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Summary of the Meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee on Science and Knowledge - December 14 and 15, 2020 - Virtual Meeting

Meeting Objective

The main objective of the December 14-15 meeting was to hear from the three TAC sub-committees on positive effects, cumulative effects, and health, social, and economic effects about their early work and provide an opportunity for input from all committee members. An update was also provided on the work of the joint subcommittee on science and Indigenous knowledge, that includes both TAC and Indigenous Advisory Committee (IAC) members. The TAC also had a presentation from a Health Canada representative on the department's approach to health impact assessment.

Day 1

Agenda Item: Opening Remarks & Agency Update

- The TAC co-chairs provided opening remarks.
- The Agency's ex-officio member provided a territorial acknowledgement for the land on which the Agency representatives were located.

- The ex-officio member provided updates on the following topics:
- Inviting two-year TAC members to renew their term on the committee, and the process being undertaken to do so.
- The status of the three research contracts complementing the work of the three TAC sub-committees.
- The activities of the Indigenous Advisory Committee and the launching of the Minister's Advisory Council.

Agenda Item: Presentation by Health Canada on Guidance on Health Impact Assessment

- A Health Canada official presented on the department's approach to health impact assessment. The presentation addressed their role in reviewing health assessments completed by proponents as well as the department's participation in consultations with Indigenous peoples.
- The official also described Health Canada's approach to developing its draft guidance on health impact assessment methodologies, which is being prepared to align with the *Impact Assessment Act*.
- TAC members requested the opportunity to review and comment on the draft guidance.
- An Agency official provided additional context on the approach being taken to coordinating with Health Canada and provided the rationale behind the Agency and Health Canada publishing separate, but aligned, guidance documents related to health impact assessment.

Agenda Item: Sub-committee on Cumulative Effects Presentation

- The sub-committee champions provided an overview of their work plan for the coming months and described the research contract being established to support their work. Next steps include reviewing existing cumulative effects guidance documents and consulting case

studies to identify best practices in order to then provide recommendations to the Agency for updating the guidance.

- Agency officials had the opportunity to answer some questions that the subcommittee had on the topic of cumulative effects. This included providing information on the progress being made on the creation of a regional assessment policy.
- TAC members had the opportunity to discuss the work that the subcommittee is undertaking. This included a substantial discussion on the opportunities and challenges in establishing a baseline to be used in cumulative effects assessment.

Agenda Item: Sub-committee on Indigenous Knowledge and Science

- The sub-committee is composed of members from both the TAC and the Indigenous Advisory Committee. The champion from the TAC provided a brief update on the sub-committee's work to date. The sub-committee's primary goal is to provide recommendations for proponents on how best to include and consider Indigenous knowledge and science in the early planning phase of impact assessment. The sub-committee's work and discussions have reflected this goal.
- The champion also described the preparation work that the subcommittee had already done in advance of its presentation at the May 2021 meeting of the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA), focused on the use of science and Indigenous knowledge in impact assessments.
- TAC members expressed general support for the sub-committee's approach and multiple members emphasized the topic of equitable inclusion as a key consideration in its work going forward.

Day 2

Agenda Item: Sub-Committee on Health, Social, and Economic Effects

- The sub-committee champions provided an overview of their work plan for the coming months and described the research contract being established to support their work. They also provided the Agency with an initial list of recommendations, including with regard to possible additional documents and tools. Next steps include refining a priority list of recommended tools for implementation.
- Agency officials had the opportunity to answer some questions that TAC members had on the topic of health, social, and economic effects. This included explaining how the Agency relies on expert departments to conduct most of the analysis of these effects and specifying that effects both within and outside of federal jurisdiction are assessed.
- TAC members advised the Agency in a number of areas related to this topic, including UNDRIP legislation, decision-making, and proponent capacity.

Agenda Item: Sub-Committee on Positive Effects

- The sub-committee champions provided an overview of their work plan for the coming months, and described the details of the research contract being established to support their work.
- The champions led TAC members through a discussion of positive effects, specifically relating to principles to be considered in assessing the effects, examples of the effects, and content to be included in potential guidance. This included a substantial discussion around the role of proponents, and the nuance and variety of perspectives present in considering whether an effect is, in fact, positive.

- Next steps include providing recommendations to the Agency, including an expanded list of principles and identifying areas where Agency guidance needs to more explicitly reference Agency effects and specific topics for which new guidance/tools may be required.

Agenda Item: Recap and Next Steps

- The TAC co-chairs summarized the takeaways from both days of the meetings.

Take Aways

- The Agency will advise TAC members when the opportunity arises to comment on Health Canada's draft guidance.
- The sub-committees will continue to meet to advance their work.
- The Agency will finalize the research contracts and arrange kick-off meetings between the contractors and the sub-committee champions.
- The Agency will provide the cumulative effects sub-committee with case study examples of cumulative effects assessments.

Attendees

TAC Co-Chairs

- Kevin Hanna
- Darcy Pickard

TAC Committee Members

- Alistair MacDonald
- Bill Ross
- Colin Webster

- Gillian Donald
- Glennis Lewis
- Helga Shield
- Marie Lagimodiere
- Mark Shrimpton
- Meinhard Doelle
- Michel Bérubé
- Regrets
- Hugo Mailhot Couture

Impact Assessment Agency of Canada

- Steve Chapman
- Anjala Puvananathan
- Stewart Lindale
- Miriam Padolsky
- Friederike Kirstein
- Robyn Whittaker
- Joshua Boisvert
- Alana Green

Date modified:

2021-02-16