



NIRB File No.: 25YN028

NIRB Public Registry Link: www.nirb.ca/project/126190

NPC File No.: 150702

June 26, 2025

Christopher Lewis
 Fisheries and Oceans Canada
 3B-630 Queen Elizabeth Way
 Iqaluit, Nunavut
 X0A 3H0

Sent via email: Christopher.Lewis@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

Re: Notice of Screening for Fisheries and Oceans Canada’s “Iqaluit Coastal Baseline Study 2025” and Comment Request

Dear Christopher Lewis:

On April 9, 2025, the Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB) received a referral from the Nunavut Planning Commission (Commission) to screen Fisheries and Oceans Canada’s “Iqaluit Coastal Baseline Study 2025” project proposal. The Commission confirmed that the project is outside the area of an applicable regional land use plan. A complete application was received by the NIRB on May 28, 2025, and the project was assigned file number **25YN028**, please reference this file number in all future correspondence.

The NIRB has commenced screening the project proposal pursuant to the *Nunavut Agreement* and *Nunavut Planning and Project Assessment Act*¹ and by copy of this letter, **invites interested parties and municipalities potentially affected by the proposal to comment directly to the Nunavut Impact Review Board.**

SCOPE OF PROPOSED PROJECT

Location	Qikiqtani, within 10 kilometers (km) from Iqaluit on Frobisher Bay, encompassing Tarr Inlet, Koojesse Inlet, and Peterhead Inlet
Objective	To gather comprehensive temporal and spatial sampling data on the biodiversity of sea-ice algae, phytoplankton, and zooplankton, as well as benthic invertebrates and amphipods

¹ 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*)

Timeline	April to November 2025 (sampling one (1) to two (2) times per month)
-----------------	--

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

- **Transportation**
 - Use of four (4) Snow mobiles for sea ice travel.
 - Use of a boat owned by a local operator in Iqaluit or Fisheries and Oceans Canada Officer for water transportation to each site.
- **Accommodation**
 - Use of location accommodations.
- **Sampling:**
 - Sea ice samples to be collected using an ice corer (MARK II coring system).
 - Measurements of ice and snow thickness.
 - Water collection using Niskin bottles.
 - Zooplankton collection using vertical zooplankton nets.
 - Amphipods collection using hand nets and/or amphipod traps.
 - Benthic invertebrate samples collected by using a grab sampler (Ekman/Van Veen grab samplers) and by hand.
 - Collect vertical conductivity, temperature, depth (CTD) profiles (Castaway CTD and Sontek & RBR CTD).
 - Basic weather data collection at each station.

Inclusion or Exclusion of Scoping List

The NIRB has identified no additional work 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

Documents received and describing the proposal can be accessed from the NIRB's online public registry at www.nirb.ca/project/126190 including:

- *Commission Conformity Determination*
- *Commission Application*
- *NIRB online Application in English*
- *Non-technical Summary in English, French, and Inuktitut*
- *Hunters and Trappers Association Letter of Support*

The NIRB may request additional information at any time during the process.

By copy of this letter, the NIRB is inviting interested parties and municipalities potentially affected by the project proposal to comment directly to the NIRB by **July 9, 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 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/126190.

Sincerely,



Amir Pourmahabadian
Senior Impact Assessment officer
Nunavut Impact Review Board

Attachments: Appendix A: *Proposed* Project Specific Terms and Conditions

Enclosures (6): Public Notice of Screening (English, French and Inuktitut)
Comment Forms (English, French and Inuktitut)

cc: Distribution List
Jared Ottenhof, Qikiqtani Inuit Association
Chris Spencer, Qikiqtani Inuit Association
Joel Fortier, Qikiqtani Inuit Association
Mosha Cote, Nunavut Research Institute
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.: 150702), and the NIRB (Online Application Form, May 28, 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 water extraction from any fish-bearing waterbody is done with appropriate care and caution. Small lakes or streams should not be used for water withdrawal unless approved 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 were deemed necessary for maintaining project-specific operational commitments or approved by a responsible authority in cases of spill management.

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.
9. 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.

Air Quality

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

Wildlife – General

11. 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.
12. 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.
13. The Proponent shall not hunt or fish, unless proper Nunavut authorizations have been acquired.
14. The Proponent shall ensure that all wildlife have the right-of-way on any roads or trails. Vehicles are required to slow down or stop and wait to permit the free and unrestricted movement of wildlife across roads or trails at any location.

Migratory Birds and Raptors Disturbance

15. 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*.
16. 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 zone² appropriate for the species and the surrounding habitat.
17. 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.
18. 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.

Caribou Disturbance

19. The Proponent shall avoid interfering with any paths or crossings known to be frequented by caribou during periods of migration as identified by current land use plans in place and/or by Inuit Qaujimaningit.
20. The Proponent shall immediately cease activities likely to interfere with the migration or calving of caribou until such time as the caribou or muskox have passed.
21. The Proponent shall immediately cease activities likely to interfere with the migration or calving of caribou until such time as the caribou have passed.

² 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.

Road and Ground Disturbance

22. 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.
23. The Proponent shall not move any equipment or vehicles without prior testing the thickness of the ice to ensure the lake, river or stream is in a state capable of fully supporting the equipment or vehicles.

Land Use and Restoration of Disturbed Areas

24. The Proponent shall use existing trails where possible during project activities on the land.
25. The Proponent shall ensure that the land use area is kept clean and tidy at all times.
26. 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.

Heritage Sites

27. 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.
28. 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.

Other

29. 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.
30. The Proponent shall ensure that project activities do not interfere with Inuit wildlife harvesting or traditional land use activities.
31. The Proponent should, to the extent possible, hire local people and access local services where possible.