

# GUIDELINES

for

## Environmental Preview Report

for the

### ***Indian Head Hatchery Expansion Project***

**Honourable Bernard Davis**

Minister

Environment and Climate Change

December 2021

## **ENVIRONMENTAL PREVIEW REPORT GUIDELINES**

The following guidelines are intended to assist the proponent, Northern Harvest Smolt Ltd. with the preparation of the Environmental Preview Report (EPR) for the Indian Head Hatchery Expansion Project. The EPR will present additional information to supplement that provided upon initial registration of the undertaking. The purpose of the information in the EPR is to assist the Minister of Environment and Climate Change in making a determination as to the potential for significant environmental effects from the proposed undertaking and whether an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be required. The EPR is expected to be as concise as possible while presenting the comprehensive information necessary to make an informed decision.

The EPR should include and update the information provided in the original registration document(s) and focus on the information gaps identified during the government and public review of the registration. The EPR should address the information gaps in sufficient detail to enable the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to make an informed decision as to the potential for significant environmental effect from the undertaking.

For clarity and ease of reference, the EPR shall include a Table of Concordance that cross-references the EPR guidelines so that points raised in the guidelines are easily located in the EPR.

The contents of the EPR should be organized according to the following format:

### **1. NAME OF UNDERTAKING:**

The undertaking has been assigned the Name "***Indian Head Hatchery Expansion Project***."

### **2. PROPONENT:**

Name the proponent and the corporate body, if any, and state the mailing and e-mail address.

Name the chief executive officer if a corporate body, and telephone number, fax number and e-mail address.

Name the principal contact person for purposes of environmental assessment and state the official title, telephone number, fax number and e-mail address.

**Please note:** this document will be posted on the Department's web page. You may provide personal contact information in a separate cover letter that will not be publicly available.

### **3. THE UNDERTAKING:**

State the nature of the project.

State the purpose/rationale/need for the project. If the proposal is in response to an established need, this should be clearly stated. Identify needs that are immediate as well as potential future needs.

### **4. DESCRIPTION OF THE UNDERTAKING:**

Provide a complete overview of the project in the following subsections, including information about the preferred choice of location, design, construction standards, operation and maintenance standards, etc.

#### **4.1 Geographical Location/Physical Components/Existing Environment:**

- Provide an accurate description of the proposed site, access road, facilities, infrastructure and equipment, including GPS location coordinates. Attach an original base map (1:25,000 scale) and/or recent air photos. This description shall include, but not be limited to:
  - a) all existing and proposed hatchery components, including infrastructure for water supply, sewage disposal, effluent discharge and waste management;
  - b) all infrastructure associated with transport of smolts from the hatchery to sea cages;
  - c) site locations and layout of all existing licenced sea cages that will receive smolts produced by the hatchery expansion;
  - d) site locations and layout of any proposed new sea cages required to receive smolts produced by the hatchery expansion; and
  - e) proximity of hatchery and sea cage sites to pollution sources such as sewer outfalls, ocean disposal sites or industrial effluents.
  
- Provide information regarding ownership and/or zoning of the land upon which the project is to be located and any restrictions imposed by that ownership or zoning, including municipal ownership/zoning, Crown, and private land.

## **4.2 Construction:**

- State the time period for proposed construction (if staged, list each stage and its approximate duration) and anticipated final construction.
- The details, materials, methods, schedule, and location of all planned construction activities must be presented and shall include, but not be limited to, the following:
  - a) expansion work completed to date as a result of the initial release decision for EA 1975 – Indian Head Hatchery Expansion Project and the remaining work required to complete the hatchery component;
  - b) any work required to permit the transport and transfer of hatchery fish to sea cages, including pipelines, right of ways, access roads, wharves, slipways, or other physical structures;
  - c) any work required for construction, installation or modification of new or existing sea cages; and
  - d) management of solid and liquid waste during construction.

Describe how the project would be constructed if there was a future requirement to decommission and rehabilitate the area.

## **4.3 Operation and Maintenance:**

All aspects of the operation and maintenance of the proposed development should be presented including and in relation to the potential environmental effects of transporting and adding additional smolt to the sea farms, including illustrations where applicable, and shall include but not be limited to the following:

- a) a description of equipment and procedures associated with fish-rearing operations including acquisition of eggs, all hatchery growth stages, transport and transfer of fish to sea cages, grow-out within sea cages; and final harvest and transfer to a processing facility;
- b) a description of biosecurity protocols associated with the hatchery and sea cage operations;
- c) a description of aquatic animal health veterinary services through all the stages identified in a) above;
- d) proposed use and purpose of antibiotics, anesthetics, vaccines, pesticides, and disinfectants;

- e) a description of freshwater and saltwater use in the hatchery/hatchery expansion, from source to discharge;
- f) identification of the groundwater source and operational water withdrawal volumes required for the hatchery expansion;
- g) identification of the minimum water quality parameters required to support all hatchery operations as well as the industry or regulatory standards they meet or exceed. Describe all treatment, testing and monitoring of intake water to ensure sufficient quality for fish life support, including processes and technology involved with screening and filtration, UV radiation, oxygenation, aeration, nitrogen removal, or any other proposed treatment;
- h) a description of all treatment, testing and monitoring of hatchery effluent and identify industry/regulatory standards for the treatment of hatchery effluent prior to discharge;
- i) a description of the anticipated volume of waste to be generated and waste management methods during normal operations;
- j) planned stocking densities for the hatchery and sea cages, including maximum densities at peak production;
- k) measures that will be undertaken to monitor water conditions and quality in the hatchery and sea cages, including water temperature and dissolved oxygen;
- l) use of integrated pest management for sea lice control and monitoring, including provision of designated veterinary services;
- m) methods for fish containment within sea cages as well as during any transfer periods;
- n) methods to recapture fish should escapes occur;
- o) a description of potential predators and controls; and
- p) a description of all government reporting, including incident management and public reporting requirements related to the hatchery and sea cage operations.

## 5. ALTERNATIVES

Alternative means of carrying out the project to meet the stated purpose and rationale must be provided.

The EPR must identify, describe, and evaluate alternative means and locations of carrying out the project that are technically and economically feasible. The following steps for addressing alternatives are recommended:

- alternatives to sea cage method of grow out;
- Identify the environmental effects of each alternative means and location;
- Identify the **preferred** means and location and provide rationale for selection; and,
- Provide reasons for the rejection of alternative sites.

Include information from previous project related studies describing alternate locations that were considered, including the expansion of existing sites, reasons for rejection, and reasons supporting the proposed site as the preferred location, if applicable.

Alternative locations should be clearly outlined on maps of a suitable scale (i.e. 1:50,000, 1:25,000) and aerial imagery.

## 6. POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS and MITIGATION:

Provide information regarding the potential effects of the project on the environment and the proposed mitigation to be used to avoid adverse environmental effects. This section should include, but not be limited to, the following:

- a) Impacts to freshwater sources. The EPR should provide up to date results of testing, monitoring and modelling that has been conducted to determine the capacity and suitability of the aquifer to supply the freshwater requirements of the hatchery expansion.
- b) Disease transmission. Describe mitigation strategies that will limit potential pathogen spread between farmed and wild populations.
- c) Disposal of High Risk Material waste. Describe biosecurity measures and contingency plans for fish disposal due to mass mortality and depopulation events due to reportable diseases. Identify disposal sites and capacity of those sites to accommodate the maximum volume of waste that may be generated by a mass mortality or reportable disease event.

- d) Risk to wild Atlantic salmon and operational mitigations. This should include:
  - i. identification of scheduled and non-scheduled Atlantic salmon bearing rivers near sea cages;
  - ii. mitigations to prevent the potential transfer of pathogens between farmed and wild Atlantic salmon;
  - iii. potential ecological effects of interactions between escaped fish and wild salmon populations and mitigating activities; and,
  - iv. measures that will be undertaken to support Fisheries and Oceans Canada efforts to monitor nearby rivers for escaped farmed salmon and signs of genetic introgression.
- e) Impacts on benthic habitat. Identify methods to protect fish and fish habitat beneath sea cage sites from the effects of deposits due to feed and fecal matter. Identify regulatory thresholds of benthic biochemical oxygen demand and proposed mitigations if thresholds are exceeded.
- f) Chemotherapeutants. Describe the environmental concerns and controls used to manage chemotherapeutants. Describe potential impacts on, and mitigations for, non-target species.
- g) Impact to Species at Risk. Identify any Species at Risk in the area that may be impacted by hatchery and sea cage operations and provide mitigations for protection.
- h) Potential for proliferation of aquatic invasive species due to sea cage operation and due to hatchery effluent discharge.
- i) Risks associated with extreme environmental conditions periodically observed at the hatchery and sea cage locations, including temperature events and low dissolved oxygen levels, and the operational measures that will be undertaken to mitigate the risk of abnormal mortality events.

Identify how the project avoids interference with the rights of other legitimate land owners/users, including, but not limited to:

- a) other fisheries including commercial, Indigenous or recreational fisheries; and
- b) tourism or recreational activities.

## **7. DECOMMISSIONING and REHABILITATION:**

Describe all aspects of the decommissioning and rehabilitation plans for the project, assuming the eventual need to eliminate the entire project footprint from the landscape.

**8. PROJECT- RELATED DOCUMENTS:**

Provide a bibliography of all project-related documents already generated by or for the project (e.g., feasibility study, engineering reports, etc).

**9. PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING:**

An Open House Public Information Session shall be held at a place adjacent to or in the geographical area of the undertaking, or as the Minister may determine, in order to:

- a) provide information concerning the undertaking to the people whose environment may be affected by the undertaking;
- b) record and respond to the concerns of the local community regarding the environmental effects of the undertaking; and,
- c) present the information gathered to fulfill the requirements of Section 5 of these guidelines.

The proposed format of the public information session must be presented in advance to the Minister for approval. The Public Information session must adhere to all restrictions to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 that are in place at the time of the session. Information sessions may be conducted by virtual means through a live streaming, video conferencing or teleconferencing process, such as Facebook Live, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Skype, Webex, Go To Meeting, and others.

You are required to notify the Minister and the public of the scheduled meeting **not fewer than 7 days** before that meeting. Public concerns shall be addressed in a separate section of the EPR.

Protocol for these public sessions will comply with Section 10 of the Environmental Assessment Regulations, 2003. Public notification specifications are outlined in Appendix A.

**10. APPROVAL OF THE UNDERTAKING:**

List the main permits, licences, approvals, and other forms of authorization required for the undertaking, together with the names of the authorities responsible for issuing them (e.g., federal government department, provincial government department, municipal council, etc.)



The required 1 paper copy of the EPR, and an electronic version for posting to the Environmental Assessment website, should be sent together with a covering letter to:

Minister  
Environment and Climate Change  
P.O. Box 8700  
St. John's NL A1B 4J6

The Minister reserves the right to require the provision of additional paper copies, if needed, at the proponent's expense.

## **11. FEE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

Undertakings with an estimated capital cost greater than \$5 million are subject to the Department's fees for environmental assessment found at <https://www.gov.nl.ca/ecc/env-assessment/fees/>. You are to email an estimate of the capital cost of the undertaking using current standard estimating practices and construction costs, to the following email address:

Director of Environmental Assessment  
[EAProjectComments@gov.nl.ca](mailto:EAProjectComments@gov.nl.ca)

## APPENDIX A

### Public Notices

Under the provisions of the Environmental Assessment Regulations 2003, Section 10, and where the approved Guidelines require a public information session(s), the following specified public notification requirements must be met by the proponent prior to each meeting:

#### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

Public Information Session on the Proposed

*Name of undertaking*  
*Location of undertaking*

shall be held at  
*Date and Time*  
*Location*

This session shall be conducted by the proponent,  
*Proponent name and contact phone number/email address,*  
as part of the environmental assessment for this project.

The purpose of this session is to describe all aspects of the proposed project, to describe the activities associated with it, and to provide an opportunity for all interested persons to request information or state their concerns.

**ALL ARE WELCOME**

#### **MINIMUM INFORMATION CONTENT OF PUBLIC ADVERTISEMENT**

- Minimum newspaper ad size: 2 column widths. Minimum posted ad size: 7" x 5"
- Minimum newspaper ad coverage: Weekend preceding meeting and 3 consecutive days prior to meeting date; to be run in newspaper locally distributed within meeting area or newspaper with closest local distribution area.
- Minimum posted ad coverage: Local Town or City website (if permitted), proponent's web site (if applicable), and local community channel (if applicable), to be posted continually for 1 full week prior to meeting date.
- Social media posts (optional).

