:

- *Commission Conformity Determination and Application*
- *NIRB Online Public Application in English*
- *Non-technical Summary in English, French and Inuktitut*
- *University of Windsor – Animal Utilization Project Proposal*
- *OTN Arctic survey 2025 – Proposed logistical plan*
- *Pangnirtung Hunters and Trappers Association Letter of Support*

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 Fisheries and Oceans Canada project proposal with this letter, and we invite interested parties to comment directly to the NIRB by **September 29, 2025**.

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/126223](http://www.nirb.ca/project/126223).

If you have any questions or require clarification, feel free to contact the undersigned at (867) 983-4607 or [vnayak@nirb.ca](mailto:vnayak@nirb.ca).

Sincerely,



Varun Nayak  
Monitoring Officer  
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, and Inuktitut)

cc: Distribution List  
Jared Ottenhof, Qikiqtani Inuit Association  
Chris Spencer, Qikiqtani Inuit Association  
Conor Goddard, Qikiqtani Inuit Association  
Justin Buller, Government of Nunavut  
Dianne Lapierre, Government of Nunavut  
Natalie D'Souza, Government of Nunavut  
Mosha Cote, Nunavut Research Institute  
Adrian Paradis, Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency  
José Audet-Lecouffe, Fisheries and Oceans Canada

## 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.: 150872) and the NIRB (Online Application Form, August 11, 2025; Additional Information, August 27, 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 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.
8. The Proponent shall dispose of all combustible wastes as required by the appropriate authorizing agencies. All non-combustible wastes from the project site shall be removed to an approved facility for disposal.

### Fuel and Chemical Storage

9. 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.
10. 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).

11. 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.
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.

### **Air Quality**

13. The Proponent shall eliminate unnecessary idling to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as much as possible.

### **Wildlife – General**

14. 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.
15. 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.
16. The Proponent shall not hunt or fish, unless proper Nunavut authorizations have been acquired.

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

17. 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*.
18. 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.
19. 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**

20. 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).
21. 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.
22. The Proponent shall not visit cliffs used by nesting and breeding birds during the late afternoon or early evening hours during the months of August and September.

23. 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.
24. 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.
25. 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.
26. The Proponent shall maintain a distance of 500 metres of a walrus haul out while conducting activities from a zodiac or other small craft.
27. 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.
28. The Proponent shall report all incidents, injuries or sightings of marine mammals to the appropriate authorizing agencies.
29. 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.

### **Other**

30. 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.
31. The Proponent shall ensure that project activities do not interfere with Inuit wildlife harvesting or traditional land use activities.
32. The Proponent should, to the extent possible, hire local people and access local services where possible.