

Summary of the Meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee on Science and Knowledge

January 17/18, 2023

Virtual Meeting

Meeting Objective

There were five objectives for this meeting. The first objective was to provide Agency updates, including on the TAC membership renewal process and project updates. The second objective was to receive an update from the Biodiversity Subcommittee on its research grant and approach to developing advice to the Agency, and from the Joint TAC/IAC Indigenous Knowledge and Science subcommittee on its activities and to seek initial input from TAC members to inform next steps. The third objective was to review the committee's draft advice on characterizing uncertainty and precaution for decision-makers and determine next steps prior to submission to the Agency. The fourth objective was to discuss the committee's proposed feedback on Health Canada's Health Impact Assessment guidance, including implications for the Agency's Health, Social, and Economic Effects Guidance. The fifth objective was for the TAC to determine whether to include an item(s) related to transparency in the draft list of potential TAC priorities for next fiscal year and to have an initial overarching discussion about potential priority topics for the committee for 2023-24.

Agenda Item: Opening Remarks

- The Agency provided a territorial acknowledgement for the land on which the Agency representatives were located.
- The Agency provided an update on the membership renewal process for TAC members. In August 2022, the Agency launched a call for nominations to seek applications for members to serve on the TAC. The call for nominations closed on November 30th, 2022. The Agency has created a review committee with members across the Agency and from another government department to make recommendations to the Agency on TAC membership.
- The Agency provided the TAC with an update on the Adaptive Management guidance document. The Agency is in the process of integrating the TAC's comments, after which the Agency plans to publish the guidance document online.

Agenda Item: Biodiversity Subcommittee Update

- The Biodiversity Subcommittee provided an update on its work to provide advice to the Agency on the treatment of biodiversity under the *Impact Assessment Act* (IAA).
- The subcommittee has met with the researchers commissioned by the Agency to support the subcommittee, as well as members of relevant federal authorities (FAs) to discuss the treatment of biodiversity under the IAA. The researchers discussed their work to date and received input from FAs and the Agency on current practices and potential areas of improvement. The subcommittee expects to receive a final report from the researchers by mid-March and will present its advice to the TAC at the March TAC meeting.

Agenda Item: Joint TAC/IAC Indigenous Knowledge and Science Subcommittee Update

- The subcommittee co-champion provided the TAC with an update on the subcommittee's work to date.
- The subcommittee intends to deliver a simple tool to provide practical recommendations to staff about what they should be communicating to decision-makers for the consideration of Indigenous knowledge and science in the IA decision-making process. The draft tool is expected to be shared with IAC and TAC for feedback during their respective March meetings.

Agenda Item: Decision-Making Phase – Characterizing Uncertainty and Precaution

- The Agency provided an updated document to reflect the TAC's previous discussion on this topic during the November meeting. Co-chairs then facilitated a discussion about the draft advice.
- The TAC agreed to continue to work to finalize its advice to the Agency by the end of the fiscal year. The Agency agreed to update the document with the TAC's verbal comments from the meeting and recirculate the document in advance of the March TAC meeting.

Agenda Item: Health Canada's Health Impact Assessment (HIA) Guidance

- As requested during the November meeting, the Agency provided the TAC with a document to help frame the TAC's discussion about providing feedback to the Agency and to Health Canada on Health Impact Assessment guidance, including implications for the Agency's Health, Social and Economic Effects Guidance.

- Co-chairs facilitated a discussion about the document and how to proceed with drafting the TAC's advice on this topic.
- The Agency agreed to update the document with the TAC's verbal comments from the meeting and recirculate it in advance of the March TAC meeting, and the TAC agreed to continue to work on its advice document in advance of the March TAC meeting in order to deliver advice by the end of the fiscal year.

Agenda Item: Scoping the Potential Transparency Topic for Next Year

- The Agency provided the TAC with responses to its questions related to transparency from the November meeting. Co-Chairs facilitated a discussion on the topic and the TAC determined the scope for a potential priority item related to transparency for consideration as part of the discussion on potential TAC priorities for 2023-24.

Agenda Item: Potential TAC Priorities for Next Fiscal Year

- The Agency presented a draft of potential priorities for fiscal year 2023-24 for the TAC's consideration, based on previous suggestions from the TAC, topics identified for potential further advice, and needs identified by the Agency. Co-chairs facilitated an initial discussion on the ideas presented and the TAC provided some additional ideas to include in the document.
- The Agency agreed to engage in internal consultations with senior Agency staff on the draft priority options and to update the document and recirculate it in advance of the March TAC meeting.
- The TAC agreed to revisit the discussion on potential priorities during the March TAC meeting.

Take Aways

- The TAC agreed that the Biodiversity subcommittee has a clear path forward to present its advice to the TAC and the Agency by the end of March.
- TAC members provided input on the Joint TAC/IAC Indigenous Knowledge and Science subcommittee's activities and path forward. The subcommittee members will provide this information to the full Joint TAC/IAC Indigenous Knowledge and Science subcommittee.
- The Agency collected the TAC's comments on the draft Uncertainty and Precaution advice document and will update and recirculate it in advance of the March TAC

meeting. The TAC agreed to continue working on the document in advance of the March TAC meeting.

- The Agency agreed to update the TAC's draft advice on health impact assessments document with the TAC's verbal comments from the meeting and recirculate it in advance of the March TAC meeting. The TAC agreed to continue working on the document in advance of the March TAC meeting.
- The Agency agreed to engage in internal consultations with senior Agency staff on the draft 2023-24 priority options identified for consideration and to update the document and recirculate it in advance of the March TAC meeting. The TAC agreed to continue discussing the committee's priorities for the next fiscal year during the March TAC meeting.

Attendees

TAC Co-Chairs

Kevin Hanna
Darcy Pickard

TAC Committee Members

Alistair MacDonald
Colin Webster
Gillian Donald
Glennis Lewis
Marie Lagimodiere
Mark Shrimpton
Marie-Hélène Gauthier
Bill Ross

Regrets

Helga Shield

Impact Assessment Agency of Canada

Steve Chapman
Robyn Whittaker
Anne Spear
Lauren Omson
Michael Grassie
Sydney Allen