



May 8, 2023

Members of the Technical Advisory Committee on Science and Knowledge:

I appreciate the advice you have provided to the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (the Agency) on a variety of important topics in 2022–2023, including on health impact assessment, biodiversity, Indigenous Knowledge and western science (in conjunction with the Indigenous Advisory Committee), the decision-making phase, and the post-approval phase.

The Technical Advisory Committee on Science and Knowledge Committee (the Committee) continues to make a positive contribution to the implementation of the *Impact Assessment Act* (IAA) by providing advice on issues that are critical to undertaking high quality assessments. The Agency is actively taking your advice into consideration and will report back to the Committee with respect to how your advice was addressed.

As we enter the fifth year of the Committee's mandate, and in light of the Committee's discussions and Agency's priorities, I have identified a number of topics that would benefit from the Committee's attention in 2023–2024. I would note that different forms of advice and products are all appreciated as appropriate to the topic including formal advice, immediate verbal feedback, and tools, principles and guidance.

1. **Joint work with the Indigenous Advisory Committee on Indigenous Knowledge and Western Science:** Building on the progress made, the joint subcommittee is encouraged to continue its excellent work in developing a practical tool to support the consideration of both knowledge systems in impact assessment decision-making with the aim of submitting a tool to the Agency this fiscal year.

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2. **Review of draft Agency guidance:** The Agency's guidance has benefitted from the Committee's feedback in the past. I would appreciate your input on new and updated draft guidance products.
 - New draft guidance that is focussed specifically on assessing economic effects.
 - Revised technical guidance on cumulative effects that is updated to align with the IAA, building on recent updates to a complementary policy statement. There is also the opportunity for the Agency to come to the Committee before the draft technical guidance is developed to seek immediate advice on the approach for complex issues, provide recent examples of best practices, etc.
 - Revised health, social, and economic guidance that takes into account previous Committee advice, experiences with IAA projects to date, and Health Canada's approach to Health Impact Assessment.
3. **Biodiversity:** Building from the work undertaken by the Committee in 2022–2023, and aligned with the Government of Canada's commitments, the Committee is encouraged to identify an issue and/or product for further work that would assist in operationalizing the Committee's advice; for example, a tool to support proponents in conducting biodiversity assessments.
4. **Project List Review:** I would welcome the Committee's participation at key points in the upcoming review of the Project List (*Physical Activities Regulations*).
5. **"Alternatives to" and "alternative means":** This item has been highlighted by Committee members as a topic that would benefit from further work. For example, the Agency could benefit from practical proposals on how to support proponents in better integrating sustainability considerations and Indigenous views.

The Committee's advice on these subjects will be valuable to the Agency as it continues to implement the IAA.

I would underscore that the Agency is here to support the Committee. The Agency's ex-officio member can provide guidance and support for the Committee's work for those priorities identified above and any which may emerge. Similarly, the Agency's Technical Advisory Committee on Science and Knowledge Secretariat is able to support committee members in a number of ways.

I look forward to an opportunity to meet with Committee members over the next year and wish to extend a special welcome to those members who have recently joined. I am confident that the Committee, informed by the varied experiences and expertise of its membership, will provide valuable advice to the Agency, contributing to the achievement of our mandate and the objectives of the IAA.

Sincerely,

Terence Hubbard (he/him, il)