

Regional Study in the Slave Geological Province

Workshop, February 16, 2023

Summary Report

Overview

On June 7, 2021 the Tłıchǫ Government requested that the Minister of Northern Affairs initiate a regional study in the Slave Geological Province of the Northwest Territories pursuant to Part 5.2 of the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act* (the Act). A workshop held in Yellowknife on June 22-23, 2022 brought together subject matter experts and interested parties to discuss the merits, concerns and ideas for a regional study in this area. After seeking and receiving the views from northern partners following this workshop, the Minister of Northern Affairs responded favourably to the request for a regional study in the Slave Geological Province on February 3, 2023. In his response letter, the Minister set out a number of overarching criteria that must be honoured and directed officials to reach out to partners to discuss a process to establish recommendations on a committee to conduct the study, and that committee's terms of reference, in accordance with the Act. The criteria set out by the Minister are:

- The regional study governance structure shall be designed to foster a fair and transparent process over interest-based outcomes; committee member recommendations should reflect the characteristics (such as number of committee members and expertise of committee members) required to oversee a successful process. The study itself shall involve opportunities to maximize meaningful public participation.
- The protection of caribou in this region is a priority that has been raised by partners. The regional study shall specifically consider the impacts to caribou and strategies for mitigation of cumulative effects and caribou protection (such as the Recovery Strategy for Barren-ground Caribou in the Northwest Territories, and the Bathurst Caribou Management Plan).
- The regional study shall also consider other priorities of our northern partners, including objectives to:
 - protect and promote the social, cultural, and economic well-being of residents;
 - support the responsible advancement of climate change adaptation and mitigation, cumulative effects, and the green economy; and,
 - contribute to the objectives of the Critical Minerals Strategy, such as the responsible advancement of critical minerals projects and supporting infrastructure development in the North.
- The regional study shall focus on the Mackenzie Valley (Northwest Territories) portion of the Slave Geological Province at this time. However, consideration must be given to how potentially impacted organizations,

communities and knowledge holders will be involved in the study regardless of geographic location (particularly given the broad range of caribou migration routes that include areas in Nunavut). Participation in the study, including recommendations on committee membership, will not be limited to parties in the Northwest Territories.

- The regional study shall be designed so that outcomes can be considered for near-term anticipated development and planning processes. The study shall aim to be completed within a two- to three-year timeframe. However, consideration must be given to how the outcomes can be meaningful and useful into the future, rather than focus on outcomes that are only relevant for a short period of time. The study shall be designed in a manner that would permit an expansion into Nunavut, if deemed a priority, following this initial phase in the Northwest Territories.
- The regional study shall not interrupt existing and ongoing regulatory and planning processes. Regulatory and planning proceedings, such as land and water regulation and impact assessment processes for project applications and management, can continue to advance throughout the duration of the study.

Northern partners convened in Yellowknife on February 16, 2023 to review the criteria set out by the Minister ([Annex A](#)), and to discuss next steps. A subject matter expert presented examples of regional studies from across Canada and abroad, and shared some insights about what made them successful and what elements were challenging ([Annex B](#)). Participants had the opportunity to discuss thoughts and ideas to help inform next steps, with the focus on a governance structure that would help guide the study. Open plenary and breakout group discussions among active participants were facilitated by Stratos Inc. Discussions first focused on ideas about the committee; what a successful committee might look like, what would be required from the committee and, how to form a committee. Discussions then turned to examine potential supports for the committee and who might provide that level of support, as well as ways to involve experts and include Indigenous and traditional local knowledge. To see the questions which guided group discussion as well as the summarized responses shared with the plenary, please see [Annex C](#).

Results and next steps

At the close of the workshop, participants agreed that Indigenous, territorial, and federal governments were best placed to work together on the governance model for the regional study prior to making a recommendation to the Minister of Northern Affairs on the establishment of a committee and the terms of reference to guide the committee's work. CIRNAC officials agreed to follow up with Indigenous and territorial governments to initiate this work.

Annexes

[Annex A: Slides from CIRNAC Presentation on Minister's Criteria](#)

[Annex B: Slides from Aura Environmental Presentation on RSEA Governance Models](#)

[Annex C: Group Discussion Questions and Summary of Shared Responses \(as recorded by Stratos Inc.\)](#)

Annex A: Slides from CIRNAC Presentation on Minister's Criteria

 Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada Relations Couronne-Autochtones et Affaires du Nord Canada

Background & Current Status of SGP regional study

Regional Study Workshop:
Slave Geological Province
February 16, 2023





Canada

 Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada Relations Couronne-Autochtones et Affaires du Nord Canada

Background

- In June 2021, the Tłı̨chǫ Government sent a request to the Minister of Northern Affairs requesting a regional study of the Slave Geological Province (SGP) in accordance with section 5.2 of the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act* (MVRMA).
- In June 2022, parties came together for a two-day workshop to discuss a potential study. Following the workshop, interested parties submitted written comments to CIRNAC expressing general support for a regional study, and recommendations around scope, timing and governance. These submissions, as well as copies of the presentations and a workshop summary report, have been posted on the MVEIRB website.
- On February 3, 2023 the Minister responded to the Tłı̨chǫ Government expressing support to initiate a regional study of the SGP. In the response, the Minister included overarching criteria to consider, and instructed officials to work with partners to inform recommendations on committee membership and committee Terms of Reference (TOR).



2

MVRMA Provisions

- Under Part 5.2 of the MVRMA:
 - The federal Minister may establish a committee to conduct a study of the impact of existing or future works or activities carried out in a region of the Mackenzie Valley
 - Minister shall appoint one or more persons as members of a committee
- Minister shall establish the committee's terms of reference after seeking and considering the advice of territorial government and, if the study examines works or activities affecting any first nation or the Tłı̨chǫ First Nation, the advice of the affected first nation or the Tłı̨chǫ Government, as the case may be.



3

Criteria #1



The regional study governance structure shall be designed to foster a fair and transparent process over interest-based outcomes; committee member recommendations should reflect the characteristics (such as number of committee members and expertise of committee members) required to oversee a successful process. The study itself shall involve opportunities to maximize meaningful public participation.

Criteria #2



The protection of caribou in this region is a priority that has been raised by partners. The regional study shall specifically consider the impacts to caribou and strategies for mitigation of cumulative effects and caribou protection (such as the Recovery Strategy for Barren-ground Caribou in the Northwest Territories, and the Bathurst Caribou Management Plan



4

Criteria #3



The regional study shall also consider other priorities of our northern partners, including objectives to:

- protect and promote the social, cultural, and economic well-being of residents;
- support the responsible advancement of climate change adaptation and mitigation, cumulative effects, and the green economy; and,
- contribute to the objectives of the Critical Minerals Strategy, such as the responsible advancement of critical minerals projects and supporting infrastructure development in the North

Criteria #4



The regional study shall focus on the Mackenzie Valley (Northwest Territories) portion of the Slave Geological Province at this time. However, consideration must be given to how potentially impacted organizations, communities and knowledge holders will be involved in the study regardless of geographic location (particularly given the broad range of caribou migration routes that include areas in Nunavut). Participation in the study, including recommendations on committee membership, will not be limited to parties in the Northwest Territories.



5

Criteria #5



The regional study shall be designed so that outcomes can be considered for near-term anticipated development and planning processes. The study shall aim to be completed within a two- to three-year timeframe. However, consideration must be given to how the outcomes can be meaningful and useful into the future, rather than focus on outcomes that are only relevant for a short period of time. The study shall be designed in a manner that would permit an expansion into Nunavut, if deemed a priority, following this initial phase in the Northwest Territories.

Criteria #6



The regional study shall not interrupt existing and ongoing regulatory and planning processes. Regulatory and planning proceedings, such as land and water regulation and impact assessment processes for project applications and management, can continue to advance throughout the duration of the study.



6

Next Steps

- Discussions today will help inform
 - Governance: committee membership
 - Supports: structures to support the committee (e.g. secretariat)
 - Participation: how parties can be involved (e.g. advisory panels, sessions, etc.)
 - TOR: elements of a TOR that are important to guiding committee's work
- There will be an opportunity to submit written comments following this workshop
- Today's discussion, and any written submission received, will help inform a recommendation to the Minister on committee membership/appointment, and a draft terms of reference to guide the committee's work



Annex B: Slides from Aura Environmental Presentation on RSEA Governance Models

Regional Strategic Environmental Assessment (RSEA) for the Slave Geological Province:

Governance Principles and Models

16 February 2023

Bram Noble and Jill Blakley



Regional Strategic Environmental Assessment

RSEA is gaining traction across Canada and internationally





Slave Geological Province RSEA

The Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board commissioned a report to provide preliminary, independent guidance on the nature and function of an RSEA committee and a related *governance model* for the SGP RSEA. Specifically, the report:

- provides a brief primer on governance for RSEA;
- presents a synthesis of different models of RSEA (and RSEA-like) governance from Canadian and international cases; and
- identifies draft *conceptual models* for governance of the SGP RSEA



Primer on Governance for RSEA

A good-governance model for RSEA will:

- i) facilitate open discussion;
- ii) identify different values and expectations;
- iii) empower participants;
- iv) influence the development of regional development and planning strategy;
- v) promote learning;
- vi) create a sense of ownership.

Collectively, these features provide legitimacy to the RSEA and to the subsequent actions and decisions taken.



Table 1. Select characteristics of governance styles.^{17,18}

Characteristics or Functions	Governance Style		
	<i>Hierarchical</i>	<i>Networked</i>	<i>Market</i>
<i>Role of 'government'</i>	ruling	partnering and supporting	material benefit
<i>Actors' choices</i>	controlled by written rules	free; ruled by trust and reciprocity	free; ruled by level of investment and negotiation
<i>Dominant actor(s)</i>	State/colonial government	civil society; communities; interests; Indigenous governments	private sector; investors
<i>Steering</i>	authority	trust	incentive
<i>Knowledge</i>	technocratic; technical expertise; confidentiality	braided; group-building; different ways of knowing; shared	competitive advantage; proprietary; protected
<i>Conflict resolution</i>	legal; jurisdictional	aim for consensus; mediation	survival of the fittest
<i>Evaluation</i>	compliance with rules and regulation	learning-based; reflection on agreed-upon goals	benefit-cost; value-for-money; return on investment
<i>Legitimacy</i>	representation; democratic process	participation; multiple voices; values	efficiency; cost-effectiveness
<i>Representation</i>	elected or appointed; technical experts	affected parties; openness; knowledge holders	market players; investors; "stakeholders"

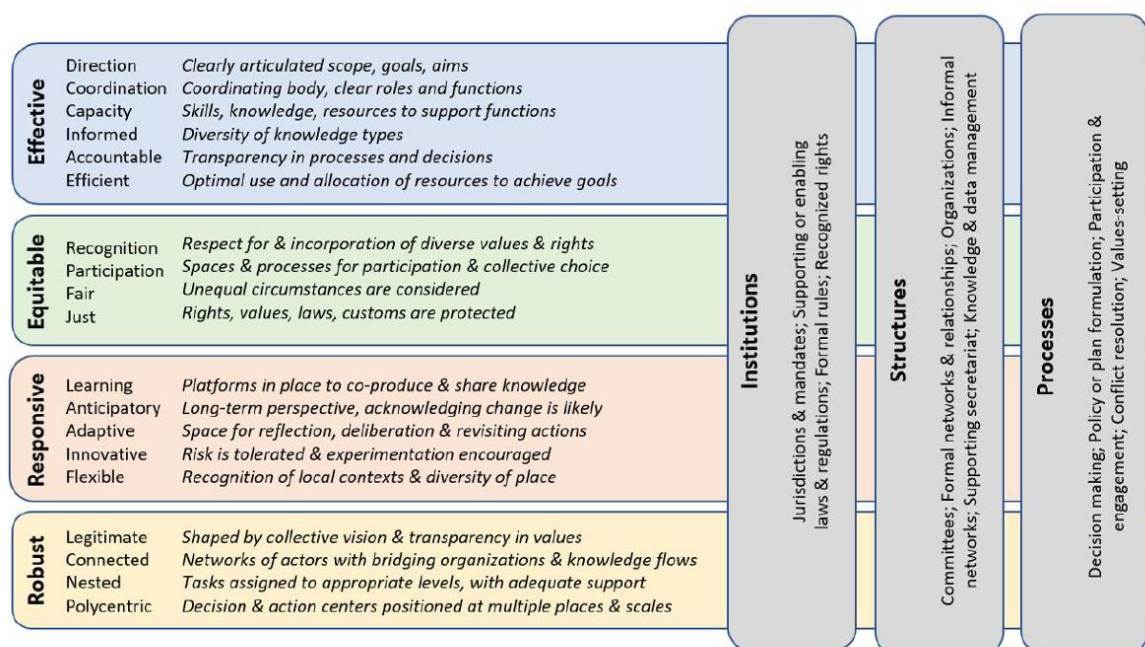


Figure 1. Governance attributes and elements.

Source: Adapted from Bennett and Satterfield 2018²³

Case Study Snapshots

Gitanyow Regional Strategic Assessment Process

Great Sand Hills Regional Environmental Study

Gulf of St. Lawrence Strategic Environmental Assessment

Strategic Environmental Assessment in Baffin Bay and Davis Strait

Kimberly Browse LNG Strategic Environmental Assessment

*From Science to Policy in the Eastern Canadian Arctic:
An Integrated Regional Impact Study (IRIS) of Climate Change and Modernization*



Gitanyow Regional Strategic Assessment Process



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Gulf of St. Lawrence Strategic Environmental Assessment



Strategic Environmental Assessment in Baffin Bay and Davis Strait



Kimberly Browse LNG Strategic Environmental Assessment



An Integrated Regional Impact Study (IRIS) of Climate Change and Modernization



Conceptual Governance Models for SGP RSEA

Functional building-blocks

Steering committee
Secretariat
Communications team
Data & knowledge management team
Indigenous advisory council(s)
Assessment working group(s)
Cumulative effects team
Community engagement team
Other government agencies and organizations
Technical writing team
Independent peer reviewers

Important Questions:

- *What is the group's vision for what you are trying to achieve or influence?*
- *Does the capacity exist to have a Secretariat?*
- *Formulation of the Steering Committee?*
- *Will the Steering Committee assume the responsibility for integrating all the knowledge/science, or is there an independent team to play that role? If there is an independent report writing team, is that Indigenous led, Indigenous advised or completely independent?*
- *How are the local communities integrated directly into the governance model?*
- *RSEA methodology?*
- *Governance model for longer term RSEA follow-up and monitoring?*



**Regional Strategic Environmental Assessment
(RSEA) for the Slave Geological Province:**

Governance Principles and Models

16 February 2023

Bram Noble and Jill Blakley



Breakout Group Discussion



Purpose: Discuss elements of good governance for a SGP regional study to help inform ideal committee membership and study structure

1. What would success look like for committee governance (consider aspects of the governance models presented earlier that could apply)?
2. What would success not look like?
3. What is required from the Committee to ensure the success of the regional study?
4. How do we get there? (Nominations? Other?)



*You'll have about **25 mins** in breakout groups to discuss these four questions*

Reporting back...



1. What would success look like for committee governance (consider aspects of the governance models presented earlier that could apply)?
 - **Diversity & inclusion** (all parties at the table with **clear R&Rs/mandate/equal voice**); Steering Committee – all perspectives, equal representation
 - Establish a decision-making process (consensus?), scope of task/objective – timely manner – will inform governance
 - Shared understandings, mutual respect
 - Indigenous led process with equal decision making
 - **Allow the right voice at the right place at the right time** (those with direct interest, Ind governments) – consider in the model; who sets the stage? Governance is government – governments need to lay out the map (working group); look at MVRMA
 - Right people doing the working (technicians)
 - **Reduce duplication** (in work and in governance); **streamlined and efficient** governance structure that links well with existing structures
2. What would success not look like?
 - Representation for Indigenous Knowledge and privacy (communication, collection, use)
 - Trust and independence
 - Learn from others and benefit from their experiences
 - Process for report writing, good communication (communication experts to disseminate info)
 - Transparency (public registry)
 - Document on the shelf
 - Lack of collaboration (silo, separation of parties)
 - Uneven distribution of voices
 - Complex processes and timelines resulting in no satisfactory outcome
 - Lack of public engagement
 - Lack of engagement with co-management boards

Reporting back...



3. What is required from the Committee to ensure the success of the regional study?
 - Strong leadership (right representatives of the groups at the table), active participation
 - Capturing all views
 - Consider existing context and work in the region
 - Define stakeholders and the components they will participate in
 - Engage all those affected
 - Balance of expertise
4. How do we get there? (Nominations? Other?)
 - Combination of appointment and nomination approach
 - Develop a roadmap, including timelines (in sequence, in parallel, expected milestones)
 - Indigenous governments should nominate own reps – determine how many reps and which groups
 - Government to Government discussion
 - Establish a process to select Committee members (e.g., legal counsel to select members)

Public Participation and Committee Supports



Provides the structure by which the Committee is able to complete the regional study effectively. The roles and responsibilities of each participant and support group can be described in the TOR.

Relevant sections of the MVRMA

144.34 *The federal Minister, if he or she considers it appropriate, may enter into an agreement or arrangement with any person or body that possesses knowledge or expertise that is relevant to the study to participate in the study.*

Examples

- Community members and organizations/people who have information, knowledge or interest in the regional study
- Engagement plans could be developed with advisory groups
- Posted on public registry and updated as needed

Public Participation



- Technical and administrative support
- Communications, record keeping, support for engagement sessions, drafting documents

Secretariat



- Identify, access, analyze, how to use information relevant to the study
- Individuals or organizations from within or outside of governments

Advisory Groups



- Subject matter experts
- Provide information, knowledge and analysis related to key subjects related to the regional study
- Identified either by the federal Minister or by the Committee if/as needed

Experts



Adapted from:

-Draft Agreement to conduct a regional assessment in the Ring of Fire, Appendix B [142280E.pdf \(aac-aeic.gc.ca\)](#)

-Regional Assessment of Offshore Wind Development in Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia Appendix A [145236E.pdf \(aac-aeic.gc.ca\)](#)

46

16-Feb-2023

Slave Geological Province Regional Study Workshop

Strategies to Sustainability

Breakout Group Discussion



1. What are the best ways to involve experts and local knowledge / perspectives into the regional study?
2. What support would be most useful to the Committee?
3. Who is best placed to provide this support?



You'll have about 25 mins in breakout groups to discuss these four questions

48

16-Feb-2023

Slave Geological Province Regional Study Workshop

Strategies to Sustainability

Reporting back...



1. What are the best ways to involve experts and local knowledge / perspectives into the regional study?
 - All those with an interest have opportunities to participate
 - Different levels of participation (working groups e.g., caribou, elders, youth, economic, water quality)
 - Workshops – formal, community level, cultural days (TK), land-based, public meetings; information on concerns and prioritization; expert panels with communities for Q&A
 - Public participation on the RSEA as a whole (less technical)
 - Participant funding for community participation (finding ways to reduce duplication in funding activities)
 - Experts and **local** knowledge – results published publicly, looking at **existing knowledge** (make public) then filling gaps; identify experts in the region (industry, academia, Indigenous etc); technical and Indigenous knowledge holders should be present at same meetings; interpretation and plain language communication (registry); data sharing and privacy
 - Guided by TOR and panel – scope key topic areas to have focused discussion (scenario based)

50

16-Feb-2023

Slave Geological Province Regional Study Workshop

Strategies to Sustainability

Reporting back...



2. What support would be most useful to the Committee?
 - Secretariat (need public registry, meetings, agendas etc)
 - Plain language communication support (e.g., videos are the work, summaries etc)
 - Create an event list and share information to FNs to support Committee selection and operation (GNWT/GoC)
 - Guidelines of operation in TOR and check ins to ensure compliance
3. Who is best placed to provide this support?
 - Review Board has existing infrastructure and staff capability to support
 - Federal/Territorial government
 - Industry role
 - Other organizations that hold knowledge

51

16-Feb-2023

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Strategies to Sustainability