



NIRB Summary Report

Strategic Environmental Assessment in Baffin Bay and Davis Strait Public Engagement Sessions – November 19-28, 2019



Photo Credit: NIRB Staff
(NIRB File No. 17SN034)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB or Board) would like to thank all those who participated in the recent public engagement sessions held throughout the Qikiqtani region of Nunavut as part of the NIRB's Strategic Environmental Assessment in Baffin Bay and Davis Strait (the SEA). In response to feedback from community members during the NIRB's previous public engagement sessions for the SEA, an additional round of public engagement meetings was planned to follow the submission of the Board's Final Sea Report. The objective of these meetings was to discuss the findings and recommendations of the Final SEA Report and next steps for the SEA. The meetings were successful owing to the participation and assistance of local organizations, community members, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, as well as representatives of the SEA working group: the Qikiqtani Inuit Association, the Government of Nunavut, and Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada.

The NIRB would like to acknowledge the many Elders and community members who actively participated in the public meetings, sharing their Inuit Qaujimaningit with the NIRB staff and other meeting participants, along with their questions and comments about the SEA.

The NIRB would further like to take this opportunity to thank all the communities for the warm hospitality offered to the NIRB staff and SEA working group during their recent visits.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'M Ings', is positioned above a horizontal line.

Mark Ings
Director, Finance and Administration and *Acting* Executive Director
Nunavut Impact Review Board

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	Outline of the NIRB’s Strategic Environmental Assessment in Baffin Bay and Davis Strait	1
1.2	Objectives of the NIRB’s Strategic Environmental Assessment Process	2
1.3	Final SEA Report	2
2	NIRB PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS.....	3
2.1	Overview of the Public Engagement Sessions.....	3
2.2	Setup of the NIRB Public Engagement Sessions	3
2.3	Meeting Materials	3
2.4	Agenda and Venues for Community Information Sessions	4
2.5	Advertisements.....	4
3	FEEDBACK RECEIVED DURING THE NIRB’s PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS	5
4	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	6

1 INTRODUCTION

On February 9, 2017 Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (then Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada) referred the Strategic Environmental Assessment in Baffin Bay and Davis Strait (the SEA; NIRB File No. 17SN034) to the NIRB pursuant to section 12.2.4 of the *Agreement Between the Inuit of the Nunavut Settlement Area and Her Majesty the Queen in right of Canada (Nunavut Agreement)*. The NIRB was responsible for coordinating the assessment, and in July 2019 the Board issued a final report with recommendations to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs. The Final SEA Report is expected to inform the five (5) year review of the Government of Canada decision to designate Canadian Arctic waters as off limits to future oil and gas licences (2016-2021).

The NIRB has worked closely with a working group developed for the SEA: Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC), Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI), the Qikiqtani Inuit Association (QIA), and the Government of Nunavut (GN). The NIRB has also worked closely with other government departments, industry, non-governmental organizations, potentially affected communities, and the general public. The NIRB held a Final Public Meeting for the SEA in Iqaluit from March 18-22, 2019. During the Meeting, members of the public, Inuit organizations, and government agencies shared information, knowledge, and concerns, and discussed a range of topics related to possible oil and gas related activities in the Canadian waters of Baffin Bay and Davis Strait. Three (3) community representatives from each of the 10 potentially interested communities were invited to attend the Meeting and to participate in the associated Community Roundtable.

The following report summarizes the NIRB's last round of public engagement sessions for the SEA that were held in communities of the Qikiqtani region between November 19-28, 2019.

1.1 Outline of the NIRB's Strategic Environmental Assessment in Baffin Bay and Davis Strait

The focus of the SEA was to develop an improved understanding of possible types of oil and gas related development activities¹ that could one day be proposed within the Canadian waters of Baffin Bay and Davis Strait outside of the Nunavut Settlement Area (NSA), along with their associated risks, benefits, and management strategies. The SEA was informed by available scientific information, Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and Inuit Qaujimaningit² and other types of traditional knowledge, and public feedback. An essential component of the SEA was to reflect Inuit concerns and traditional use of the associated marine areas.

¹ For the purpose of the SEA, 'oil and gas development' refers to the discovery and exploitation of oil and gas deposits and encompass exploration, production, and decommissioning activities.

² Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit refers to traditional values, beliefs, and principles while Inuit Qaujimaningit encompasses Inuit traditional knowledge (and variations thereof) as well as Inuit epistemology as it relates to Inuit Societal Values and Inuit Knowledge (both contemporary and traditional).

The SEA consisted of the following three (3) general phases:

Issues Scoping: Identified a list of topics to be considered within the SEA.

Analyze Possible Development Scenarios: Identified what oil and gas development could be possible in Baffin Bay and Davis Strait if it was allowed and to analyze the potential positive and negative effects on the physical, biological, and socio-economic environment.

Develop Final SEA Report: Information necessary to prepare a Final SEA Report and recommendations to government was made available to the NIRB Board members.

Throughout each phase of the SEA, the NIRB scheduled public engagement sessions in the communities surrounding Baffin Bay and Davis Strait: Resolute Bay, Grise Fiord, Arctic Bay, Pond Inlet, Clyde River, Qikiqtarjuaq, Pangnirtung, Iqaluit, Kimmirut, and Cape Dorset. The information, knowledge, and concerns shared were used to inform the SEA process and summary reports were written for each round of engagement. The NIRB reported on the available information collected and considered as part of the SEA, which will increase the overall body of knowledge for the region and may have additional applications beyond the design of this study.

All information relating to the NIRB's Strategic Environmental Assessment in Baffin Bay and Davis Strait can be accessed online from the NIRB's online public registry at www.nirb.ca/project/125087.

1.2 Objectives of the NIRB's Strategic Environmental Assessment Process

The primary objectives of the SEA were to:

- Provide background information;
- Describe potential challenges, obstacles, and other factors relevant to possible oil and gas development;
- Describe possible oil and gas development scenarios;
- Assess the potential impacts and benefits;
- Identify knowledge and data gaps, including areas of concern; and
- Develop Final SEA Report with recommendations.

1.3 Final SEA Report

On July 31, 2019 the NIRB issued the Final SEA Report to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs. The Final SEA Report was designed to describe the hypothetical development scenarios that were examined to better understand what oil and gas activities could look like, identify gaps in available information, address questions and gauge public concern, and lead to recommendations for moving forward. Summaries were provided of the comprehensive review of available literature and the extensive public engagement that was undertaken throughout this assessment, as well as the outcomes of the analysis of potential effects of possible oil and gas activities. Importantly, the report includes extensive references to the background documentation, knowledge, and Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit that informed and enriched the SEA and lead to the Board's central conclusion and 79 recommendations for moving forward.

Taking the submissions, input, and knowledge of parties into account, the Board's central conclusion of the SEA was:

Given the importance of the marine environment to the well-being of Nunavummiut, significant gaps in knowledge of the environment necessary to support impact assessment, and an overall lack of regulatory, industry, and infrastructure readiness in Nunavut, the 2016 moratorium on oil and gas development in the Canadian Arctic should remain in place for Baffin Bay and Davis Strait until such time as the key issues set out in this Report can be addressed. The Board expects that it will take at least a decade to complete the research, planning, and consultation identified as necessary prior to undertaking a re-assessment by the Minister to determine if the moratorium should be lifted.

2 NIRB PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS

2.1 Overview of the Public Engagement Sessions

From November 19-28, 2019 the NIRB held public engagement sessions in the Qikiqtani communities of Resolute, Grise Fiord, Arctic Bay, Pond Inlet, Pangnirtung, Iqaluit, Cape Dorset, Clyde River, Qikiqtarjuaq, and Kimmirut. Despite the NIRB's best efforts to plan the dates and route of these engagement sessions around specific community events, some sessions occurred at the same time as other community events.

The NIRB staff was joined throughout the tour by the following representatives of the SEA working group:

- **Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada:** Daniel Van Vliet and Filip Petrovic
- **Qikiqtani Inuit Association:** Catriona Popoff, Tiivi Qiatsuk, and Steven Lonsdale
- **Government of Nunavut:** Paul Kaludjak and Annie Cyr-Parent

2.2 Setup of the NIRB Public Engagement Sessions

When arriving in each community, NIRB staff, along with representatives of the SEA working group, attempted to visit hamlet and hunters and trappers' organizations to provide updates on the SEA process and provide digital versions of the NIRB's Final SEA Report.

Public engagement sessions were hosted during the evening for each community, which included simultaneous translations into Inuktitut, snacks and refreshments, and door prizes. All attendees were asked to sign in at each meeting. The NIRB delivered a detailed presentation and summarized the Board's conclusions and recommendations to the Minister; CIRNAC, the QIA, and the GN discussed associated work going forward.

2.3 Meeting Materials

The following printed materials were made available to attendees of the public engagement sessions:

- NIRB PowerPoint presentation in English and Inuktitut;
- NIRB Final SEA Report;
- *Agreement between the Inuit of the Nunavut Settlement Area and Her Majesty the Queen in right of Canada (Nunavut Agreement);*
- *Nunavut Planning and Project Assessment Act;* and

- NIRB Sign-in Sheets and comment forms.

2.4 Agenda and Venues for Community Information Sessions

The NIRB staff consulted with community organizations and considered travel requirements in determining the timing of the community engagement sessions. The public meetings were planned for one (1) evening in each community starting at 6:00 pm:

Community	Date	Location	Attendance
Resolute Bay	November 19, 2019	Community Hall Gym	16
Grise Fiord	November 20, 2019	Community Hall	28
Arctic Bay	November 21, 2019	Community Hall	44
Pond Inlet	November 22, 2019	High School Gym	15
Pangnirtung	November 23, 2019	High School Gym	16
Iqaluit	November 24, 2019	Cadet Hall	4
Cape Dorset	November 25, 2019	Community Hall	0
Clyde River	November 26, 2019	High School Gym	8
Qikiqtarjuaq	November 27, 2019	Community Hall	7
Kimmirut	November 28, 2019	Akavak Centre	20

2.5 Advertisements

Public notification is essential to effective public engagement and is a prerequisite of the NIRB's community information sessions. The NIRB informed the communities of the upcoming meetings through various advertisements including print media, radio, and the NIRB's Facebook page and shared with individual community pages. Copies of all advertisements are available on the NIRB public registry.

Media	Details
Letters of Invitation	On November 14, 2019 the NIRB distributed correspondence to the Mayors of each of the 10 Qikiqtani communities
Newspaper	Newspaper advertisements in English, Inuktitut, and French were published in the print publication and online webpage of <i>Nunatsiaq News</i> from November 15-29, 2019.
Radio	Public service announcements in English and Inuktitut were provided to the radio station in each of the 10 communities as well as on Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) Iqaluit radio with requests to have the announcements read on-air twice a day until the day of each NIRB meeting.
Posters	A translated poster with the date, location, and time was sent to community members, local organizations, and the Hamlet office for placement around each community.
Online	The translated poster was placed online on each of the local community news Facebook pages.

3 FEEDBACK RECEIVED DURING THE NIRB'S PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS

The purpose of the final public engagement sessions held in the Qikiqtani region was to discuss the findings and recommendations of the Final SEA Report and next steps for the Strategic Environmental Assessment in Baffin Bay and Davis Strait (the SEA). The following is a summarized list of verbal comments by topic and related to the SEA and the Board's Final SEA Report and associated recommendations that were raised during each public engagement session or to NIRB staff or representatives of the SEA working group following each session.

Final SEA Report and Recommendations
Many community members were aware of the Final SEA Report and expressed appreciation for the Board and staff and the work conducted for the SEA. Many comments noted that the concerns of Inuit were identified in the Report and people felt 'heard'.
The SEA working group was thanked for visiting and bringing the conclusion of the study back to the communities.
Support for extending the current moratorium on offshore oil and gas activities in Baffin Bay and Davis Strait and the need for more data collection, studies, and general readiness was expressed in each community. Opposition to possible offshore oil and gas development, regardless of readiness, was also expressed throughout the tour.
Questions were raised on what work will be undertaken now that the Final SEA Report has been submitted.
Processes and Decision-Making
Communities noted the need to be consulted on whether Inuit are in support or not of oil and gas development and the need for a plan to be developed if there is consensus.
Many community members discussed being over consulted and noted they are often asked the same questions by researchers and decision makers. It was requested that processes be streamlined, and information shared between programs and studies.
Community members were happy to see the different organizations and levels of government working together and visiting the communities. Questions on the involvement of other federal departments in the SEA and marine management, particularly Fisheries and Oceans Canada, were also raised.
Questions were raised on the implications of devolution and whether the Government of Nunavut could allow oil and gas development in the offshore areas of Baffin Bay and Davis Strait even after the Board's recommendations and if the federal government keeps the moratorium in place.
Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit
The importance of continuing to conduct Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit studies and to include Elders in such studies was noted. The Qikiqtani Inuit Association (QIA) was congratulated for its work for the SEA, specifically with Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit. There was general support for the QIA's proposed Elder and youth committees to share Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit.
It was expressed that Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and related laws need to be included in decision making processes in the Region.
The Environment and Potential Effects from Offshore Oil and Gas
Knowledge shared on whale behaviors and responses to activities, such as shipping and effects, specifically noise. Concerns of potential negative effects, and observations of past effects, from noise from oil and gas activities, particularly seismic surveys, on marine life were expressed.
Changing migration routes and new observations of species in some communities was identified.

The interconnectedness of all parts of the environment and the importance of country food to Inuit survival was emphasized. The potential risks to the marine environment and Inuit from offshore oil and gas activities, particularly from an oil spill, were continually raised. Changes to marine life and effects observed regardless of offshore oil and gas development and resulting impacts to Inuit were noted.
There were many comments on dangerous and changing environmental conditions and potential for accidents from icebergs and waves.
Questions and concerns were expressed on current spill response measures, capacity, and compensation and who would benefit from compensation in an affected area. It was emphasized that additional work needs to be conducted in these areas and that there is a general lack of readiness for oil and gas development.
Many community members noted that they did not support offshore oil and gas development, particularly when considering current ice conditions and climate change and potential impacts to marine mammals and the environment.
Questions were raised about offshore oil and gas development in Russia and Greenland
Questions were raised about potential benefits to Nunavut and Nunavummiut from offshore oil and gas development in Baffin Bay and Davis Strait and there were comments about the lack of certainty for Inuit employment with offshore oil and gas development.
The need for consideration of alternative developments, such as deep sea fishing, was expressed.

4 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

During the final public engagement sessions, community members provided their comments, shared knowledge, and asked questions on a variety of topics related to the Strategic Environmental Assessment in Baffin Bay and Davis Strait (the SEA). Comments were generally focused on:

- The Final SEA Report and Board Recommendations;
- General processes and decision-making;
- Use and importance of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit;
- Potential for accidents and malfunctions and compensation; and
- Current environmental conditions and potential effects from offshore oil and gas.

A general appreciation for the NIRB's process and the Board's conclusions and recommendations was expressed throughout the tour. Community members further commented that they liked to see the different organizations and levels of government working together and visiting the communities to bring back the results of a study.

The comments raised during the meetings have been included in this report for broader publication and the NIRB hopes that the identification of issues may help other organizations in their respective processes going forward. This report will be translated into Inuktitut and French and electronic copies will be posted on the NIRB's online public registry. Over the coming months the NIRB will be developing online materials to provide the public with a reference to the SEA and the Board's recommendations. The NIRB expects to follow up with applicable organizations on the status of actions taken to address the Board's recommendations.