



NIRB File No.: 25YN027
Commission File No.: 150640 & 150806

July 14, 2025

Alia Bigio
Canada-Nunavut Geoscience Office
Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada
918 Nunavut Drive
Iqaluit, NU
X0H 2H0

Sent via email: alia.bigio@rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca

Re: Notice of Screening for Canada-Nunavut Geoscience Office's "Sylvia Grinnell Geoscience Program" project proposal

Dear Alia Bigio:

On April 10, 2025 the Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB) received a referral to screen Canada-Nunavut Geoscience Office's "Sylvia Grinnell Geoscience Program" 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 May 23, 2025, the Commission issued a new determination noting that the proposal renewal were to reflect changes in operational dates and the that the proposed activities are still outside the area of an applicable regional land use plan. On July 3, 2025the 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 **25YN027** - 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/126196.

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| Project: | Sylvia Grinnell Geoscience Program |
| Location: | South Qikiqtani region, approximately 50 kilometres (km) northwest of Iqaluit around Sylvia Grinnell Lake |
| Summary of Project Description: | The Proponent intends to conduct a follow-up geological research survey program to identify anomalous quantities of cassiterite and scheelite grains in stream sediment samples. |
| Project Proposed Timeline: | August 2025 for a total of 16 days |

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

- Conduct geological bedrock mapping, rock and surficial sediment sampling and thematic studies;
- Establishment of a temporary camp for six (6) personnel;
- Use of up to two (2) helicopters to transport personnel and equipment to the camp site and to research sites;
- Collection of water for domestic purposes;
- Removal of non-combustible wastes to Iqaluit for proper disposal;
- Refuelling of helicopter at the Iqaluit airport; and
- Use of local accommodations and facilities.

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 at www.nirb.ca/project/126196 and include:

- *Commission Conformity Determinations (April and May 2025)*
- *Commission Application*
- *NIRB online Application in English*
- *Non-technical Summary in English, French and Inuktitut*
- *Project Summary in English*

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 Canada-Nunavut Geoscience Office project proposal with this letter, and we invite interested parties to comment directly to the NIRB by July 24, 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, 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/126196.

If you have any questions or require clarification, feel free to contact the undersigned at Kelli Gillard, Manager, Impact Assessment at kgillard@nirb.ca or Leila Cai, Impact Assessment Officer at lcai@nirb.ca.

Sincerely,



Kelli Gillard, PAg, CTAJ
Manager, Impact Assessment
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
Conor Goddard, Qikiqtani Inuit Association
Joel Fortier, Qikiqtani Inuit Association
Justin Buller, Government of Nunavut, Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs
Dianne Lapierre, Government of Nunavut, Economic Development and Transportation
Sean Joseph, Government of Nunavut, Environmental Assessment and Regulations
Patrick Graillon, Government of Nunavut, Parks and Places
Jakub Garbarczyk, Government of Nunavut, Parks and Places
Moshá Cote, Nunavut Research Institute
Adrien Paradis, Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency
Tracey McCaie, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada
Amaruq Hunters and Trappers Association

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. Canada-Nunavut Geoscience Office (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.: 150640 and 160806), and the NIRB (Online Application Form, June 4, 2025; Revised Application Form, July 3, 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 where 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.

Fuel and Chemical Storage

10. 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.

11. 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.
12. 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).
13. 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.
14. 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.

Wildlife – General

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

Migratory Birds and Raptors Disturbance

18. 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*.
19. 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 zone¹ appropriate for the species and the surrounding habitat.
20. 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.
21. 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.

¹ 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.

Aircraft Flight Restrictions

22. The Proponent shall not alter flight paths to approach wildlife and avoid flying directly over animals.
23. The Proponent shall plan flight paths that minimize flights over known habitat likely to have birds or concentrations of wildlife. Aircraft should avoid critical and sensitive wildlife areas at all times by choosing alternate flight corridors.
24. The Proponent shall restrict aircraft/helicopter activity related to the project to a minimum flight altitude of 610 metres (2,100 ft) above ground level except during landing, take-off or if there is a specific requirement for low-level flying, which does not disturb wildlife or migratory birds.
25. The Proponent shall avoid known concentrations of birds (e.g., bird colonies, moulting areas) by a lateral distance of 1.5 kilometre. If avoidance is not possible maintain a minimum flight altitude of 1,100 metres (3,500 feet) over these areas.
26. The Proponent shall ensure that aircraft/helicopter do not, unless for emergency, touch-down in areas where wildlife are present.
27. The Proponent shall advise all pilots of relevant flight restrictions and enforce their application over the project area, including flight paths to/from the project area.

Caribou Disturbance

28. 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.
29. The Proponent shall not locate any operation or undertake activities that could block or cause any diversion to migration of caribou.
30. The Proponent shall immediately cease activities likely to interfere with the migration or calving of caribou until such time as the caribou have passed.

Land Use and Restoration of Disturbed Areas

31. The Proponent shall use existing trails where possible during project activities on the land.
32. The Proponent shall ensure that the land use area is kept clean and tidy at all times.
33. 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.
34. 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.

Camps

35. The Proponent shall ensure that all camps are located durable surfaces, such as gravel or sand that is consolidated and can withstand repeated, heavy use. Measures shall be put in place to prevent erosion, trail formation and damage to the ground.

Heritage Sites

36. 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.
37. 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

38. 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.
39. The Proponent shall ensure that project activities do not interfere with Inuit wildlife harvesting or traditional land use activities.
40. The Proponent should, to the extent possible, hire local people and access local services where possible.