

Mackenzie Valley
Review Board



MACKENZIE VALLEY ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REVIEW BOARD STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-27



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Environmental Impact Review Board
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Chair's Message



I am pleased to present the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board's (Review Board) Strategic Plan for 2023-2027. This Plan outlines the mission, vision, and values that guide our organization in our work. It also describes the goals and objectives that the Review Board will prioritize and operationalize over the next five years while conducting environmental impact assessment within the Mackenzie Valley.

The Review Board's enabling legislation, the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act*, stems from modern treaties. It supports the principles of reconciliation and provides greater opportunities for people of the Mackenzie Valley to participate in resource decision making. The Review Board is committed to advancing reconciliation throughout the Mackenzie Valley and Canada, within its mandate as described in the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act*. This commitment is reflected in the mission, vision, and values described in this Plan.

It is also reflected in the Plan's specific goals and objectives designed to support and facilitate Indigenous Governments' and communities' participation in the Board's processes, and to make decisions that benefit the residents of the Mackenzie Valley and all Canadians.

The Review Board will also advance reconciliation within our organization. We work to provide an inclusive and supportive workplace for all Indigenous employees, including through recruitment, representation, and career development at all levels of the organization.

The Plan was developed jointly by Board members and staff. Through a series of workshops, we assessed progress we made on the 2018-2022 Strategic Plan and then identified areas to focus on over the next five years. The Review Board will review and report on the Plan annually, using an online public dashboard which will be posted on our website at www.reviewboard.ca. We will review and prioritize actions mandated by the Plan to adapt to changes as the need arises, and in response to internal and external changes or opportunities.

The Review Board is looking forward to our work over the next five years, including the coming into force of development certificate provisions and other legislative amendments which will strengthen the Review Board's ability to meet its mandate.

Overall, this Strategic Plan was developed to help the Review Board to better achieve our goals and responsibilities through fair, timely, and effective environmental impact assessment. We will continue to work with our partners in the integrated land and resource co-management system to improve the way land and resources are managed in the Mackenzie Valley today and in the future.

Sincerely,
JoAnne Deneron
Chair

Board Governance

As a result of the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement and the Sahtu Dene and Metis Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement, the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act* (the Act) came into force on December 22, 1998. The Act establishes the Review Board as the main agency of environmental assessment and review in the Mackenzie Valley.

The Review Board's purpose is to conduct environmental assessments, which are public processes, by thoroughly studying proposed development applications to determine if they are likely to cause significant adverse impacts on the environment or public concern.

The Review Board is a co-management body whose members are appointed by the federal, territorial, Gwich'in, Sahtu and Tłıchq Governments. The Review Board's office is in Yellowknife and its jurisdiction applies to all lands in the Northwest Territories, except the Inuvialuit Settlement Region and Wood Buffalo National Park.

As of April 1, 2023, the members of the Board include:

- JoAnne Deneron (Chair)
- David Krutko (Gwich'in Nominee)
- Yvonne Nakimayak (Sahtu Nominee)
- Vacant (Tłıchq Nominee)
- Brenda Gauthier (Dehcho Nominee)
- Jim Edmundson (Federal Nominee)
- Sunny Munroe (Federal Nominee)
- Kate Hearn (Territorial Nominee)
- Harvey Pierrot (Territorial Nominee)

Plan Timeline

This Plan is in effect from the start of fiscal year 2023 to the end of fiscal year 2027.



Mission

We conduct fair, effective, timely, and evidence-based environmental impact assessment processes that consider:

- a) the protection of the environment from the significant adverse impacts of proposed developments;
- b) the protection of the social, cultural, and economic well-being of residents and communities in the Mackenzie Valley; and
- c) the importance of conservation to the well-being and way of life of the Aboriginal peoples of the Mackenzie Valley.

Vision

Making wise environmental impact assessment decisions that balance the diverse values, interests, and knowledge of all residents of the Mackenzie Valley, while ensuring the protection of the environment for present and future generations.

Values

The following values guide the Review Board's decisions as we work toward realizing our mission, vision, and goals.

COMMITTED – We are committed to our obligation and duty to ensure our decisions are balanced and respect the interests and knowledge of all communities in the Mackenzie Valley.

FAIR - Our processes are transparent to ensure fair, accessible, and accountable decisions and operations.

BALANCED – We consider both Indigenous Traditional Knowledge and scientific knowledge.

DIVERSE - We acknowledge and benefit from the diversity, unique backgrounds, knowledge, and perspectives of our Board and staff as well as the parties who participate in our processes.

INCLUSIVE - We are inclusive and open, seeking out all relevant perspectives and consulting and collaborating with each other and our parties.

TRUST AND RESPECT - We strive to create an environment based on mutual respect, trust, and honesty that enables effective and efficient teamwork and consensus decision making.

CONTINUOUS LEARNING – We value continuous learning and improvement, fostering an environment of innovation and adaptation.



Current operating environment

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to many challenges and opportunities for workplaces and organizations across the world. The shift towards online work and activities has allowed us to communicate internally and with the public in new and exciting ways, but it has also led to a re-evaluation of what good communication means. The key areas of progress, challenges, changes, and opportunities below are the Review Board's view on the issues that are unique to the Review Board and were most informative in developing our Strategic Plan.

Progress	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EA processes are more rigorous, disciplined and focused on using a systemic, holistic approach to understanding and assessing impacts. We are getting better at writing clear Reasons for Decision that show people how their voices were considered by the Board. There is secure and stable participant funding for environmental assessments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing public awareness of the Board's identity, role, and responsibilities and promoting participation in environmental assessment. Keeping up with rapid pace of change with respect to things like climate change, technology, evolving case law, and a shifting investment climate. Absence of participant funding for pre-EA phases means that parties may not be able to fully participate in environmental assessments.
Changes	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes to the way Indigenous governments and communities participate in our processes with increasing shift towards self-government and self-determination. Consideration of cumulative effects and impacts on social, cultural and economic well-being and impacts on caribou are ongoing and increasingly important challenges. The Canadian Critical Mineral Strategy might result in changes to the types of developments we assess and the ways we assess them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Regional Strategic Environmental Assessment could provide more and better information for future environmental assessments. The coming into force of development certificates would improve our ability to track the implementation and effectiveness of measures. Building and strengthening our strategic partnerships and relationships with communities, governments, and industry.



Goals

GOAL 1 – EIA Processes

Conduct timely, effective, and evidence-based Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) processes.

- 1.1 EIA decisions are based on credible and relevant evidence and communicated in accessible and appropriate ways.
- 1.2 Evidence is gathered in a consultative way that is inclusive, culturally appropriate, and procedurally fair.
- 1.3 Indigenous Traditional Knowledge (ITK) is valued, considered, and incorporated into project planning and Board processes and decisions.
- 1.4 Demonstrate efficiency by making wise EIA decisions within legislated timelines.
- 1.5 EIA measures are implemented and effective.

GOAL 2 – Participation

Enable and encourage inclusive and effective participation in EIA and the Mackenzie Valley co-management system.

- 2.1 All parties, including Elders, youth, and other community members, feel they can participate effectively in EIA processes and see their voices reflected in decisions.
- 2.2 ITK holders are encouraged in respectful and culturally appropriate ways to participate in EIA processes.
- 2.3 Through public participation and active communication, adapt and improve EIA processes, policies and practices.
- 2.4 The Board builds and maintains respectful and meaningful relationships with communities, governments, and industry.
- 2.5 Improved public understanding of the co-management system and EIA processes.



GOAL 3 – Leadership

Provide leadership to improve integration and coordination within the resource co-management system and adjacent jurisdictions:

- 3.1 Develop and maintain strong partnerships and relationships.
- 3.2 Working with co-management and other partners to clarify and strengthen our roles and responsibilities.
- 3.3 Demonstrate leadership and excellence by supporting and leading collaborative initiatives and forums to improve EIA and integration in the resource co-management system.

GOAL 4 – Organizational performance

Be an efficient, innovative, adaptive, and values-based Board that:

- 4.1 Is knowledgeable, informed and rooted in clearly articulated values.
- 4.2 Benefits from a diversity of people and worldviews.
- 4.3 Maintains an up-to-date, comprehensive framework of relevant policies, guidelines, and practices.
- 4.4 Improves accessibility of all Board information including policies, guidelines, and practices.
- 4.5 Uses modern, user-friendly tools to manage, collect and share information.



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