



MINUTES OF THE 239th MEETING OF THE JAMES BAY ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT

DATE

March 19, 2026

LOCATION

Hybride (Videoconference & Québec City)

PRESENT

Marc Dunn, Cree Nation Government (remote)
Graeme Morin, Cree Nation Government
Tina Petawabano, Cree Nation Government
Mélanie Chabot, Québec
Brigitte Goulet, Québec (remote)
Jean-Philippe Marcoux, Québec
Mélanie Savoie, Québec
Luc Denis, Canada

Benoit Péloquin, Canada
Madeleine Green, Canada
Jean-Olivier Roy, Canada

Michèle Leduc-Lapierre, Executive Director
Louis-Joseph Drapeau, Environmental Analyst

ABSENT

Melissa Saganash, Cree Nation Government

GUESTS

Frédéric Guay, Provincial Administrator and Deputy Minister, ministère de l'Environnement, de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques, de la Faune et des Parcs
Vanessa Chalifour, Environmental Protection Regimes Advisor for Northern Québec, ministère de l'Environnement, de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques, de la Faune et des Parcs
Elisabeth Gill, Impact Assessment Agency of Canada

WELCOME AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The Vice-Chair welcomes the members.

On a motion by Jean-Philippe Marcoux, seconded by Benoit Péloquin, the agenda (see [Appendix 1](#)) is adopted.

ADMINISTRATION

Adoption of the minutes of the 237th and 238th meetings and follow-up on actions

The Executive Director mentions that she received a proposal from a member for minor modifications to the minutes of the 238th meeting, and none for those of the 237th meeting.

On a motion by Graeme Morin, seconded by Luc Denis, the minutes of the 237th meeting are adopted as is, and those of the 238th meeting with modifications.

The Executive Director then follows up on the actions stemming from the 238th meeting:

- The Executive Director sent:
 - o The summary of the tri-committee meeting to the members who sent their comments and approval.
 - o The subcommittee table to the members for their review.
 - o A thank-you letter to the Federal Administrator.
 - o The final summary of the tri-committee meeting and the reference for the JBNQA documentary to the Administrator.
- Legislative portrait: There has been no progress on the file of the consideration of climate change in environmental assessments since the last meeting.
- Cumulative effects: The Executive Director sent the report on data to members, who provided their comments and approval. The recommendation and the report were sent to the Administrators in January

2026. The Executive Director contacted Vanessa Chalifour regarding the file of cumulative impacts on transportation of mining projects.

- Communications: The Executive Director received the quote for the purchase of utensil sets as promotional items, but the Administrative Committee did not have time to consider the matter yet.
- Waste material: The Executive Director will send a reminder to Mélanie Savoie asking her to discuss the regional committee with her team (regarding wild deposit).
- Mining activities: No follow-up is required, as the draft regulations were published just before the meeting, as was the QSDCSM.
- JBNQA 50th Anniversary Event at UQAM: The Executive Director shared the link to the recording in a bilan earlier this year.

Subcommittee et membership

The Executive Director mentions that there are no updates to report. For 2026–2027, confirmation is pending regarding the Chair (Canada) and the Vice-Chair (Quebec).

Next meetings

The Executive Director confirms the dates of the upcoming meetings:

- Meeting 241 will take place in Eastmain from September 23-25, 2026.
- Meeting 242 will take place in Quebec City on the afternoon of Thursday November 19 and the morning of Friday November 20, 2026.

Human Resources

The Executive Director informs members that the part-time Analyst position was posted in early February 2026 and that several applications had been received, two of which were suitable. Following interviews, it was decided to offer the position to Benjamin Labbé, who will start during the week of June 15, 2026.

Finances

The Executive Director reports that the JBACE will close the financial year at the end of March 2026 with a surplus, as expected. The final report will be presented at the June 2026 meeting.

MEETING WITH THE PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATOR

The Vice-Chair welcomes Mr. Guay who is accompanied by Ms. Vanessa Chalifour.

The meeting begins with a round table of introductions.

Firstly, the Executive Director outlines the role of the JBACE and its mandate. She then presents the key points of the 2023–2028 Strategic Plan. She then mentions that discussions had begun to explore the possibility of securing multi-year funding. The Administrator notes that the current funding model, i.e. applying for funding each year, is not effective. Work is currently underway to change this to a five-year application. Ms. Chalifour adds that the intention is for this to be in place by 2027–2028 and therefore for a procedure to be established this fall in anticipation of the next grant application.

The participants then discuss the tri-committee meeting held in September 2025 in Whapmagoostui / Kuujuarapik. One member notes that this was the first such meeting in 50 years and that it reflected a commitment to efficiency and effectiveness. Another member adds that it was an opportunity to break down the silos between the different committees. When asked whether another meeting was planned, the Executive Director replies that the secretariats have been meeting monthly since then to discuss ongoing issues and share information. One member adds that a meeting between members of the three committees could be arranged for certain issues of common interest. There is also the possibility of bringing the three committees together when a meeting is requested with a government department regarding a shared issue.

The Director asks a question about the JBACE's links with proponents. The Executive Director replies that the committee does not examine the projects themselves, but that proponents are always welcome to contact us if

they have any questions. One member reiterated that the JBACE reviews draft regulations and legislation, and that coordination with other committees is possible for this purpose. Another member adds that there is a common core between Sections 22 and 23, but that differences between the committees and their mandates may lead to differing analyses.

A discussion then takes place regarding cumulative effects. The Executive Director outlines the JBACE's work on the matter, particularly the recommendation regarding data. The Administrator mentions that he had met with COMEX, who had raised the same issues regarding data. This may go beyond the mandate of the MELCCFP. He adds that if support or contact with other ministries is required, he can be contacted to help open doors.

Finally, the participants discuss Bill 5 (note: *An Act to accelerate the granting of the authorizations required to carry out priority national-scale projects*). One member raises concerns regarding the implementation of the bill's provisions, particularly the interaction between Title I and Title II of the *Environment Quality Act*. Participants discussed these concerns, developments in the matter and the need for a transitional period.

The meeting concludes with mutual thanks, as well as a reminder from Ms. Chalifour of her support for the day-to-day running of the JBACE (funding, appointment of members, etc.).

After the meeting, the members discuss their impressions. One member notes that the commitment to multi-year funding was positive, as it would provide greater predictability. The question will be what the procedure for reporting will be. Another member adds that the administrative agreement will also be reviewed, as the Ministry wishes to standardize the committee's agreements. Finally, another member expresses their satisfaction that the Administrator shares the CNG's concerns regarding Bill 5. The Executive Director adds that she will draft a letter of thanks.

WORK ORGANISATION

A member presents the item. The MRNF is considering whether to consult the HFTCC on matters that fall more within the mandate of the JBACE. The joint committee is expected to receive a letter to this effect shortly. As Section 22 provides for a member of the HFTCC to sit on the JBACE —namely, the ex officio member—it is necessary to discuss how the JBACE might involve the HFTCC in discussions where relevant. Thus, since Section 22 already provides for a mechanism involving the HFTCC, the MRNF's position is that, regarding land use issues, the HFTCC need not be consulted, as these matters fall within the JBACE's mandate.

Members discuss the opportunities and challenges presented by this situation. One member states that it would be important to establish a mechanism for incorporating the HFTCC's concerns into discussions, given that the two committees operate differently. The Executive Director notes that informal discussions are currently taking place with staff from the CCCPP secretariat when their expertise is useful for preparing our comments. A member adds that these discussions should be formalized.

One member, encouraging collaboration between the entities of the JBNQA chapters, proposes setting up a JBACE - HFTCC working group to discuss the arrangements for this joint effort. Once the MRNF has contacted the HFTCC, we will be able to propose setting up the committee. Should a working committee be established, several members highlight the need to define how the work will be organized, as the JBACE and the HFTCC do not operate in the same way. Another member points out that HFTCC members could participate in subcommittees relevant to them (wildlife, conservation, among others). He also believes that procedures already exist and should be implemented, rather than creating mechanisms not originally provided for in the JBNQA. In his view, the HFTCC will need to respect our working arrangements to collaborate, as provided for under the ex officio member mechanism. One member mentions that this work to foster synergy and maximize resources could also be carried out between the HFTCC and the KEAC, even if this is not provided for in the agreement.

The members agree to set up a subcommittee to look into the matter and to approach the HFTCC. The committee will wait for the letter to be sent to the HFTCC before taking any further action. Some members express an interest in joining the subcommittee.

FOLLOW-UP ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Objective 1.1 Evaluate the legislative framework of the environmental and social protection regime

The Analyst mentions that this matter has not been addressed since the last meeting, but the imminent arrival of a new Analyst will ensure that progress is made on it.

Objective 1.2 Evaluate the transparency of the environmental and social impact assessment and review process

The Analyst presents the findings relating to the two projects under review: the Whapmagoostui-Kuujuarapik hybrid power plant and the Waswanipi trench landfill. Following questions from a member regarding the findings, it was decided that the analyst would organize a subcommittee meeting to summarize the approach and parameters in order to build a common understanding.

Objective 1.3 Evaluate the follow-up and monitoring of authorized projects

The Analyst presents the approach that has been approved by the subcommittee members. He will draft an action plan for implementing the measures set out in the approach and share it with the subcommittee.

Objective 1.4 Provide recommendations for the consideration of cumulative effects in the environmental and social impact assessment and review process

The Executive Director mentions that the recommendation on data was sent out earlier this year. One member raises the issue of interest at DFO regarding the recommendation on data, and the Executive Director notes that it is important to know who holds what data.

Regional planning strategy:

The Executive Director presents the strategy for regional planning. She provides an overview of the work carried out since 2016 and the data recommendations. She then presents the four phases for the strategy: defining the terms of reference and reviewing the information, conducting interviews, drafting the report, and preparing the recommendation. The aim is to complete the work and finalize the recommendation(s) by March 2027.

Transportation project:

The Executive Director presents the item and provides some background regarding Vanessa Chalifour's request regarding the COMEX's concerns about the cumulative effects of increased transport in the context of mining development.

Following the decision taken by the members at the November 2025 meeting, a meeting took place in January 2026 between Marc Dunn, Vanessa Chalifour and the Executive Director.

A proposal was submitted to the subcommittee in February 2026. The first step will be to compile an inventory of the available information, which would include identifying those responsible and any missing information. A report will be prepared based on this information. The work will be carried out by an intern.

One member points out that the Grande Alliance project was a study of regional transport, not an impact assessment, so now is the right time to take stock of the situation.

Objective 2.1 Meetings with strategic partners

The Executive Director reports that the committee met with the Provincial Administrator in the morning and with the Federal Administrator last November. Once a Cree Administrator is in place, a meeting will also be arranged.

Objective 2.2 Improve the visibility and communications of the JBACE

The Executive Director notes that there has been no progress on this matter since the last meeting. She mentions that the website will be updated. Promotional materials will be ordered shortly. The idea of producing a newsletter is also worth exploring.

IAAC PRESENTATION ON THE TWO-YEAR PROCESS

The members welcome Ms. Elisabeth Gill from the IAAC, and a round-table introduction takes place.

Ms. Gill then presents the proposed two-year process. She explains that the move to shorten the environmental assessment process from five to two years had gained momentum in the context of Bill C-5. This is a reorganization rather than a legislative amendment. The initiative focuses on efficiency by making the main mitigation measures publicly available for proponents to consult at an early stage.

As part of the process to speed up the process, Indigenous consultation would begin as soon as possible, but there would be no legal requirements to compel the proponent to do so. Funding for Indigenous participation would be provided for the early stages of the project. Ms. Gill emphasizes that proponent-Indigenous relations are a key factor in ensuring a project can be assessed within two years. She stresses that residual issues can be decisive, so it is vital to establish and maintain relations as early and as effectively as possible, and to increase the frequency of interactions between the agency, the proponent and the Indigenous groups involved.

Ms. Gill notes that there would be no public consultation on the draft guidelines, with the focus instead on the planning phase and preparatory work to speed up the process. For example, identifying key issues at the outset between communities/Nations, the proponent and federal authorities – such as other government departments – would be crucial. She also refers to agreements between the agency and the proponent to specify what has been done by the proponent, particularly in the early stages. For example, it would be possible to publish a timetable agreed between the agency and the proponent on the IAAC register.

The IAAC would play a supportive role for project proponents, in particular to facilitate early-stage consultation. It states that the approach would be based on key issues rather than on public comment periods. This approach would aim to encourage proponents to focus on key issues, in line with the province's guidelines. Information for permits and authorizations could be requested alongside the impact assessment. 'One project, one assessment' agreements are currently being signed between the federal government and the provinces. In most cases, in this context, the province's timelines for conducting the environmental assessment process are adopted (as in British Columbia).

Regarding the impact assessment, it is stated that a comprehensive impact assessment submitted in sections might be accepted, rather than a single document. The proponent would present the impact assessment to the Indigenous group themselves.

Members point out that the main concern for communities is that it is easy to amend a project once it has been approved. Ms. Gill emphasizes that shorter assessment periods would enable projects to be finalized more quickly and avoid numerous amendments that alter the projects. The key issue remains the proponent's good faith and ensuring that they do not propose a piecemeal project that will be amended time and time again.

In short, speeding up the process will require the proponent to exercise great rigor, particularly by improving the coordination of Indigenous consultation with other federal authorities.

The Executive Director asks what level of interest proponents have shown so far. Ms. Gill mentions that there was interest but that nothing had been finalized yet. She adds that the new fast-track procedure would comply with existing treaties. A project submitted to COMEX could therefore not be unilaterally subject to a two-year assessment by the IAAC.

Members highlight the positive aspect of placing responsibility on proponents. This approach could serve to speed up the provincial process. The alignment of consultations (e.g. on fisheries and human health) and impact assessment guidelines with those of Quebec is also viewed favorably.

Ms. Gill mentions that the concept will be finalized and announced in spring 2026, with follow-up with Indigenous groups (national groups and organizations) but without formal consultations with individual communities, as there are no legislative changes.

There will be no formal consultation, but the IAAC may get back to us at a future meeting.

FILES

Forestry: debrief the workshop and next steps

The Analyst discusses how the workshop went and shares the following observations:

- There is a case for strengthening collaboration by pooling expertise.
- The JBACE's current review and parameters remain relevant and should continue.
- The JBACE could carry out a stakeholder satisfaction survey (covering satisfaction with the process and with the implementation of recommendations).

The secretariat will send out a thank-you letter, and the presentations will be sent to participants within the week. A summary of the workshop will also be sent to members in the coming weeks, and a proposal for the next steps will be discussed by the subcommittee.

ECCC Event

The Executive Director reminds everyone that the event will take place the following week at ÉNAP in Québec City. One member notes that 120 participants have already registered. The presentations on the JBNQA will be organized as follows: historical context with Stéphane Savard; JBNQA regimes with François Boulanger and Gilles Côté; and northern committees in the afternoon.

IAIA 2026 – presentation of the poster

The Executive Director mentions that the content has been approved by the communications subcommittee. She presents the poster to the members, who offer their initial comments. The Executive Director will send the draft poster and the document forwarded to the graphic designer to the members, who will have one week to submit their comments.

Bills C5 and Q5

A member presents the CNG's opinion on Bill 5 – *An Act to accelerate the granting of the authorizations required to carry out priority national-scale projects* (note: provincial bill). Members from other parties share their concerns about how the provisions would operate in practice, particularly for designated priority projects of national interest that are already during the environmental assessment process.

One member then highlights the precedence of the JBNQA over the provisions of Bill C-5 – *An Act to enact the Free Trade and Labour Mobility in Canada Act and the Building Canada Act*. He adds that a meeting had taken place between the CNG and the IAAC.

Northern Conservation Territories

This matter will be discussed at the next meeting.

National Architecture and Land Use Planning Policy

The Executive Director reminds members that, in 2021, the JBACE took part in the consultation on the broad guidelines for the National Urban Planning and Land Use Strategy. This strategy was combined with the Quebec Architecture Strategy to form the National Architecture and Land Use Planning Policy. The policy, comprising

four key areas, was published in June 2022. The 2023–2027 Implementation Plan was published in June 2023. It contains nine objectives spread across the four priority areas. Specific actions are set out for each objective.

A meeting was held on March 17, 2026, which was held as part of the fourth focus area: “A greater focus on the land and architecture in government actions. Objective 9 is to “Foster a sustainable and integrated approach to land use planning that takes into account the realities of Aboriginal nations”. Specific action 9.1 is entitled “Agree with First Nations and Inuit on the establishment of land use planning”

The Executive Director will finish drafting the briefing note after the meeting.

AJOURNMENT

The meeting is adjourned.

Prepared by Eva Wolf, Secretariat Officer and Michèle Leduc-Lapierre, Executive Director

Adopted on June 11, 2026



239th meeting of the JBACE

March 19, 2026, Québec City

Édifice Marie-Guyart, room RC 221.04 or via [Teams](#)

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| 9:00 | Welcome and adoption of the agenda |
| 9:05 | Administration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adoption of the minutes of the 237th and 238th meetings and follow-up on actions - Subcommittees and membership - Next meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Dates for the September (Eastmain) and Novembre (Québec City) meetings - Human resources – part-time Analyst - Finances |
| 10:00 | Meeting with the Provincial Administrator |
| 11:00 | <i>Break</i> |
| 11:15 | Debrief on the meeting with the Provincial Administrator |
| 11:30 | Work organization |
| 11:45 | <i>Lunch (Restaurant les 3 Brasseurs)</i> |
| 13:15 | Implementation of the Strategic Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1.1: Legislative framework - 1.2: Evaluation of the transparency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Presentation of the projects evaluated - 1.3: Follow-up and monitoring of authorized projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Presentation of the approach - 1.4: Cumulative impacts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Presentation of the regional planning strategy o Transportation project - 2.1: Meetings with strategic partners - 2.2: Communications |
| 14:15 | <i>Break</i> |
| 14:30 | Presentation of the IAAC on the two-year process –Elisabeth Gill, IAAC |
| 15:00 | Files <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Forestry: debrief on the workshop and next steps - ECCC event - IAIA 2026 – presentation of the poster - Bills Q5 and C5 - Northern conservation areas (NCA) - National architecture and land use planning policy |
| 16:00 | Adjourn |