



NIRB File No.: 25YN052
NPC File No.: 150833

July 14, 2025

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

Sent via email: christopher.lewis@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

Re: **Notice of Minor Screening for Fisheries and Oceans Canada's "Qikitarjuaq Coastal Baseline Study – Open Water Work 2025" project proposal**

Dear Christopher Lewis:

On June 9, 2025, the Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB) received a referral to screen Fisheries and Oceans Canada's "Qikitarjuaq Coastal Baseline Study – Open Water Work 2025" 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.

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.**

INFORMATION REQUEST

On June 30, 2025, the NIRB received the required information and commenced the screening pursuant to Part 3 of the *NuPPAA*.

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*)

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/126197.

Location:	Qikiqtarjuaq
Objective	The Proponent intends to conduct research program that collects coastal marine baseline data, such as benthic and pelagic habitat use by biota (e.g. plankton, fish and invertebrates) near Qikiqtarjuaq during the open water season. Sampling stations were determined in consultation with the Nattivak Hunters and Trappers Association; 45 stations are planned for research sites within a 25-kilometre radius of Qikiqtarjuaq
Timeline	September 7, 2025 to September 21, 2025

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

- Use of a boat owned by local outfitter to transport personnel and equipment;
- Use of scientific equipment to collect data such as:
 - Niskin bottles to collect phytoplankton samples;
 - Zooplankton nets to collect zooplankton;
 - Conductivity, Temperature, Depth (CTD) probe to collect data;
 - Grab sampler to collect benthic invertebrates, small dredge or by hand-shoreline seine;
- Use of gasoline 25 gallons for boat transportation; and
- Use of local accommodations.

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/126197 and include:

- *NPC Conformity Determination and Application*
- *Nattivak HTA 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 DFO project proposal with this letter, and we invite interested parties to comment directly to the NIRB by **July 24, 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.

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/126197.

If you have any questions or require clarification, feel free to contact the undersigned at 1-866-233-3033 or femingak@nirb.ca.

Sincerely,



Francis Emingak
Screening Officer
Nunavut Impact Review Board

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

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

cc: Distribution List
Nidhi Singh, Nunavut Water Board
Abid Jan, Nunavut Water Board
Dustin Fredlund, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.
Carson Gillis, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.
Jorgan Aitaok, 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
Natalie D'Souza, Government of Nunavut
Bradley Pirie, Government of Nunavut
Michele LeBlanc-Havard, Government of Nunavut
José Audet-Lecouffe, Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Nattivik HTA

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.: 150833) and the NIRB (Online Application Form, June 9, 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 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 implement erosion and sediment suppression measures on all areas during all project activities in order to prevent sediment or fugitive dust from entering any water body or surrounding environment. Erosion prevention measures may include berms or silt fences.
9. 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

10. 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

11. 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.
12. 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.
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 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.
15. 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

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

Wildlife – General

17. 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.
18. 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.
19. The Proponent shall not hunt or fish, unless proper Nunavut authorizations have been acquired.

Migratory Birds and Raptors Disturbance

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.

Marine-Based Activities

22. The Proponent shall, where practicable, coordinate with other vessels to minimize simultaneous vessel traffic in critical wildlife habitat areas allowing the wildlife to continue to use the habitat undisturbed (e.g. Navy Board Inlet, Lancaster Sound, Milne Inlet, Bellot Strait).
23. The Proponent shall ensure that noise be kept to a minimum and shall refrain from making sharp or loud noises, blowing horns or whistles and shall maintain constant engine noise levels.
24. The Proponent shall not visit cliffs used by nesting and breeding birds during the late afternoon or early evening hours during the months of August and September.
25. 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.
26. 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.
27. 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.
28. 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.
29. The Proponent shall report all incidents, injuries or sightings of marine mammals to the appropriate authorizing agencies.
30. 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.

Other

31. 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.
32. The Proponent shall ensure that project activities do not interfere with Inuit wildlife harvesting or traditional land use activities.

33. The Proponent should, to the extent possible, hire local people and access local services where possible.