



NIRB File No.: 26YN044
NIRB Public Registry link:
www.nirb.ca/project/126478
NPC File No.: 151230

August 05, 2026

José Lagunas
Defence Research and Development Canada (DRDC)
2459 Rte de la Bravoure
Québec QC G3J 1X5
Canada

Sent via email: jose.lagunas-morales@forces.gc.ca

Re: Notice of Screening and Comment Request for Defence Research and Development Canada's "ICENAV" project proposal

Dear José Lagunas:

The Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB) has commenced screening¹ the project proposal.

By copy of this letter, NIRB invites regulators, interested parties, and community members or groups potentially affected by the proposal to view the application and comment directly to the NIRB by August 26, 2026.

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

The application can be viewed on www.nirb.ca/project/126477 where a comment form is available. Comments may also be submitted to info@nirb.ca, or by fax at 867-983-2594.

¹ 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)

SCOPE OF PROPOSED PROJECT

Location	Kitikmeot and Qikiqtani (North Baffin) regions; marine waters of the Northwest Passage, including Lancaster Sound, Parry Channel, Barrow Strait, Austin Channel, Peel Sound, Prince Regent Inlet, M'Clintock Channel and Viscount Melville Sound, along routes beginning at Resolute Bay and extending toward Cambridge Bay. The nearest affected communities include Resolute Bay and Cambridge Bay.
Objective	To improve the efficiency and safety of maritime navigation in ice-covered waters and reduce reliance on manned helicopter ice-reconnaissance flights by testing and validating ship-, air-, satellite- and underwater-based systems that detect, track and characterize sea and glacial ice.
Timeline	August 20 to August 30 within the 2026-2028 operating period (seasonal, multi-year; approximately 10 days of field operations per campaign).

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

- Conduct a 10-day ship-based research program from the **CCGS (Canadian Coast Guard Ship) Henry Larsen** along northern and southern Northwest Passage routes, adjusted for weather and sea-ice conditions, with up to 13 scientific personnel and no land-based camp.
- Use vessels, helicopter, Rigid-Hulled Inflatable Boats (RHIBs)/zodiacs, drones/ Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS), satellites, ship-mounted sensors, and underwater vehicles to map and measure sea and glacial ice.
- Collect ice cores and samples from stable floes or from the vessel/RHIB; conduct mechanical, temperature, salinity, thickness, acoustic, and under-ice morphology measurements; and validate sensor data.
- Deploy acoustic instruments, drifting devices, and track Radio Frequency (RF) / Automatic Identification System (AIS) tags and conduct visible and infrared drone surveys for ice-detection, tracking, and navigation research.
- Use approximately 220 m³ of diesel, 1,200 L of aviation fuel, up to 4 L of mixed fuel, and lithium-ion batteries. No freshwater would be withdrawn, and all waste would be managed under Canadian Coast Guard procedures.
- Apply mitigation measures, including low-power acoustic sources, suitable-weather drone operations, trackable drifters, and keeping a RHIB available for equipment recovery.

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 described above.

Questions about the NIRB's work should be directed to the undersigned at 1-866-233-3033 EXT 545 or apourmahabadian@nirb.ca.

Sincerely,



Amir Pourmahabadian
Acting Manager, Impact Assessment
Nunavut Impact Review Board

cc: Distribution List:
 Cory Barker, Kitikmeot Inuit Association
 Jared Ottenhof, Qikiqtani Inuit Association
 Mosha Cote, Nunavut Research Institute
 Eva Walker, Environment and Climate Change Canada