



NIRB File No.: 19YN024
NPC File No.: 149163
Related NPC File No.: 149066

June 28, 2019

Dr. Valeria Vergara
Ocean Wise Conservation Association
1768 William St.
Vancouver, BC V5L 2R4

Sent via email: valeria.vergara@ocean.org

Re: Notice of Screening for Ocean Wise Conservation Association’s “Eyes Above and Ears Below: Combining Technologies to Understand Killer Whale Vocal Behaviour, Group Composition and Distribution in the Arctic” Project Proposal

Dear Dr Valeria Vergara:

On April 4, 2019 the NIRB received a referral to screen Ocean Wise Conservation Association’s (Ocean Wise) “Eyes Above and Ears Below: Combining Technologies to Understand Killer Whale Vocal Behaviour, Group Composition and Distribution in the Arctic” project proposal from the Nunavut Planning Commission (NPC or Commission), with an accompanying positive conformity determination with the North Baffin Regional Land Use Plan. Following the Proponent’s reduction in scope from the originally proposed project, the NIRB received an updated referral from the Commission on May 24, 2019, which upheld the previous conformity determination.

INFORMATION REQUEST

On April 4, 2019 the NIRB requested that the Proponent complete the online application form through the NIRB’s public registry system and ensure, pursuant to s. 144(1) of the *NuPPAA*, that sufficient information was provided to determine the scope of the project activities being proposed and commence screening.

On May 10, 2019 the NIRB released a formal letter, pursuant to s. 144(1) of the *NuPPAA*, requesting that the Proponent provide the Board with the information necessary in order to carry out the screening of the project proposal. Following receipt of the updated referral from NPC, the NIRB followed up via email on May 27, 2019 requesting an update on when the information would be provided. On May 28, 2019 the Proponent provided the requested information and following a preliminary completeness check of the proposal as submitted, the NIRB determined that the proposal did not contain all the necessary information for the NIRB to carry out its screening. The

NIRB followed up via email on May 29, 2019 requesting that the Proponent provide the Board with additional information in order to carry out the screening of the project proposal.

On June 14, 2019 the NIRB received information from the Proponent; however, the NIRB determined that the proposal did not contain the necessary information for the NIRB to carry out its screening and on June 14, 2019 requested that the Proponent provide the Board with the additional information. On June 24, 2019 the NIRB received the required information and commenced the screening pursuant to Part 3 of the *NuPPAA*.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Project Scope:

The proposed “Eyes Above and Ears Below: Combining Technologies to Understand Killer Whale Vocal Behaviour, Group Composition and Distribution in the Arctic” project is located within the Qikiqtani (North Baffin) region, within Eclipse Sound and surrounding inlets, within the vicinity of Sirmilik National Park, and within the vicinity of and up to approximately 100 kilometres (km) from Pond Inlet. The Proponent intends to conduct a visual and passive acoustic study of killer whales, to better define their population characteristics and distribution near Pond Inlet and surrounding areas. The program is proposed to take place in August 2019.

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

- Establishment of two (2) temporary camp locations within Sirmilik National Park;
- Transport of up to three (3) personnel by boat from Pond Inlet to access temporary camp locations;
- Use of a small, locally contracted boat for tracking and identifying killer whales;
- Use of portable hydrophones deployed from the boat to record whale sounds;
- Operation of an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV/drone) for aerial surveys and filming of killer whales;
- Fuel used for boat to be sourced from Pond Inlet and stored at temporary camp;
- Project-generated wastes to be contained and transported back to Pond Inlet for disposal at municipal facilities;
- Disposal of greywater waste generated from camp activities and human waste by burial;
- Water requirements for human consumption and domestic activities sourced from Pond Inlet; and
- Training of Youth, Elders and hunters in the research activities.

Inclusion or Exclusion of Scoping List

At this time, the NIRB has identified no additional works or activities in relation to the project proposal; however, the NIRB notes that the project is expected to occur partially within the Sirmilik National Park and the above scope as described includes the entire project activities.

REQUEST FOR COMMENTS

All documents received and pertaining to this project proposal can be accessed from the NIRB’s online public registry www.nirb.ca/project/125467.

The documents received include:

- *NPC Revised Screening Referral and Conformity Determination*
- *NPC Application and Conformity Questionnaire*
- *NIRB's Online Application Form*
- *Non-technical Project Proposal summary in English, French and Inuktitut*

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 Ocean Wise's project proposal with this letter, and we invite interested parties to comment directly to the NIRB by **July 19, 2019**.

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.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Please send your comments to the NIRB via email at 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/125467.

If you have any questions or require clarification, feel free to contact the undersigned at (867) 857-4566 or ereimer@nirb.ca.

Sincerely,

Erin Reimer
Technical Advisor I
Nunavut Impact Review Board

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

cc: Distribution List
Mosha Cote, Nunavut Research Institute
Tracey McCaie, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada
Lisa Pirie-Dominix, Canadian Wildlife Services
Jane Chisholm, Parks Canada
Mark D'Aguiar, Fisheries and Oceans Canada