

January 31, 2005

WKSS Society – Renewed Mandate and Terms of Reference

The original WKSS terms of reference approved December 14th 1995 (http://www.wkss.nt.ca/HTML/03_Terms/03_index.htm) have been updated.. The renewed mandate and revised terms of reference are supplemented by separate tables ('Priorities for Cumulative Effects Research and Monitoring in the Slave Geological Province'(December 17, 2004)) explaining the factors/criteria that can be used to set priorities for WKSS over the interim period (Table 1), and the themes/questions that WKSS may pursue for research and monitoring activities (Table 2).

Background

As discussed at Board meetings earlier in 2004, the mandate of WKSS needed to be clarified and updated to reflect current circumstances and priorities. DIAND prepared a draft renewed statement of the WKSS mandate and a separate proposed work plan (June 29, 2004) for the 2004/2005 fiscal year. On October 27 & 28, 2004, a strategic planning workshop was held to further map out the activities and priorities for the short-term future; the Annual General Meeting was held October 28, 2004. In November, a revised mandate and terms of reference document was distributed to WKSS partners for comment prior to being finalized.

While there has been some progress on the development of regional monitoring and research options in the Slave Geological Province, implementation of regional monitoring would appear to be at least several years away. There is a commitment to develop a Multi-Project Environmental Monitoring Agency for the three NWT diamond mines, but its mandate will be project-specific oversight rather than regional monitoring or research. Both the Nunavut General Monitoring Program and the NWT Cumulative Impact Monitoring Program are in developmental stages. The future work of WKSS will build upon the Board's work in 2001 and 2002 to define an interim cumulative effects research and monitoring plan.

Renewed Mandate Statement

The West Kitikmeot / Slave Study (WKSS) Society is a consensus-based partnership of government, Aboriginal, co-management, industry and environmental organizations in the NWT and Nunavut. Its focus during the interim period while a long-term approach(es) to regional environmental¹ research and monitoring is developed will be on providing funding and facilitating partnerships for priority research and monitoring projects that are of direct relevance to the Partners and others in making resource management decisions. In particular, studies that contribute to the understanding of cumulative effects assessment and management (e.g., the identification of indicators, thresholds and carrying capacity) will be given priority. Rather than broad calls for proposals to conduct projects, the WKSS will consider specific project proposals brought forward for consideration due to their merit and relevance. The WKSS will continue to include both traditional knowledge and scientific knowledge; to encourage the building of capacity at the community and organizational level; to serve as an information-sharing forum for the partners; and to ensure that the information produced through WKSS funding is readily available for use by decision makers and the public.

¹ 'Environment' is broadly defined to include the biophysical, social, economic and cultural environment.

Revised West Kitikmeot/Slave Study Terms of Reference

1. Introduction

The level of exploration activity and the development potential, particularly for mining, in the West Kitikmeot / Slave area is significant. At the same time the area is home to a population which includes Inuit, Dene and Metis aboriginal peoples, who depend upon the natural resources of the area. The West Kitikmeot / Slave Study was initiated in 1995 to provide an information base to support sound resource management decisions and examined the short term and long term effects of development. The study to date has addressed major gaps in the biophysical information available for the area and provided a starting point for cumulative effects monitoring, assessment and management. It is recognized that development and implementation of a comprehensive, effective and efficient system for cumulative effects in the area will take time. The major function of the study is now to fill this time gap. The study involves the cooperation and participation of many interested parties: industry, aboriginal organizations and communities, co-management organizations established through land claims, other non-government organizations, and government.

2. Vision Statement

The vision of the Partners is to achieve responsible economic development within a sound environmental management framework in the West Kitikmeot / Slave Study area, so that aboriginal cultural values are respected, the land is protected, culture is preserved, and community self sufficiency / reliance is enhanced.

3. Goal

The goal of the Study is to collect and provide information for the West Kitikmeot / Slave area to ensure that decision making by the Partners can give full consideration to potential cumulative effects and changes in the environment resulting from human activity, and to facilitate responsible economic development within a sound environmental management framework.

4. Objectives

The objectives of the West Kitikmeot / Slave Study are to:

- a) develop and maintain an information base necessary to make improved, sound resource management decisions
- b) establish and maintain a basis for the identification and assessment of cumulative effects for planning and development purposes
- c) provide a forum to continue to develop approaches to regional cumulative effects monitoring until such time as the NWT Cumulative Impact Monitoring Program, the Nunavut General Monitoring Program and other initiatives can fully address this need.
- d) provide a forum in which to share information on issues, while respecting the diversity of interests: aboriginal, industry, environmental organizations, governments, and the public
- e) provide the information necessary to enhance the understanding of potential impacts of human activity on ecological processes and communities.
- f) support a central role for both traditional knowledge and scientific knowledge, and facilitate the linkage of research carried out in these systems.
- g) ensure the accessibility of Study research results and information to all Partners and the public, while respecting the confidentiality of certain information.
- h) maximize community research training opportunities and the use of community resources in all Study research.

5. Study Partners

Partners in the Study may include all organizations and agencies who have a legitimate vested interest in the area. Each Partner must be accepted by consensus of the other Partners, and each Partner must agree to support the vision, goal and objectives of the Study. The list of Partners may be reviewed and revised from time to time.

6. Management Board

The management structure shall be cost effective, efficient, representative of the Partners, flexible, and shall build on existing bodies and institutions to the extent possible. It shall be composed of a Management Board and a small study office.

The Management Board shall have a Chair selected by the aboriginal members and may include a representative (or alternate) from each of:

(Note: the following is a list of the current WKSS partners; partners have been asked to reconfirm their ongoing participation in WKSS, and as such this list is subject to change. In addition, the project-specific oversight bodies [IEMA, EMAB, and Snap Lake Monitoring Agencies have been approached to determine if they wish to participate as members or in another capacity)

- Dogrib Treaty 11 Council
- Lutselk'e Dene Band
- Yellowknives Dene First Nation
- Inuit organizations (Kitikmeot Hunters and Trappers Association and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.)
- Nunavut Co-management organizations (Nunavut Planning Commission, Nunavut Wildlife Management Board, Nunavut Water Board, Nunavut Impact Review Board)
- North Slave Metis Alliance
- Industry
- Environmental organizations
- GNWT
- Government of Nunavut
- Canada

The Management Board members shall have decision making authority, to the extent possible, on behalf of the organization(s) they represent. Members will be familiar with research and monitoring in the study area, and are responsible for communicating and consulting with their constituent organizations, keeping them informed of any issues or questions requiring discussion.

The Management Board shall operate on the principle of consensus, although it is recognized that this may not always be achieved. The Management Board will be responsible for managing Study resources, making decisions on the design and conduct of research, ensuring that the interests and policies of the Partners are respected, public involvement, and directing the operations of the Study Office.

7. Study Office

The Partners will establish a small independent Study Office to: coordinate, conduct, and facilitate Study work; carry out management and administrative duties; and implement a communications strategy. The Office will be managed by a Study Director recruited by the Partners, and accountable to the Chair of the Management Board or his/her Board member delegate. The Study Office, located in Yellowknife, shall be open and accessible to the public.

8. Study Design

The design of the Study will be determined and managed by the Management Board. Research will be conducted in accordance with regulations of the GNWT, the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, and Aboriginal government research protocols. Research activities will focus on identified priorities (see WKSS Priorities, Table 2 [December 17, 2004]). Study information should be able to measure and predict future changes and to assess cumulative effects. Baseline data is required with specific emphasis on linkages between the various environmental and socioeconomic components, keeping in mind that the information must be able to assess the effects of human activity.

9. Communications and Information

Communications will be a high priority of the Partners and the Study Office. A communications strategy will be developed by the Partners.

10. Funding

The Management Board shall prepare an annual work plan clearly identifying research and other activities that will be undertaken, and the available/needed resources (including general and project-specific contributions by Partner organizations, and other partnership opportunities) for review by the Partners.



Draft Renewed Mandate and Terms of Reference November 18th, 2004

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The following is a verbatim copy of the Draft Renewed Mandate and Terms of Reference, dated November 18th, 2004. A pdf version of the [Draft Renewed Mandate and Terms of Reference](#) is also available for download.

Background

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While there has been some progress on the development of regional monitoring and research options in the Slave Geological Province, implementation of regional monitoring would appear to be at least several years away. There is a commitment to develop a Multi-Project Environmental Monitoring Agency for the three NWT diamond mines, but its mandate will be project-specific oversight rather than regional monitoring or research. Both the Nunavut General Monitoring Program and the NWT Cumulative Impact Monitoring Program are in developmental stages. The future work of WKSS will build upon the Board's work in 2001 and 2002 to define an interim cumulative effects research and monitoring plan.

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Terms of Reference 1996-2001