



**NIRB File No.: 24YN008**  
NPC File No.: 149366

April 3, 2024

Justin McDonell  
Government of Nunavut  
PO Box 1000 Station 200  
Iqaluit Nunavut X0A 0H0

Sent via email: [jmcdonell@gov.nu.ca](mailto:jmcdonell@gov.nu.ca)

**Re: Notice of Screening for the Government of Nunavut’s “Baseline Studies for Qikiqtarjuaq Marine Infrastructure” project proposal**

Dear Justin McDonell:

On February 2, 2024, the Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB) received a referral to screen the Government of Nunavut’s “Baseline Studies for Qikiqtarjuaq Marine Infrastructure” 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 February 16, 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 **24YN008** - 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/125883](http://www.nirb.ca/project/125883).

<b>Project:</b>	Baseline Studies for Qikiqtarjuaq Marine Infrastructure
<b>Region:</b>	Qikiqtani
<b>Location:</b>	Qikiqtarjuaq (within municipal boundaries)

<b>Summary of Project Description:</b>	The Proponent intends to conduct baseline field studies and Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit gathering to assess the proposed port area and quarry location for the design of the Qikiqtarjuaq deep-water port facility. Activities include geotechnical investigation, terrestrial surveys (wildlife, vegetation, topographic), marine surveys (marine fish and habitat, marine mammals, water and sediment quality, bathymetry, tides), archaeological assessment and IQ gathering.
<b>Project Proposed Timeline:</b>	April to September 2024

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

- Use of a Coring/Sampling CME Drill for geotechnical coring/sampling;
- Use of a front-end loader to transport drill rig and shack;
- Use of four (4) pick-up trucks for transportation of personnel and equipment;
- Use of two (2) diesel generators for portable power;
- Use of a water pump for drilling;
- Use of Herman Nelson heaters (2) for heating drill shack;
- Use of oil-fired coil heaters for waterline;
- Use of a motorboat for marine sampling and surveys;
- Use of a remotely operated boat for bathymetric surveys;
- Use of an underwater ROV camera for fish and fish habitat surveys;
- Use of a tide gauge;
- Use of a current meter;
- Use of 1 liter of sample preservatives;
- Use of 8,500 liters of diesel fuel for generator and equipment;
- Use of 680 liters of gasoline for equipment;
- Use of 1,800 pounds of drilling mud for bedrock coring;
- Use of 600 liters of hydraulic oil for drill rig;
- Use of 120 liters of oil for drill rig;
- Use of 64 liters of heavy-duty grease for drill rig;
- Use of 40 liters of transmission fluid for drill rig;
- Use of 120 litres of transmission oil for drill rig;
- Use of 272 liters of antifreeze for drill rig;
- Daily use of 38 meters cube of water for water samples;
- Combustible waste to be disposed of at the municipal waste facility; and
- Hazardous waste to be packed and transported south at an approved facility

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

At this time, 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.

## REQUEST FOR COMMENTS

All documents received can be accessed from the NIRB's online public registry [www.nirb.ca/project/125883](http://www.nirb.ca/project/125883) and include:

- *NPC Application and Conformity Determination*
- *Baseline Studies Report Qikiqtarjuaq Letter of Support*
- *NIRB Application*

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 GN project proposal with this letter, and we invite interested parties to comment directly to the NIRB by **April 12, 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/125883](http://www.nirb.ca/project/125883).

If you have any questions or require clarification, feel free to contact the undersigned at (867) 983-4616 or [femingak@nirb.ca](mailto:femingak@nirb.ca).

Sincerely,



Francis Emingak  
Screening Officer  
Nunavut Impact Review Board

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

cc: Distribution List  
Dustin Fredlund, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.  
Carson Gillis, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.  
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  
Justin Buller, Government of Nunavut  
Dianne Lapierre, Government of Nunavut  
William Patch, Government of Nunavut (GN-CGS)  
Randy Mercer, Government of Nunavut (GN-CGS)  
Ken Wasylyshen, Government of Nunavut (GN-CGS)  
Olivier Forbes-Bouillon Government of Nunavut (GN-CGS)  
Caroline Whittle, Government of Nunavut (GC-CH)  
Sylvie LeBlanc, Government of Nunavut (GN-CH)  
Michele LeBlanc-Havard, Government of Nunavut (GN-DOE)  
Mosha Cote, Nunavut Research Institute  
Tracey McCaie, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada  
Alasdair Beattie, 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. The Government of Nunavut (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.: 149366) and the NIRB (Online Application Form, February 16, 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 extract water from any fish-bearing water body unless the water intake hose is equipped with a screen of appropriate mesh size to ensure that there is no entrapment of fish. Small lakes or streams should not be used for water withdrawal unless otherwise authorized by the appropriate authorizing agency.
7. 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.
8. 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

9. 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**

10. 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.
11. 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.
12. All fuel and chemical storage containers must be clearly marked with the Proponent's name for ease of identification.
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.

## **Air Quality**

17. The Proponent shall take appropriate dust suppression measures in conducting all activities for this Project including using approved dust suppression additives and techniques as necessary to maintain ambient air quality.
18. The Proponent shall eliminate unnecessary idling to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as much as possible.

## **Noise**

19. All construction and road vehicles must be fitted with standard and well-maintained noise suppression devices.

## **Wildlife – General**

20. 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.
21. 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.
22. The Proponent shall not hunt or fish, unless proper Nunavut authorizations have been acquired.

## **Migratory Birds and Raptors Disturbance**

23. 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*.
24. 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<sup>1</sup> appropriate for the species and the surrounding habitat.

## **Road and Ground Disturbance**

25. The Proponent shall not move any equipment or vehicles unless the ground surface is in a state capable of fully supporting the equipment or vehicles without rutting or gouging. Overland travel of equipment or vehicles must be suspended if rutting occurs.

## **Drilling – General**

26. The Proponent shall not allow any drilling wastes to spread to the surrounding lands or water bodies.
27. The Proponent shall ensure that that any deleterious substances (as defined in the *Fisheries Act*) resulting from its activities do not enter into any water bodies frequented by fish.
28. The Proponent shall ensure that all drill areas are constructed to facilitate minimizing the environmental footprint of the project area.

## **Drilling on Land**

29. The Proponent shall not conduct any land-based drilling or mechanized clearing activities a minimum distance of the normal high-water mark of any water body as required by an authorizing agency.
30. If an artesian flow is encountered, the Proponent shall ensure the drill hole is immediately plugged and permanently sealed.
31. The Proponent shall ensure that all sump/depression capacities are sufficient to accommodate the volume of wastewater and any fines that are produced. The sumps shall only be used for inert drilling fluids, and not any other materials or substances.
32. The Proponent shall not locate any sumps within a minimum distance of the normal high-water mark of any water body as required by an authorizing agency.
33. The Proponent shall ensure all drill holes are backfilled or capped prior to the end of each field season. All sumps must be backfilled and restored to original or stable profile prior to the end of each field season.

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<sup>1</sup> Recommended setback distances to define buffer zones have been established by Environment and Climate Change Canada for different bird groups nesting in tundra habitat and can be found at [www.ec.gc.ca/paom-itmb](http://www.ec.gc.ca/paom-itmb).

## **Drilling on Ice**

34. The Proponent shall ensure that drill muds and additives are not used in connection with holes drilled through ice unless they are re-circulated or contained such that they do not enter the water body, or are demonstrated to be non-toxic.
35. The Proponent shall ensure that all drill cuttings are removed from ice surfaces daily.

## **Land Use and Restoration of Disturbed Areas**

36. The Proponent shall use existing trails where possible during project activities on the land.
37. The Proponent shall ensure that the land use area is kept clean and tidy at all times.
38. The Proponent shall avoid disturbance on slopes prone to natural erosion, and alternative locations shall be utilized.
39. The Proponent shall remove all garbage, fuel and equipment at the end of each field season and/or upon completion of work and/or upon abandonment.
40. The Proponent shall ensure that all disturbed areas are restored to a stable or pre-disturbed state using Best Available Technology Economically Achievable (BATEA) upon completion of work and/or abandonment.

## **Marine-Based Activities**

41. 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.
42. 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.
43. 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.
44. The Proponent shall maintain a distance of 500 metres of a walrus haul out while conducting activities from a zodiac or other small craft.
45. 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.
46. The Proponent shall report all incidents, injuries or sightings of marine mammals to the appropriate authorizing agencies.
47. 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.

## Heritage Sites

48. The Proponent shall ensure that archaeological and paleontological sites are not purposely or inadvertently disturbed by clients or staff as a result of project activities.
49. The Proponent shall ensure that all clients and staff are aware of the Proponent's responsibilities and requirements regarding archaeological or palaeontological sites that are encountered during land-based activities. This should include briefings explaining the prohibitions regarding removal of artifacts, and defacing or writing on rocks and infrastructure.
50. No activities shall be conducted in the vicinity (50 metres buffer zone) of any archaeological/historical sites. If archaeological sites or features are encountered, activities shall immediately be interrupted and moved away from this location. Each site encountered needs to be recorded and reported to the Government of Nunavut-Department of Culture and Heritage.

## Other

51. 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.
52. The Proponent shall ensure that project activities do not interfere with Inuit wildlife harvesting or traditional land use activities.
53. The Proponent should, to the extent possible, hire local people and access local services where possible.