

Marine and Terrestrial Environmental Working Group (MEWG) Meeting

Meeting ID: MT-2003025
Group / Organization: MEWG/TEWG Members and Observers, Baffinland and Consultants
Meeting Location: Conference Call
Meeting Chair: Cortney Oliver

Organization Name	Participants
Member Organization	
Mittimatalik Hunters and Trappers Organization (MHTO)	Charlie Inurak (CI)
Igloodik Hunter and trappers Organization (IHTO)	None
Sanairaijak Hunters and Trappers Organization (HBHTO)	Laimike Ullapak (LU)
Nangmoutaq Hunters and Trappers Organisation (NHTO)	None
Ikajutit Hunters and Trappers Association (IHTA)	None
Baffinland Iron Mines Corporation (Baffinland)	Cortney Oliver (CO), Janet Merkosak (JM) Translator Jesse Manufor (JM), Todd Swenson (TS) Christine Kowbel (CK) Lawyer
Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC)	Jessica Kassar (JK) Paul Smith (PS) Jordan Hollman (JH)
Qikiqtani Inuit Association (QIA) and Consultants	Connor Goddard (CG) Lorraine Land (LL)
Government of Nunavut (GN)	Natalie D'Souza (ND) Jennifer Williams (JW)
Parks Canada (PC)	Scot Burley (SC), Marie-Claude Martel(MCM)
Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO)	Nicholas Wasilik (NW), Jose Audet-Lecoutte (JAL)
Natural Resources Canada (NRCan)	Clarrise Fiset (CF)
Baffinland Consultants	
WSP Golder	None
Observer Organization	
CIRNAC	Absent
World Wildlife Fund (WWF)	Sam Davin (SD),
Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB)	Absent

Organization Name	Participants
Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency (CANNOR)	Absent
Oceans North (ON)	Kristin Westdal (KW) Alex Ootoowark (AO)
Transport Canada (TC)	Adam Downing (AD)
Makivvik	Absent
Others	Colin Kovachik

AGENDA

Item	Time	Activity
1	11:30 – 11:40	Welcome and Roll Call
2	11:40-1:40	Terms of Reference (ToR) a) Overview of TOR b) Confirming Members for 2025 c) Selecting Independent Chair – Process for nominations
3	1:40-1:45	Wrap-up and Next Steps
4	4:30 – 4:45	Update on Terms of Reference (TOR)

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS

ID	Action	Responsible	Status
MT-200325-01	Provide Terms of Reference (ToR) Flowcharts in Inuktitut to HTA members	BIM	Completed. Will provide this on completion.
MT-200325-02	To answer any questions HTA members may have on the translated flowcharts	BIM	When received
MT-200325	To circulate in an email the request for members to submit independent Chair nominations within 60 days.	BIM	Completed. Sent on Mar 20 th .

MEETING MINUTES

CO (BIM) informed members that an AI tool would be piloted, and the meeting would be recorded.

CI (MHTO) requested clarification regarding the meeting, including the definition of membership, as he had just returned from Mary River after participating in the caribou survey with the GN. CO (BIM) welcomed him and Laimike and then handed the meeting over to Christine for an overview of the Terms of Reference (TOR).

Terms of Reference (TOR) Overview – Christine Kowbel

CK (BIM) explained that a meeting was held last spring to discuss and review changes to the TOR. The focus of this meeting would be on the recommendation process, following Figure D7 – MEWG Recommendation Process. Feedback from group members was considered, and a key inclusion was ensuring that recommendations include a justification.

The process begins when a member drafts a recommendation in writing and submits it to the Chair. HTOs may submit recommendations orally, and the Chair will assist in recording them. These recommendations can pertain to mitigation or monitoring. Once received, the Chair circulates the recommendation to all members, who have 30 days to provide comments and input.

Following circulation, BIM has the opportunity to request that a recommendation not proceed if it could impact company operations. The Chair determines whether the recommendation should be considered or revised. If revision is needed, the process restarts. Most recommendations are expected to be reasonable and will proceed accordingly. BIM must respond within 60 days, outlining whether the recommendation is implementable and providing reasons for support or opposition. If BIM supports the recommendation, it becomes a working group recommendation, and BIM will submit a timeline for implementation, reporting to the NIRB.

Once a recommendation becomes a working group recommendation, it is enforceable, meaning BIM must implement it and cannot revoke its commitment. If BIM does not support the recommendation, the Chair will initiate a vote.

CO (BIM) informed HTOs that the flowcharts would be translated into Inuktitut and shared. CI (MHTO) asked how he could seek clarification once the translation was available. CO (BIM) responded that inquiries could be sent via email in either English or Inuktitut.

CK (BIM) stated that a vote would determine whether a recommendation becomes enforceable. If at least 80% of members support it, including BIM, it becomes enforceable since BIM is responsible for implementation. If the originator of a recommendation disagrees with the outcome, they may consult the Chair, who has tools for resolving disputes, including voting and seeking guidance from the NIRB.

CI (MHTO) asked whether changes to recommendations should be directed to the Chair. CK (BIM) confirmed this and added that all recommendations, whether accepted or rejected, would be included in the NIRB annual report.

Questions

CI (MHTO) asked about the timeline for TOR review. CO (BIM) responded that it would be reviewed after two years.

MCM (PC) inquired whether BIM follows the same recommendation process when proposing changes. CK (BIM) asked for clarification, stating that the group's primary function is to review BIM's monitoring results and plans. MCM (PC) then asked whether BIM must submit a recommendation if it seeks to change approved monitoring plans. CK (BIM) explained that the process is not designed for BIM to make recommendations in that way; instead, if concerns arise about monitoring outcomes, members can submit recommendations. The NIRB, not the working group, is responsible for approving plans.

ND (GN) noted that the recommendation process allows BIM to veto recommendations and questioned how time-sensitive recommendations would be handled given the lengthy process. CK (BIM) clarified that the process is based on evidence, discussion, and voting. BIM must be part of the 80% approval because they are responsible for implementation. She disagreed with the term "veto," stating that BIM cannot implement unfeasible recommendations. ND (GN) maintained that BIM has a decisive influence on recommendations within the working group.

ND (GN) also expressed concern about urgent recommendations, referencing section 11.3 of the TOR, which states that BIM and the Chair will update the working group but does not specify how urgent matters are addressed. CK (BIM) responded that the Chair has discretion in urgent cases. Furthermore, entities outside the working group, such as the GN, have regulatory authority and can act independently if needed. ND (GN) acknowledged the response but remained concerned about clarity in urgent situations.

CO (BIM) noted that CI (MHTO) had left the meeting and asked Laimike if he would continue in English, which he agreed to.

ND (GN) reiterated that any discrepancy between the ToR and regulatory obligations under project certificates or legislation, would trump the ToR. CK (BIM) stated that the working group is advisory, not regulatory, and that urgent matters should be addressed through existing government powers rather than the working group.

CO (BIM) emphasized that the ToR is set for two years and encouraged members to participate in the process before making changes. She stressed that the ToR is not rigid and can be revised based on experience.

SD (WWF) commented that WWF, as an observer, shares concerns with the GN about BIM's influence over recommendations and the lengthy process, which could defer actions to other venues. CK (BIM) responded that the working group is one tool, but issues can also be raised with the NIRB.

Confirming Members for 2025 and Nominations for Independent Chair

CO (BIM) outlined membership and participant limits based on section 4.5 of the ToR. Each organization must designate representatives for 2025, with a maximum of two participants per organization (except for QIA, which can designate up to four). These representatives will serve as primary contacts between their organizations and the Chair. Special technical experts can participate as needed.

JW (GN) inquired what the delegates need for them to be designated from their organizations. CO (BIM) clarified that technical experts with decision-making authority should be designated.

CO (BIM) initiated the selection process for an independent Chair, noting that the qualifications are outlined in the appendix. Each organization may submit up to two nominations with written justifications. BIM will review nominations, prepare a shortlist, and conduct a meeting to discuss candidates. Informal interviews or virtual meetings may be arranged before a final vote.

CG (QIA) asked about the nomination timeline. CO (BIM) suggested 60 days but sought input from the group. CG (QIA) proposed finalizing nominations within two months, aiming for completion by the end of the calendar year. CO (BIM) agreed and confirmed a formal request for nominations would be circulated.

LU (HBHTA) asked whether an HTA director or Chair could be nominated. CO (BIM) responded that nominees must be independent of the working group and meet the listed qualifications.

PS (ECCC) asked about the Chair's time commitment. CO (BIM) offered to provide details later but noted that BIM could handle administrative and logistical support. Jordan Hollman (ECCC) stated that 60 days seemed reasonable for internal discussions.

MCM (PC) asked whether ECCC, DFO, and PC share a single nomination vote as part of the Government of Canada (GoC). CK (BIM) clarified that while GoC has one vote, other GoC organizations like PC can submit two nominations each.

CO (BIM) acknowledged a chat comment from Alex Ootoowark about selecting a Chair from Nunavut and encouraged him to include such considerations in their nomination rationales. She reiterated that the 60-day timeline was flexible based on members' needs.

The meeting concluded with CO (BIM) reminding members that the minutes would be circulated, and any comments should be submitted promptly. She emphasized the two-year review cycle and the opportunity for future revisions.

End of Meeting