



Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board Strategic Plan 2011-12 to 2013-14

Working together to make wise decisions

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Message from the Chairperson



The Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board (Review Board) is proud to present its strategic plan for 2011-12 to 2013-14. This plan is the result of the combined efforts of the Review Board members and staff and its development is based on the collective experience of the past eleven years of operation.

The strategic plan clarifies the Review Board's mission ***"To conduct fair and timely environmental impact assessments in the Mackenzie Valley that protect the environment, including the social, economic, and cultural well being of its residents."***

The Review Board's operating environment is constantly changing. Our workload is forecast to increase over the next three years. At the same time, industry, government and other stakeholders are seeking greater process certainty and timeliness for environmental impact assessments (EIAs).

However, to meet these challenges in a fair and timely way; the "right capacity must be in the right places". Adequate capacity continues to be a barrier to success, not only for the Review Board, but other key participants in the EIA process as well, including government departments, Aboriginal organizations and individuals. At the same time the Review Board needs to collaborate better with other Mackenzie Valley resource management boards to ensure that available operational efficiencies and synergies are realized and that the integrated resource management system contemplated by the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act* is achieved.

It takes strong commitment and team work to produce timely and quality EIAs. This is difficult when parts of the EIA process are controlled by others. All participants need to be focussed on their effective and timely contribution to the EIA process. This strategic plan lets it be known that, for its part, the Review Board is up to the challenge.

The Review Board also believes that an EIA need not be an adversarial process. Prospective developers, potentially impacted stakeholders and residents of the Mackenzie Valley can all benefit through a timely and quality assessment process.

This is reflected in the Review Board's vision which now states: ***"Working together, balancing diverse values and making wise decisions that protect the environment for present and future generations."***

The vision complements the Review Board's mission and values. The vision highlights the importance of "working together", "balancing diverse values", the Review Board's purpose to have regard for the protection of the Mackenzie Valley environment, and the notion of sustainability through the words "for present and future generations" as key success factors for the organization.

The values adopted by the Review Board remain unchanged to reinforce the importance of teamwork, learning, innovation and adaptation as we grow and mature as an organization. These values guide Review Board members and staff in carrying out the Review Board's work.

The Review Board has approved four goals and related strategies to be the focus of the organization for the next three year period. The goals are:

1. A timely environmental assessment process
2. Effective and efficient board operations
3. Public and stakeholder needs are met
4. An effective role within an integrated resource management system

These goals and strategies are listed in order of priority and flow from the mission, vision and values and together represent the strategic plan for the Review Board.

Over the course of the next three years, the Review Board hopes EIA participants in the Mackenzie Valley will share the Review Board's vision and values and together we will all strive "to make wise decisions that protect the environment for present and future generations."

Richard Edjericon,
Chairperson

Message from the Executive Director

The attached strategic plan builds on the Review Board's previous strategic plan which guided our work over the 2008-09 to 2010-11 period. Much has been accomplished to achieve the goals set out in that plan in addition to what is the priority business of the Review Board; being to conduct fair and timely environmental impact assessments. It is now time to reflect on the past three years and take stock once again so that the Review Board can ensure its resources are aligned in the most strategic manner to address the most pressing needs for the next three years.



The 2011-12 to 2013-14 strategic plan has been the result of a comprehensive planning process. The Review Board has been diligent in seeking out those areas in which improvements and priority attention is required. It has undertaken a thorough assessment of its internal and external operating environment. During the planning process, the Review Board received input from representatives of Aboriginal governments and organizations, the federal and territorial governments, municipalities, industry, environmental non-government organizations (NGOs) as well as from consultants and Review Board staff. Review Board members deliberated on the advice and comments provided as well as their own thoughts about what the needs and priorities of the Review Board were for the next three year period.

The Review Board has also reflected on its mission, vision and values based on the experience it has gained over the past three years. A significant result of this strategic planning process is improved statements of the Review Board's mission and vision that guide the development of strategic goals.

The next three year period will be an exciting period for the Review Board. We are confident that this strategic plan will ensure the Review Board is as fit as possible to face the future and can continue to improve and provide timely environmental impact assessment of proposed developments that have been referred to it.

Vern Christensen
Executive Director

Executive summary

The Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board has developed a strategic plan for 2011-12 to 2013-14 that reflects the Review Board's understanding of the challenges and opportunities it faces in the coming years, including the complexity and length of environmental assessments; the need for adequate and stable funding; stakeholder awareness and capacity issues; unsettled land claims; the need for increased collaboration with the other co-management boards and regulatory agencies as well as consistency and transparency in processes and decisions. Related to this latter challenge is the need for transparent monitoring, reporting, evaluation and enforcement of measures and commitments arising from reports of environmental assessment.

The strategic plan consists of a mission, vision, goals, and strategies and a statement of values. The plan also identifies performance measures the Review Board will apply to review its performance in these areas over the next three fiscal years.



Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board members – all appointed by the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development Canada; nominating organizations shown in brackets:

Front row from the left: Percy Hardisty (Dehcho First Nations), James Wah-Shee (Tlicho Government), Rachel Crapeau (Government of the Northwest Territories), Danny Bayha (Sahtu Secretariat Incorporate).

Back row from the left: Chairperson Richard Edjericon (Review Board), Richard Mercredi (Government of the Northwest Territories), Darryl Bohnet (Government of Canada), Peter Bannon (Government of Canada), Fred Koe (Gwich'in Tribal Council).

Section 1. Introduction

The Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board has developed this strategic plan for 2011-12 to 2013-14 through a series of workshops with Review Board members and staff. The plan reflects the Review Board's understanding of the challenges and opportunities the organization faces in the coming years. The plan demonstrates the Review Board's commitment to meeting the challenges and embracing the opportunities for the benefit of all stakeholders.

Many individuals contributed to the development of this strategic plan by taking part in interviews and focus groups designed to gather information on the Review Board's successes and strengths, areas for improvement, challenges and opportunities, and on the components of the Review Board's previous strategic plan. In addition to Review Board members and staff, numerous representatives from the federal and territorial governments, Aboriginal organizations, municipalities, environmental non-government organizations, and industry associations provided the Review Board with valuable feedback.

The Review Board's strategic plan consists of the following components:

Section 2 – The operating context – A description of the key challenges and opportunities the Review Board seeks to address through its strategic plan.

Section 3 – The Strategic Plan – A visual overview of the strategic plan and a description of the Review Board's mission, vision, and values.

Section 4 – Goals and strategies – A detailed description of the strategies the Review Board has planned for the coming fiscal years in order to achieve its goals.

Section 5 – Performance measures – The Review Board has identified performance measures associated with each strategy, to be used in measuring progress.

The Review Board's annual business plan provides more detailed information on the specific tasks planned by the Review Board in support of the strategies outlined in this strategic plan. Budget information is also presented in the business plan.

The Review Board's reports on its progress in achieving the Strategic Plan at the end of each fiscal year in its Annual Report.

Section 2. The operating context

While developing its strategic plan, the Review Board conducted an environmental scan to gather information on its operating context, its strengths and weaknesses, and the challenges and opportunities the Review Board faces over the next three years. The Review Board gathered information for the scan through a series of interviews with Review Board members, senior staff, and external stakeholders, and through a focus group with all Review Board staff.

During a strategic planning workshop, the Review Board and its staff reviewed the results of the environmental scan. During the workshop, the Review Board focused on the key challenges and opportunities identified and used these to develop its goals and strategies for the next three years. The key challenges and opportunities are summarized here to provide a context for the strategic plan. A more detailed elaboration of these key challenges and opportunities is provided in Appendix 'A'.

Key challenges

- Complexity and length of environmental assessments
- Lack of consistency and transparency in processes and decisions
- Lack of adequate and stable operating funds
- Inadequate technical and administrative support
- The need for increased collaboration with other regulatory agencies
- Terms and appointment of Review Board members
- Outstanding land claim self government agreements creating ambiguity
- Lack of participant funding
- Lack of information about process for proponents

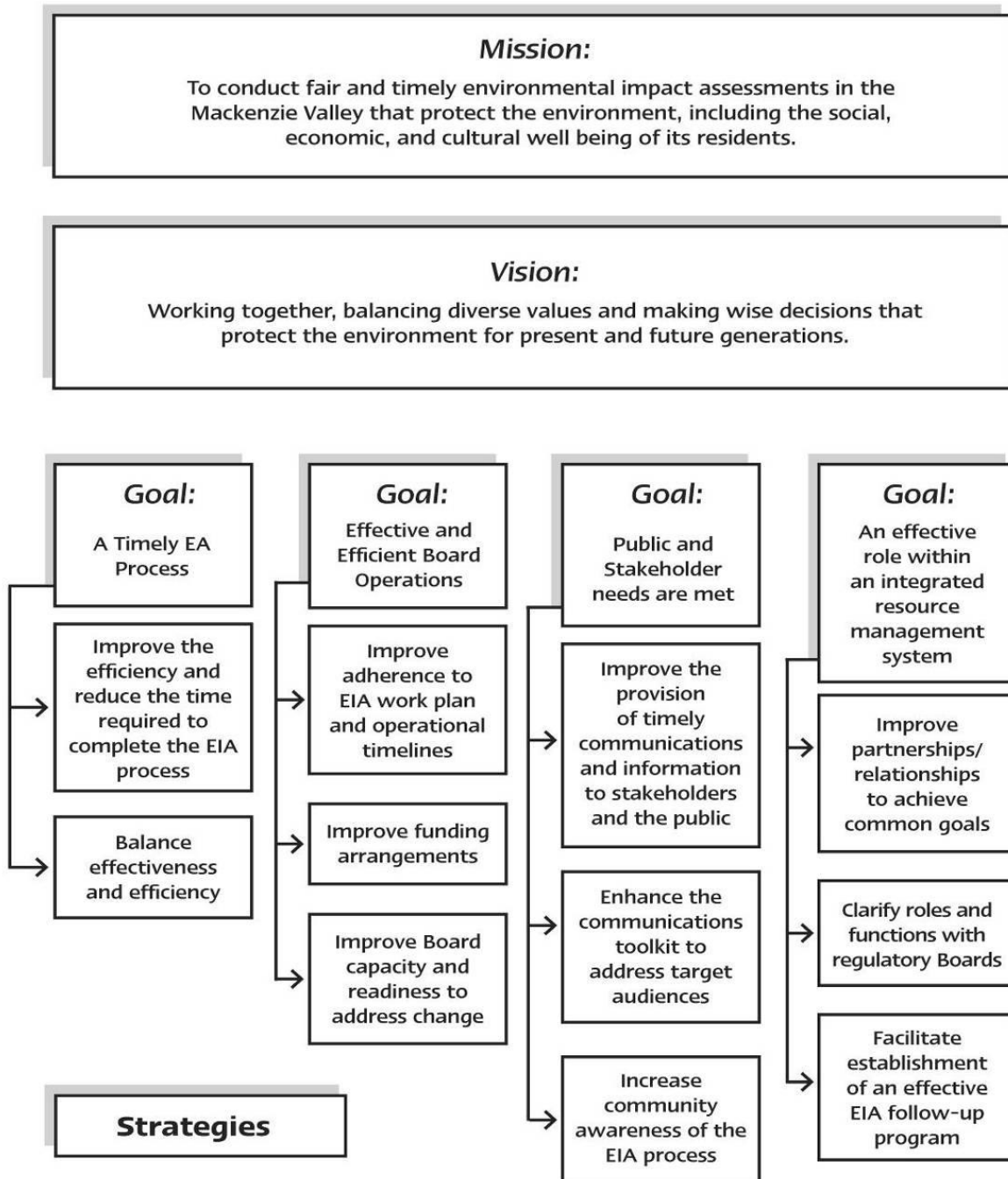
Opportunities

- INAC's Northern Regulatory Improvement Action Plan (e.g. *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act improvements, investments in cumulative effects monitoring*)
- Working with others to improve collaboration in the regulatory system
- Devolution of authority for land and water resources to the Government of the NWT
- Learning from others (e.g. best practices)

Section 3. The Strategic Plan

The Review Board's strategic plan consists of a mission, vision, values, goals and objectives, all of which are described in this section. The strategic plan components are captured in the diagram below and described in detail in the subsequent sections.

Figure 1: The Review Board's 2011-12 to 2013-14 Strategic Plan



Mission, vision and values

The Review Board's mission is:

To conduct fair and timely environmental impact assessments in the Mackenzie Valley that protect the environment, including the social, economic, and cultural well being of its residents.

The Review Board's vision is:

Working together, balancing diverse values and making wise decisions that protect the environment for present and future generations.

The Review Board has also reaffirmed the following values in conducting its business:

The Review Board values:

- Relationships based on mutual respect, trust, and honesty
- Acting with integrity, objectivity, and fairness
- Accountability, quality, and efficiency in our work
- Consensus decision-making and team work
- Transparency, accessibility, and openness in our processes
- The diversity of the Mackenzie Valley
- Learning as an organization
- Continual improvement through innovation and adaptation



L-R: Fred Koe, James Wah-Shee, Danny Bayha and Martin Haefele

Section 4. Goals and strategies

The Review Board established its goals and strategies for the coming three fiscal years in response to the key challenges and opportunities identified through the planning process (see Section 2). Each of the three goals and associated strategies are presented here with a brief explanation.

Goals – *The top 3 or 4 things (major issues or groups of issues) that must be addressed to make the vision a reality – over the next 5-10 year period.*

Strategies – *Specific measurable time bound strategies to achieve a goal over the next 3 three year period. Strategies should be limited to four or less per goal.*

Goal 1 – A timely environmental assessment process

The mission of the Review Board is to produce fair and timely environmental impact assessments of proposed developments; hence the focus on “a timely environmental assessment process”.

The strategic planning process identified a number of areas where the Review Board might address being timely throughout the environmental assessment process and the planning process confirmed that many stakeholders expect the Review Board to continue to improve environmental assessment processes in the Mackenzie Valley.

The Review Board identified two strategies to support the goal of a timely environmental assessment process:

Strategy A. *Improve the efficiency and reduce the time required to complete the EIA process*– Communities and other organizations continue to raise concerns with respect to the length of the EIA process. The Review Board aims to minimize this issue by identifying the bottlenecks in the process through the use of an external consultant. The Review Board anticipates that the consultants work will bring to light delays in the process with some possible solutions identified.

Strategy B. *Balance effectiveness and efficiency* – The Review Board identified a number of priority resources to assist participants in the environmental impact assessment (EIA) process. These included the continuing need for regular “lessons learned” reviews of environmental assessments, the need for cultural impact assessment guidelines, the updating of current EIA guideline documents as well as supplementary reference bulletins to assist EIA practitioners and stakeholders generally. Through this strategic plan, the Review Board reaffirms its commitment to identifying and promoting best practices in EIA, to ensuring the quality of the Review Board’s reports and recommendations, and to establishing appropriate and responsive processes and procedures.

Goal 2 – Effective and efficient board operations

The information gathered during the strategic planning process clearly indicated that Review Board members and staff have a demanding workload and that the Review Board can expect a continued increase in its workload over the next three years. These challenges require a continued emphasis on striving for effective and efficient Review Board operations.

The Review Board identified three strategies to support the promotion of effective and efficient Review Board operations:

Strategy A. Improve adherence to EIA work plan and operational timelines –

The strategic planning process identified common reasons for delays in the EIA process. The Review Board intends to continue to perform its due diligence to ensure that EIA work plans are followed and that delays in the process are minimized to the best of the Review Board's ability.

Strategy B. Improve funding arrangements – Having a reliable, long-term funding base is a key success factor for the Review Board. Current funding arrangements are based on 10 year “flat line” funding agreements between the federal government and land claimant organizations. They are not responsive to provide annual variations in work volume or to strategic and annual business planning approaches to assessing annual funding needs and priorities. Current funding levels are insufficient to deliver the full legislated mandate of the Review Board.

Strategy C. Improve Review Board capacity and readiness to address change –

Existing Review Board member and staff capacity must be maintained to ensure continuing quality and timeliness of the EIA processes. Similarly, new Review Board and staff members require professional development and training to acquire knowledge and skills specific to the Review Board's needs. Review Board member and staff competence is a key building block to the Review Board's success.

Goal 3 – Public and stakeholder needs are met

The information gathered during the strategic planning process reinforced the need to ensure that stakeholder needs for effective and timely participation in the EIA process are addressed.

The Review Board identified three strategies to support the third goal:

Strategy A. Improve the provision of timely communications and information to stakeholders and the public –

Communities, organizations, and stakeholders continue to raise concerns with respect to their capacity to participate in the EIA process. The strategic planning process has identified that as a result some people and organizations potentially impacted by a proposed development are unable to participate in the EIA process in a timely and effective manner. The required capacity may involve a lack of education and awareness of EIA process,

the lack of financial and human resource capacity and the lack supporting institutional capacity.

Strategy B. *Enhance the communications toolkit to address target audiences* –

Having a variety of communication tools available that are user-friendly and accessible will improve stakeholders' understanding of the Review Board's processes and mandate. Through the strategic plan, the Review Board reaffirms its commitment to timely communications to support timely environmental assessments.

Strategy C. *Increase community awareness of the EIA process* – A major priority for the Review Board over the next three years is to raise the communication awareness of the Review Board's roles and responsibilities as well as its EIA processes with Mackenzie Valley residents, aboriginal and other organizations, as well as government and industry. The Review Board identified enhanced plain language communication in the five main aboriginal languages of the Mackenzie Valley as well as in French and English as priority requirements under this strategy. The Review Board has identified more effective communications with stakeholders as an area requiring priority attention.

Goal 4 – An effective role within an integrated resource management system

The Review Board's vision has focused the organization on not just building the internal organization and doing timely environmental impact assessment but also on its role and responsibility to make the overall Mackenzie Valley resource management system work more effectively and efficiently.

The Review Board is a creation of *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act* whose purpose is "...to provide for an integrated system of land and water management in the Mackenzie Valley..."

The information gathered during the strategic planning process clearly indicated that the Review Board must play an instrumental role in the integrated resource management system.

The Review Board identified three strategies to support achieving the fourth goal:

Strategy A. *Improve partnerships and relationships to achieve common goals* –

The need for improving healthy relations with government agencies, communities and other stakeholders was identified through the strategic planning process. The NWT Board Forum was viewed as a useful networking and information sharing vehicle to assist with Review Board initiatives.

Strategy B. *Clarify roles and functions with regulatory boards* – The strategic planning process identified the urgent need to review and clarify the roles and functions of regulatory authorities in the EIA process. The Review Board is responsible to provide guidance to preliminary screeners and other process participants. Current process guidance documents require major review and updating to incorporate lessons learned and best practices, clarification of mandate issues and improvements to process maps and templates.

Strategy C. *Facilitate establishment of an effective EIA follow-up program* –

The management of any program or service is not possible without monitoring and evaluating the results of the program or service being delivered. At present, the Review Board is unable to find out if or how, measures recommended in its Reports of environmental assessment are being implemented or how effective they may have been. This has been a continuing concern of the Review Board and limits the ability of the Review Board to improve the quality of its measures for future developments. Participants need to be assured that their respective investment in the EIA process for a proposed development has produced the results promised by the legislation. The credibility of the EIA and regulatory system under the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act* is at risk unless the Review Board addresses this key barrier to success.



The Staff – Getting the Job Done! Front row from the left: Therese Charlo, Nicole Spencer, Linda Piwowar, Martin Haefele, Chuck Hubert. Back row from the left: Paul Mercredi, Vern Christensen, Travis Schindel, Renita Jenkins, Alan Ehrlich. Missing: Wendy Ondrack

Tasks

The Review Board has identified several tasks it will be implementing in the coming three years in support of its goals and strategies. These tasks relate to the challenges, the strategic plan is intended to address and are the subject to performance measures. The tasks, along with more detailed information on the resources required for their implementation, become the substance of the Review Board's annual business plans over the next three year period.

Section 5. Performance measures

The Review Board has identified desired outcomes and performance measures associated with each strategy outlined in this section. The outcomes relate to the key challenges and opportunities identified through the strategic planning process. Each performance measure is quantifiable so that a clear understanding of the results can be achieved.

The following table shows the performance measures developed by the Review Board, listed by strategy:

Table 1: Performance Measures for 2011-12 to 2013-14

Goals and strategies	Outcomes	Performance measures
1. A timely environmental assessment process		
1A-Improve the efficiency and reduce the time required to complete the EIA process	Review Board will have a better balance between efficiency, quality, and thoroughness in the EIA process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report provided from the outcome of the EIA external review • Top priorities from the external review implemented
1B-Balance effectiveness and efficiency	The process will become more timely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders involvement becomes more focused • Work plans are consistent and adhered to
2. Effective and efficient Review Board operations		
2A-Improve adherence to EIA work plan and operational timelines	Work plans will become more realistic and provide certainty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timelines are shorter • Work plans are adhered to
2B-Improve funding arrangements	Base funding in line with the Review Board's mandate and responsive to periodic strategic plans and annual business plan submissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised funding arrangement in place • The Review is adequately funded to address its legislated mandate

Goals and strategies	Outcomes	Performance measures
2C-Improve Review Board capacity and readiness to address change	Review Board members and staff that are knowledgeable and current in their understanding of EIA best practice and the appropriate conduct of an administrative tribunal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive annual audit • IT requirements remain current • Retention of sufficient and competent staff • Board member terms are renewed or filled with newly, appointed competent Board members
3. Public and stakeholder needs are met		
3A-Improve the provision of timely communications and information to stakeholders and the public	Services will be shared quickly and translated in all required languages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback provided and interpreted
3B-Enhance the communications toolkit to address target audiences	Audiences have a variety of tools to choose from to access information and participate in the process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders have the opinion that the communication tools the Review Board offers are appropriate and relevant • Supplementary guidelines and reference bulletins are initiated and completed to address areas of process uncertainty as they arise
3C-Increase community awareness of the EIA process	Communication methods and products that are effective and address the full mandate of the Review Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Official Language Act</i> and aboriginal language services requirements are met • Community and First Nation survey confirming an increased understanding of the Review Board's roles and responsibilities and utility of communication products • Verification of understanding of Review Board mandate by senior government officials and industry • Stakeholder surveys used a measuring tool

Goals and strategies	Outcomes	Performance measures
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of consultation issues as a result of the EIA process reduced
4. An effective role within an integrated resource management system		
4A-Improve partnerships and relationships to achieve common goals	<p>Communication with government agencies is more frequent and timely</p> <p>Interruption of the Review Board's mandate is cleared up</p> <p>Research for outside projects is directed to the appropriate research groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequency of the communication barriers to the lines of communication are removed Information on the Review Board's processes become more available
4B-Clarify roles and functions with regulatory Boards	<p>Boundaries between regulatory and environmental assessment processes are clearly defined</p> <p>Duplication of efforts are minimized</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperation MOUs in place with Alberta, Saskatchewan, BC and Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency Active engagement in NWT Board Forum activities Degree of shared understanding of roles and mandates of <i>Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act</i> Boards Degree of collaborative planning on training and other resource sharing opportunities

Goals and strategies	Outcomes	Performance measures
4C-Facilitate establishment of an effective EIA follow-up program	Established plan of how to achieve an effective follow-up program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreements between parties established • A readily accessible and transparent database for the monitoring, reporting and evaluation of the implementation of measures, commitments and suggestions arising from approved Reports of environmental assessment is established.

Appendix A – Challenges and opportunities

Key Challenges

Complexity and length of environmental assessments

Concerns about the complexity and length of the process relate to the need for:

- criteria for referring a project to environmental assessment.
- certainty in the preliminary screening process.
- better definition of information requirements in environmental assessments.
- clear definitions and guidelines on key terms (e.g. significant public concern).
- updated or enhanced policy statements.
- clarity and consistency in deciding the scope of an environmental assessment relative to the size of a project.
- certainty with respect to the consult-to-modify process.

Lack of consistency and transparency in processes and decisions

The need for more consistency and transparency in processes and decisions was noted as a significant challenge as proponents and other participants seek fairness, and reasoned decisions from an administrative tribunal. It was noted in the stakeholder survey, that the Review Board sometimes alters the process on a case by case basis which makes it seem ambiguous. Predictability and administrative efficiency with respect to the assessment process are also desirable assets. Clear and comprehensive policies, processes and instructions to participants are an effective means to inform and reassure proponents and other participants about assessment processes and Review Board decisions. They also facilitate consistent and efficient decision making within the Review Board. Although the Review Board has a number of policies and guidelines in place, some interviewees felt that more were needed.

Lack of adequate and stable operating funds

Acquiring adequate and stable operating funds is an ongoing challenge for the Review Board. This includes both enough operating funds for the Review Board to conduct its business on an on-going basis and a stable funding arrangement that will provide some certainty and predictability for the Review Board. The stakeholder survey results suggest that this is a high-priority issue for Board members and staff but a much less significant concern for other respondents who probably do not appreciate the impacts on the organization.

The desire for increased and stable funding must be considered in the context of current government deficits. 'Outside Parties' may challenge the Review Board's

expenditures. As a result, the Review Board should be prepared to, justify its current budget and expenditures.

Lack of adequate technical and administrative support

‘Outside parties’ felt the Review Board needed adequate technical and administrative support. However, Review Board members and staff did not identify this as a challenge. ‘Outside parties’ described the challenge in terms of: 1) staff turnover that left the Review Board with fewer or less experienced staff or 2) and inadequate number of staff to address the Review Board workload. These concerns must be weighed against the common view that the collective technical staff is one of the Review Board’s greatest strengths.

The need for increased collaboration with other regulatory agencies

It is critical that the Review Board work with the other co-management boards and regulatory agencies that comprise the resource management regime for the Mackenzie Valley. A number of policy, process and interpretive issues have been identified elsewhere that can be most effectively addressed through increased collaboration. The results of the Stakeholder survey suggested that the preliminary screening process needed collective attention.

Terms and appointment of Review Board members

The length of terms and appointments of Review Board members creates a number of challenges for the Review Board. The three-year term of appointment does not allow members much time to become fully effective in their role before their term expires. In addition, substantive delays in Ministerial appointments can increase the challenge of the obtaining a quorum of Review Board decisions. Diversity among the members will also reassure the proponents and participants that the Review Board has fully considered all perspectives on a proposed development before making a decision.

Outstanding land claim and self government agreements

Outstanding land claims and signed agreements that have not been fully implemented create a number of challenges for the Review Board, including:

- proposed projects in unsettled areas often become the focus of larger political issues that are at play in these areas.
- the lack of completed land use plans (except the Gwich’in Settlement Area) that are intended to provide a framework for the acceptable level of cumulative impacts on a particular landscape; and

- the lack of effective cumulative environmental impact monitoring and collection of other baseline information that would assist the Review Board to make better decisions.

Lack of participant funding

The lack of participant funding limits the ability of certain potentially affected parties to effectively participate in the assessment process. This can lead to delays in the process as the Review Board tries to accommodate the needs of these parties. In some cases, the proponent has provided funds for participants so that they may engage more effectively in the assessments.

Opportunities

Northern Regulatory Improvement Action Plan

The Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs has announced the first phase of a “Northern Regulatory Improvement Action Plan” to reduce the complexity and increase the predictability and efficiency of the northern regulatory system. To date the Minister has announced an initiative to amend the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act* and \$11 million investments in cumulative effects monitoring. Further announcements are anticipated some of which will hopefully address capacity shortfalls that affect EIA timeliness as well.

Working with others

There are significant opportunities to implement cooperation agreements and memorandums of understanding with neighbouring EIA jurisdictions regarding processes, information sharing and best practices.

The NWT Board Forum - the NWT Board Forum is an organization established to address the common needs of Forum members. In the past two years it has focused efforts on developing a major training initiative, development of a rationalized budget development and approvals process, developing a standardized template and workbook to guide strategic and business planning for boards and developing a generic orientation binder for newly appointed board members.

Devolution of authority for land and water resources to the Government of the NWT

Experience to date had demonstrated that the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act* (MVRMA) would benefit from a number of legislative amendments. Through the process of Devolution, there may be an opportunity to do so in the near future. The devolution of responsibility for resource management to the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) could represent an opportunity

for the Review Board as the MVRMA may be subject to amendment during the devolution process. This could create an opportunity to address the need for improved procedural clarity in certain administrative provisions of the MVRMA. Further, the Review Board and the Minister of the GNWT receiving the Review Board's recommendations would then be located in the same geographic area and could result in increased awareness of the Review Board's role and processes including the context in which the Review Board makes its recommendations.

Learning from others

The Review Board has the opportunity to benefit from best practices from other jurisdictions which offer EIA improvements for the Mackenzie Valley as well.