



YESAB GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

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Purpose

The purpose of this *Governance Framework* is to provide clarity on the mandate of the organization, how the organization is structured, who is responsible for what aspects of the work of the organization, and the relationship between the Board and the administration (management and staff).

For clarity, the following terms will be used:

- “YESAB” is used to refer to the entire organization; the Board, management and staff, and the Designated Offices;
- “the Act” is used to refer to the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Act or YESAA;
- “the Board” is used when discussing an aspect of responsibility or process that is just about the Board itself;
- “Administration” refers to all management and staff, excluding the Board

Background

Parliament enacted the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act* (YESAA) in 2003 to implement both Chapter 12 of the *Umbrella Final Agreement*, which speaks to the development assessment process, and the corresponding chapters of 11 First Nation Final Agreements.

The Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board (YESAB) is an independent, arms-length body created by the Act and charged with the assessment responsibilities of the YESAA legislation and regulations.

YESAB carries out a comprehensive, neutrally conducted assessment process to examine the environmental and socio-economic effects of projects in Yukon before they commence.

The Board is to consist of a minimum of seven members appointed under the auspices of the Act. Of the seven Board Members, the Chair of the Board and two Board members form the Executive Committee, which has a number of additional, specific responsibilities under the Act.

The Board is appointed by the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) after seeking the views of the federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change. Prior to the appointments, nominations to the Board are made as specified in the Act. One member of the Executive Committee is nominated by the Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN) and one member is nominated by the territorial government. The third member of the Executive Committee, the Chair, is appointed after the federal minister consults with the other two Executive Committee members. Of the four remaining Board members, two are nominated by CYFN, one is nominated by the territorial government and the fourth is a direct appointment by the minister of INAC. The Board has a full time Chair. All members of the Board sit independent of influence by the body that nominates or appoints her or him. The Board speaks with one voice.

Board Governance

The Board has responsibilities under YESAA related to both the operations of the organization and the conduct of assessments. Its responsibilities regarding the operations of YESAB primarily relate to the provision of strategic direction and the oversight of its human and financial resources. Its responsibilities

regarding the conduct of assessments primarily relate to the oversight of the assessment framework. Board members do, however, have responsibilities for the conduct of assessments in particular circumstances. Executive Committee members are responsible for Screenings and Board members selected as panel members are responsible for reviews.

Board Governance as it Relates to Operations

The Board governs the organization consistent with the Act and the regulations, and works in the public interest to provide the organization with strategic direction and to oversee the organization's human and financial resources. In fulfilling its obligations, the Board has set out the following governance approach as it relates to operations:

- The Board is responsible for setting out clearly defined structure, roles and accountabilities for the organization. These roles, responsibilities and associated accountabilities will be defined and will form the basis of the Governance Framework of the organization.
- The Board may choose to set up Board committees to fulfill the Board's obligations. Consistent with a traditional Board governance model, Board committees and task forces will be advisory to the Board and will have no delegated authority unless the Board explicitly gives them such authority. Staff participation on Board committees and working groups will be in a non-voting capacity.
- The Board is responsible for the governing policies of the organization. Board policy will be prepared by the Executive Director and approved by the Board. Operational practice is the domain of the Executive Director.

The Executive Director, in a non-voting capacity, will be a full partner with the Board in direction and policy making.

Board Member Roles and Responsibilities

Chairperson of the Board (Chair) – the Chair provides leadership to the Board and to the Executive Director to ensure YESAB's responsibilities under the Act are carried out. The Chair acts as a link between the Board and administration (through the Executive Director) as well as a representative and spokesperson to the outside world. Further detail can be found in the Statement of Duties for the Chairperson of the Board.

Executive Committee – the primary role of the Executive Committee is to conduct Executive Committee Screenings. Additional Executive Committee roles outlined in the Act and Rules include preparation of an annual report, setting up panels, assigning assessment responsibilities, where necessary, for projects subject to a DO evaluation that occur in two or more assessment districts and the designation of confidential information. Further detail can be found in the Statement of Duties for Executive Committee Members.

Board Members - Board members have a fiduciary responsibility to ensure the organization fulfills its responsibilities under the Act and in accordance with approved policies, procedures and processes. Further detail can be found in the Statement of Duties for Board Members.

Executive Director Roles and Responsibilities

The Executive Director provides a link between the Board and administration (under direction of the Chair or committees of the Board). The Executive Director is responsible for communicating Board direction to the organization, either directly or through the management structure, and ensuring that direction is carried out by the administration. The Executive Director also ensures the organization provides sound advice and recommendations to the Board that support it in fulfilling its responsibilities under the Act. It is his or her responsibility to ensure the Board is provided with the information it needs in order to be able to make informed decisions.

Roles and Responsibilities of Managers

All Managers at YESAB are responsible for supporting the Executive Director and the Board in ensuring YESAB fulfills its responsibilities under YESAA and achieves its goals and priorities.

Managers are expected to ensure the organization functions in a manner that supports both operational requirements and corporate interests. Managers are the key resource YESAB relies upon to ensure that YESAB's responsibilities are met, that organizational risks are appropriately managed and that Board priorities are implemented. They are expected to identify and communicate operational, financial, legal and reputational risks, issues and gaps to their supervisor and to the Board, as appropriate, through the Executive Director. They are also expected to develop and implement solutions. In this respect, Managers play a key role in adopting and championing operational practices and informing policy development, budget planning and the Board priority setting process. They are responsible for communicating policy, operational practice and direction to their staff. Individual managers are also responsible for ensuring they promote and maintain a positive work environment and an organizational culture that supports the overall well-being of the organization.

Corporate Management Team

The Corporate Management team comprises all YESAB managers who are individually and collectively responsible to:

- Identify corporate risk
- Monitor and support the Board and its committees
- Financial review – including reallocation
- Oversee and direct internal communications
- Support, represent and implement board priorities, , and/or corporate initiatives
- Understand the business and coordination across the organization
- Ensure continuity in senior level discussions and planning
- Bring horizontal perspectives and synergies across the organization
- Deal with conflict as it emerges
- Develop recommendations for action to resolve issues
- Inspire and motivate staff to engender a positive workplace culture

Senior Management Team

The purpose of this team is to provide Head Office managers with the opportunity to meet on a regular basis to discuss both strategic and operational issues, find solutions and responses to identified risks and emerging problems, and to provide the Executive Director with a sounding board to inform decision-making and ensure leadership commitment once decisions are taken.

Board Priority Setting Process

Board priorities may be established annually or as and when the Board determines they are required. Ideally priority setting should occur at a time when the results can be used to inform the budget

development and approval processes, and for setting objectives for the Executive Director's performance goals.

The Board's Role in Financial Management, Policy and Oversight

The Board's role (including those of the Board's Finance and Human Resources Committee [FHRC]) includes:

- Oversight and approval of financial policies
- Regular review of financial statements
- Ensuring an annual independent financial audit is completed
- Reviewing and approving a balanced budget prepared by staff
- The Board may utilize a FHRC, accountable to the Board. One responsibility of the FHRC is to perform a comprehensive review of the draft, balanced budget prior to its presentation to the Board. In this role it is to conduct a detailed review of the budget, provide a challenge function, and recommend the budget to the Board for approval. Other responsibilities are set out in the FHRC Terms of Reference (see attached)
- The FHRC is a committee of the Board and its role is advisory in nature, doing the detailed review and oversight on behalf of the full Board and providing recommendations to the Board

Note: The Executive Director, along with the Finance & Administration Manager, is responsible for presenting the FHRC with a well-thought-through draft budget that reflects organizational priorities and balances ongoing operational and administrative needs. Designated Offices are required, under YESAA, to prepare and submit an annual budget to the Board, after consultation with any First Nation whose territory falls within their assessment district.

The Board's Role in Human Resources Management, Policy and Oversight

The Board's role (including that of the FHRC) includes:

- Oversight and approval of human resource policies
- Periodic review of the compensation framework, approval of any proposed changes
- The Board, via the FHRC, must approve any new positions not within the approved budget
- The Board is responsible for hiring, supervising and conducting an annual performance assessment and objective setting exercise for the Executive Director
- The Board may utilize a FHRC to review, oversee and direct the development of human resource management policies
- The Board may choose to designate a Board member(s) to participate in recruitment committees for critical positions within the organization, defined as legal counsel, Finance & Administration Manager, and positions providing direct Board support. The Executive Director has final decision-making authority regarding these hires
- The FHRC is a committee of the Board and its role is advisory in nature, doing the detailed review and oversight on behalf of the full Board and providing recommendations to the Board

Note: The Executive Director and relevant staff are responsible for ensuring that HR policies, practices and decisions are consistent with legal obligations and good practice. Where necessary, the Executive Director is expected to seek independent legal advice on any staff relations issues and to ensure the Board is fully briefed on the advice received.

The Board's Role in the Development of Assessment Policy and Strategic Matters

The Board's role (including that of the Board's Strategic Review Committee [SRC]) includes:

- The review and approval of policy or guidance related to the Assessment Framework
- The review and approval of administrative policies

- Reviewing and/or developing and approving Rules and Bylaws
- Reviewing internal or external audits
- Making decisions regarding the interpretation of YESAA
- Approving organizational communications plans and material
- The SRC is advisory, doing the detailed review and oversight on behalf of the full Board and providing recommendations to the Board

The Board may utilize a SRC, accountable to the Board, to review, oversee and direct policy and strategic initiatives related to the development and refinement of the assessment framework. Like the FHRC, the SRC is a committee of the Board and its role is advisory in nature, doing the detailed review and oversight on behalf of the full Board and providing recommendations to the Board. Its responsibilities are set out in the SRC Terms of Reference (see attached).

Roles and Responsibilities Relating to the Establishment of Rules and By-laws

Rules and by-laws are an expression of policy specifically referenced in YESAA. Rules are essential to defining the assessment framework, while by-laws can be used to establish the parameters by which the Board and Designated Offices conduct and manage their internal administrative affairs.

In accordance with sections 30 and 31 of YESAA, the Board *shall* make rules in specified areas applicable to screenings by the Executive Committee and evaluations undertaken by Designated Offices. It may also make other rules in a range of other areas relating to both screenings and evaluations.

In accordance with section 31(5) of YESAA, a Designated Office *may* make rules related to the conduct of evaluations within that office. Rules made by the Board, however, would prevail to the extent of any inconsistency. To avoid any such inconsistencies and to ensure a uniform assessment framework from office to office, a corporate approach to the development of rules is essential.

The Board and any Designated Office *may* establish by-laws relating to the management of their respective internal administrative affairs. The Board, in collaboration with the Designated Offices, however, may also establish by-laws to govern the administrative affairs of all Designated Offices. Such by-laws shall prevail to the extent of any inconsistency.

All powers exercised by the Designated Offices must meet performance expectations of the Executive Director and be in keeping with the assessment framework set out by the Board.

The Board's Role in Government and Stakeholder Engagement

While Designated Offices and the Executive Committee necessarily and routinely engage with governments and other participants in the assessment process regarding the assessment of individual projects, the Board, too, has an important role to play in government and stakeholder engagement. The Board is responsible for ensuring that the interests of governments and stakeholders are taken into account in the elaboration of the assessment framework and that significant concerns about the assessment process that are within its control are considered and addressed as appropriate. The Board is also responsible for advocating the purposes of YESAA and promoting awareness of the assessment process. The Board speaks with one voice when engaging governments and stakeholders and/or speaking to external audiences.

Board Governance as it Relates to Assessment

The Board governs the organization consistent with the Act and its regulations, and works in the public interest to provide oversight of the assessment framework. In fulfilling its obligations the Board has set out the following governance approach as it relates to Assessment:

While the Board itself (other than Executive Committee members or panel members) is not directly involved in assessments it is responsible for setting corporate direction relating to assessments. Therefore, all elements of the Assessment Framework are approved by the Board. The Assessment Framework includes rules, policies and guidance related to:

- Definitions and interpretations
- Assessment methodology and processes for conducting assessments
- Involvement of affected and interested parties

Individual assessments (including Designated Office evaluations, Executive Committee screenings and reviews) must:

- Operate within the approved assessment framework
- Operate within existing rules, guidance and policies, as well as established practice
- Be conducted in a manner consistent with professional standards

While Designated Offices, the Executive Committee, and Panels of the Board have the authority to conduct assessments, they also have a responsibility to conduct those assessments within the assessment framework approved by the Board.

Roles and Responsibilities Related to the Assessment of Projects

Designated Office Evaluations

Designated Offices (Managers)

- Conducts evaluations of projects consistent with the assessment framework
- Obtains technical expertise, if required
- Provides opportunities for First Nation and public participation in evaluations

Designated Offices – Regional Operations Manager/Executive Director Interface

- Ensures the Executive Director (through the Regional Operations Manager [ROM]) is made aware of progress, issues or potential risks

Designated Offices – Executive Committee Interface

- The Executive Committee (EC) will be notified by the Executive Director (through the ROM) of a referral to the Executive Committee immediately prior to the proponent being notified
- The Executive Committee will be notified by the Executive Director (through the ROM) when a project is located in two or more assessment districts (s.57 of the DO Rules). The EC will provide direction to the DOs if, after 2-days, the DOs cannot agree on how to proceed.
- When a person would like information being submitted to a Designated Office kept confidential, the Executive Committee will be provided with that application by the Executive Director (through the ROM) for consideration.

Designated Offices – Board Interface

- The ROM reports to the Board monthly, provides project updates, and raises issues/red flags

- Board members can request that items included in the ROM's report be put on the Board's agenda by contacting the Chair

Executive Committee Screenings

The Executive Committee

- Conducts screenings of projects, supported by staff
- Brings a broader, public interest perspective
- Assumes accountability for each step and decision in the screening process
- Relies on staff to bring technical expertise and information; the Executive Committee role is to challenge, review and direct
- Operates within the approved assessment framework

The Executive Committee – Staff Interface

- Executive Committee communications and direction to staff in meetings is direct, with the manager kept informed
- Outside of Executive Committee meetings, direction to staff is via the Executive Committee lead
- Staff assigned to specific screenings produce drafts, advise the Executive Committee, implement Executive Committee direction, undertake project management, and ensure the assessment framework is adhered to

The Executive Committee – Executive Director Interface

- The Chair and/or Executive Committee lead briefs the Executive Director on progress and issues or potential risks

The Executive Committee – Board Interface

- Executive Committee reports to the Board monthly (via the Manager) and provides project updates and raises issues/red flags
- Board members can request that items included in an Executive Committee report be put on the Board's agenda by contacting the Chair
- Board members will be notified of Executive Committee decisions to set up panels immediately prior to the proponent being notified

Panel of the Board Reviews

The Executive Committee

The Executive Committee has a distinct role in establishing a Panel of the Board, which includes: preparing the Environmental and Socio-economic Effects (ESE) Statement Guidelines, reviewing the ESE Statement once it is submitted by a proponent, determining the primary location of effects, developing a Terms of Reference for the Panel, establishing the Panel by selecting Panel members and designating the Chairperson, providing the Panel with the Terms of Reference, and publishing a notice.

The Panel

A Panel of the Board has specific responsibilities that include: conducting a technical analysis of the ESE Statement submitted to the Panel by a proponent and obtaining supplementary information from the proponent (if required), conducting public hearings, seeking views about the project, and making a recommendation with reasons to decision bodies.

The Panel – Staff Interface

- Panel communications and direction to staff in meetings is direct, with the manager kept informed
- Outside of Panel meetings, direction to staff is via the Panel Chairperson
- Staff produce drafts, advise the Panel, implement Panel direction, undertake project management, and ensure the assessment framework is adhered to

The Panel – Executive Director Interface

- The Panel Chairperson briefs the Executive Director on progress and issues or potential risks

The Panel – Executive Committee Interface

- The Panel Chairperson interacts directly with the Executive Committee (through the project lead) regarding notifications about the Panel, or any clarification or modification to the Terms of Reference, in accordance with the applicable *Rules*

The Panel – Board Interface

- The Panel reports to the Board monthly, provides updates and raises issues/red flags
- Board members can request that an item included in a Panel report be put on the Board's agenda by contacting the Chair of the Board, who will notify the Panel Chairperson

Principles to Guide What Issues are Brought to the Board for Decision

- Significant risk to YESAB (reputational, legal, financial, operational)
- Significant change in practice
- Targets an external audience (DBs, proponents, the public) or will require external communications
- New, emerging issues (e.g. scoping)
- Precedent setting
- Outside of or impacts on an approved policy or strategic matter

Finance and Human Resources Committee
Terms of Reference

ROLE

The Finance and Human Resources Committee will report and provide financial and human resource management advice to the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board (the Board) in the following areas:

Financial

- a) Oversee financial operating systems (ensure appropriate books, records, systems and practices; review and develop finance-related policy for Board approval; monitor implementation of Board decisions related to Board finances);
- b) Participate in financial planning, annual budgets, and reporting (long term financial planning, preparation of annual budget, recommendations regarding budget expenditures, operating and capital requirements, recommendations for awarding of contracts);
- c) Oversee and monitor internal and external audits and evaluations;
- d) Negotiate the Contribution Agreement with the federal government;
- e) Ensure the terms and conditions of the federal Contribution Agreement are met;
- f) Any other related matters referred to the Committee by the Board.

Human Resources

- a) Review and develop human resources policy for Board approval;
- b) Participate in the development and review of job descriptions for staff, and the organizational structure of the organization;
- c) Review recruitment procedures;
- d) Participate in employee hiring committees as required;
- e) Develop and provide advice on compensation packages for employees;
- f) Any other related matters referred to the Committee by the Board.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The activities of the Board are enabled and limited by the:

- *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act and Regulations*
- *Federal Contribution Agreement terms and conditions*
- *Board approved bylaws, policies and procedures.*

Changes to these Terms of Reference will be approved by the Board, upon recommendation of the Finance and Human Resource Committee.

MEMBERSHIP

The Finance and Human Resource Committee will be made up of a maximum of two (2) members of the Board appointed by the Board, the Chair of the Board, the Executive Director of the Board, and the Finance and Administration Manager. One Board member of the Committee will be selected as the Chairperson by the Committee members.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Chairperson:

1. Facilitate discussions to meet the overall objectives of the Committee.
2. Strive for consensus in decisions and recommendations.
3. Identify and secure staff participation in meetings as required, subject to the approval of the Executive Director.
4. Set time lines for accomplishment of tasks or deliverables associated with the Committee.
5. Report Committee recommendations to the Board.

Members:

1. Review meeting materials prior to attending meetings and participate in meetings of the Committee.
2. Review action items, records of decisions, and discussion points to ensure accuracy.
3. Review and comment on materials generated by the Committee. This includes providing input into draft reports and other materials, within timelines specified by the Chair.

Finance and Administration Manager:

1. Will organize meetings of the Committee, including development and approval of agendas, setting the time for meetings, and coordinating taking, preparation, and distribution of minutes if required.
2. Provide administrative and technical support and advice to the Committee.
3. Ensure record of action items and decisions.

OBJECTIVES

The Finance and Human Resources Committee will focus on tasks associated with the development of identified policies and procedures; review and amendment of job descriptions; evaluating overall financial performance to determine if the obligations of the Contribution agreement are being met; providing the Board with monthly up to date financial reports; maintain a healthy work environment to provide an enjoyable work experience for our employees and deal with human resource issues as they arise.

MEETINGS

The Committee Chairperson will call meetings of the Finance and Human Resources Committee.

Strategic Review Committee (SRC)
Terms of Reference

ROLE

The Strategic Review Committee (SRC) is responsible for reporting to and advising the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board (the Board) on all matters related to the effective and efficient operation of the Board in order to meet the obligations and purposes set out in the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act* (YESAA) and its Regulations, including making recommendations to the Board on the following:

1. The assessment process including the development and periodic review of rules under sections 30 to 33 of YESAA and by-laws under sections 35 and 36 of YESAA;
2. YESAB participation in or contribution to external reviews of YESAA and its regulations;
3. The creation or review of policy and guidance, including the identification of policy research initiatives;
4. Operational monitoring and evaluation tools, including audits, and compiling statistics on projects;
5. Internal operations and resources;
6. Matters concerning the Board meeting the intent of the YESAA;
7. Studies and research to be conducted under sections 112 and 113 of YESAA and reviews of existing projects under section 95 of YESAA;
8. Audits and effects monitoring to be carried out by the Board under section 111 of YESAA;
9. Strategic planning and its implementation;
10. Communications, internal and external on any matters undertaken by the SRC including reporting on auditing, monitoring and evaluation;
11. Any other matter referred to the SRC by the Board.

MEMBERSHIP

The SRC will be made up of a maximum of three (3) Board members, and the Executive Director (ED). One Board member on the SRC will be selected as the Chairperson by the Board.

The SRC may invite any other Board members or staff to attend meetings or to assist in functions carried out by the SRC and other Board members may observe and participate in SRC discussions at their discretion.

The YESAB Chair may attend any SRC meeting.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Chairperson:

1. Organize meetings of the SRC, supported by the (ED), including development and approval of agendas, setting the time for meetings, and coordinating the taking, preparation, and distribution of minutes, if required.

2. Facilitate discussions to meet the overall objectives of the SRC.
3. Establish working groups to assist with or undertake SRC initiatives;
4. Set time lines for accomplishment of tasks or deliverables associated with the SRC, working closely with the ED.
5. Communicate recommendations of the SRC to the Board and report to the Board on progress of SRC priorities and initiatives
6. Annually, ensure the SRC proposes a new work plan based on Board priorities.

Members:

1. Review meeting materials prior to attending meetings, and participate in meetings of the SRC.
2. Review minutes, including action items, records of decisions, and discussion points to ensure accuracy.
3. Review and comment on materials generated by the SRC and its working groups, when required. This includes providing input into draft reports and other materials, within timelines specified by the Chairperson and ensuring deliverables align with Board priorities.

Executive Director:

1. Ensure deliverables align with YESAB's mandate under the YESAA and Regulations.
2. Identify and secure staff participation in meetings, as required, including staff support for the Chairperson in ensuring the responsibilities of the SRC are fulfilled.
3. Allocate staff resources to:
 - a. track SRC issues and initiatives and progress on SRC priorities;
 - b. manage the SRC records; and
 - c. advance work on SRC priorities.
4. Bring to the attention of the SRC, operational matters having a bearing on the assessment framework.

REPORTING TO THE BOARD

The SRC appraises the Board regularly on its activities and deliverables and makes recommendations to the Board for review and approval. The Board will be consulted on draft deliverables at a sufficiently early stage as to allow the Board to provide constructive input and direction.

To the extent possible, the SRC will operate by consensus. Where consensus in respect of deliverables or recommendations made by the SRC to the Board cannot be attained, the SRC will present options or alternatives to the Board for its consideration that reflect the diversity of views of the SRC.

MEETINGS

The SRC Chairperson, working closely with the ED, will call regular meetings of the SRC. There will be approximately twelve (12) meetings per year. Additional meetings needed to prepare for specific issues or topics, while under the authority of the SRC, shall not be considered SRC meetings and may occur throughout the year to support items in the work plan.