

Federal Authority Advice Record (FAAR)**FAAR Response must be submitted by December 10, 2025**

Matane Port Facilities Expansion Project – Société portuaire du Bas-Saint-Laurent et de la Gaspésie

Registry File: 90008

Department/Agency	Health Canada
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1. Will your department or agency exercise a **power, perform a duty or function**, or provide **financial assistance**, related to the project to enable it to be carried out in whole or in part?

No

As relevant,

- a) Specify the power, duty or function, or financial assistance, and the likelihood that it will be required to construct the project, based on the Initial Project Description, as either Required, Potential, Likely, Unlikely or Not Required
 - b) Describe any associated Indigenous or public consultation, including timelines
 - c) Describe any associated information requirements (e.g., alternative means assessment, habitat offsetting), and specify those that may be coordinated with the impact assessment process, if an impact assessment is required
 - d) Identify any associated project-specific guidance or issues of which the proponent should be aware, or information the proponent should provide
 - e) Indicate whether your department or agency has identified any power that it will not be exercising or may not be able to exercise to allow the project to be carried out, in whole or in part.
2. **Using Table 1**, identify project- and context- specific **key issues**, based on the expertise within your mandate¹ and the information in your possession, including the Initial Project Description, any exchanges with the proponent or others related to the project and known means to address the effects of the project. For each key issue:
- a) Specify the key issue (e.g., specific species and location)
 - b) Specify the project component or activity linked to the key issue
 - c) Explain why it's a key issue based on:
 - i. biophysical effect pathway(s) from the specific project component or activity
 - ii. concern unique to the project or a priority within your mandate
 - iii. the issue being material² to decision making under the *Impact Assessment Act*
 - d) Identify how the issue could be resolved, including through means other than an impact assessment
 - e) Identify additional information the proponent could provide including to give confidence on how the issue can be addressed through other means.

Isabelle Lampron, Manager,
Environmental Health Program –
Québec region

Name and title of Departmental /
Agency Responder

¹ Refer to the [Memoranda of Understanding with IAAC](#).

² An issue is material to decision making if its analysis is anticipated to affect the conclusions on (1) whether adverse effects within federal jurisdiction or direct and incidental adverse effects (collectively adverse federal effects) are likely not significant, or of low, medium or high significance; (2) appropriate mitigation measures for significant adverse federal effects; or (3) justification in the public interest.

December 9th, 2025

Date

Table 1: Key Issues to inform the impact assessment process

This table should outline key issues to inform the impact assessment process, including whether an impact assessment is required and, if so, the scope of the assessment and tailoring of the Tailored Impact Statement Guidelines.

Key issues are the major concerns directly related to a project component or activity, the analysis of which is anticipated to be material to decision-making under the *Impact Assessment Act*.

Federal authorities' advice should be guided by the identification and resolution of key issues. If an impact assessment is required, it will be focused on key issues.

Comment ID	a) Key issue	b) Project component or activity	c)(i) Biophysical effect pathway(s)	c)(ii) Concern unique to the project or a priority within your mandate	c)(iii) Material to federal decision-making	d) Means for issue resolution	e) Additional information from the proponent
<p>Identify comments by organization and comment number.</p> <p>e.g.: IAAC-01</p>	<p>Specify the key issue (e.g., specific species and location).</p>	<p>Identify the project component or activity linked to the key issue.</p> <p>Be specific about the nature, scale, novelty and complexity or the component or activity.</p>	<p>Identify the specific biophysical effect pathway between the project component or activity and the affected environmental or human receptor (including Indigenous Peoples).</p>	<p>Describe why it's a key issue within the mandate of your department or agency, including in terms of priorities of the federal government and in terms of anticipated likelihood, severity or uncertainty of effects.</p> <p>Identify if the key issue is common for projects of this nature or in this sector, or whether it's unique to this project due to its complexity, size or novelty; a sensitive or rare receiving environment; and/or proximity of sensitive environmental or human receptors (including Indigenous Peoples).</p>	<p>Describe why the key issue is material to decision-making as either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an adverse effect within federal jurisdiction, or a direct or incidental adverse effect, that may be significant based on available evidence including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ federal experts' knowledge and experience with past project assessments; ○ presence of sensitive species, habitats or human receptors (including Indigenous Peoples); ○ novel or complex project activities, components or technologies; ○ high uncertainties in effects or in the effectiveness of mitigation measures; ○ unknown or unproven mitigation; or • a factor for the justification in the public interest anticipated to be material to decision-making such as a likely positive effect contributing to sustainability, to Canada's environmental 	<p>Describe how the key issue could be resolved or addressed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any means, including powers, duties, functions, frameworks, policies or guidance that your department or agency has; • Any means, including powers, duties, functions, frameworks, policies or guidance from another jurisdiction, including the province; • Common, proven, well-understood or standard mitigation measures to mitigate the effect or effect pathway(s); or • Commitments made by the proponent (e.g., in the Initial Project Description). 	<p>Describe information the proponent can provide, or commitments the proponent can make, in their Response to the Summary of Issues that would provide confidence that the issue can be resolved by existing means.</p> <p>Consider whether information, studies, analyses or collaborative work with other authorities would be required to address the issue beyond existing means.</p>

					<i>obligations or climate change commitments or in supporting governmental priorities, such as reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.</i>		
HC-01	<p>Fishing – Lobster - Wolastoqiyik Wamsipekwik First Nation (WWFN)</p> <p>Fishing - Mi'gmaq First Nation (MMFN)</p>	<p>Sediment dredging and the management of accidental spills are common practices for port facilities. However, the cumulative effects of industrial and port development in the St. Lawrence River area may make the management of environmental contaminants more challenging.</p>	<p>Water contamination can have an indirect impact on human health through the accumulation of undesirable substances (bioaccumulation) in traditional foods that are consumed. Members of the WWFN have been lobster fishing near the Port of Matane for several years (IPD, p.86). The larger study area is used by the MMFN, among others, for fishing-related activities (IPD, p.86).</p> <p>Access to traditional foods is also very important from a cultural perspective for First Nations Peoples.</p>	<p>Under the <i>Impact Assessment Act</i> (IAA), Health Canada (HC) provides expert information and knowledge to support the assessment of health impacts.</p> <p>The issue is common but becomes a key issue due to cumulative effects and the use of the river by Indigenous peoples for fishing.</p> <p>Moreover, health impacts due to contamination of traditional foods are generally not addressed outside of an impact assessment.</p> <p>Contaminant levels in sediment appear to have been compared to guidelines for the protection of aquatic life (Occasional Effects Level (OEL), Probable Effect Level (PEL), etc., see p. 75). Thus, contaminants of potential concern for human health remain uncertain.</p>	<p>The key issue would correspond to an “adverse effect within federal jurisdiction that is non-negligible and occurring in Canada to the health, social or economic conditions of the Indigenous peoples of Canada” (IAA, Section 2).</p>	<p>The proponent plans to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement standard mitigation measures to limit the release of suspended particulate matter (SPM). • Develop an emergency response plan. <p>The proponent could propose to affected First Nations the establishment of a water quality and traditional foods monitoring committee. The committee could then decide on contaminant levels that would trigger additional measures (monitoring, mitigation, compensation) and the communication plan for community members.</p>	<p>Demonstrate that the criteria used to assess contaminant concentrations in sediment (OEL, PEL, etc.) are adequate for protecting the health of individuals using the river for fishing purposes.</p> <p>Demonstrate how monitoring suspended particulate matter (SPM) and water quality will enable decision-making on additional measures to prevent the accumulation of contaminants of potential concern in traditional foods consumed. This includes, above all, identifying all contaminants of potential concern.</p> <p>As part of the annual emergency response training, use a scenario of accidental contamination of traditional foods and demonstrate how human health is protected.</p> <p>For more information on principles of human health risk assessment in traditional foods, please consult:</p> <p>HEALTH CANADA (HC), 2023. <i>Guidance for Evaluating Human Health Effects in Impact Assessment: Country Foods</i>. Available online: https://publications.gc.ca/site/fra/9.930343/publication.html</p>
HC-02	Human Health – Air Quality (including dust)	<p>The following activities are common for port facilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction work; • Transport and traffic of road vehicles and ships (construction and operation). 	<p>Ambient air quality can be affected by machinery exhaust emissions, dust, and fuel combustion by-products. The main contaminants identified by the proponent are dust (PM_{2.5}), carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), and sulfur dioxide (SO₂) (IPD, p.107).</p>	<p>Under the <i>Impact Assessment Act</i> (IAA), Health Canada (HC) provides expert information and knowledge to support the assessment of health impacts.</p> <p>Air quality is a common valued component for this type of project but becomes a key issue due to cumulative effects in the region. Air quality-</p>	<p>The project represents a federal undertaking, where the issue would correspond to a “non-negligible adverse effect” (IAA, end of section 2).</p>	<p>The <i>ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux du Québec</i> and/or the <i>Direction régionale de santé publique du Centre intégré de santé et de services sociaux (CISSS) du Bas-Saint-Laurent</i> could be involved in the provincial impact assessment process.</p> <p>The provincial guidelines for completing an environmental impact assessment also state that potential health impacts will be estimated based on <u>criteria</u></p>	<p>Since the proponent has carried out atmospheric contaminant dispersion modeling and states that very few exceedances of applicable criteria are expected (IPD, p.109), the next step would be to complete a pathways of effects analysis up to the impact on human health.</p> <p>Health Canada recommends that a health assessment be conducted when exceedances of applicable air quality criteria are anticipated.</p> <p>For more information, please consult:</p> <p>HEALTH CANADA (HC), 2023. <i>Guidance for Evaluating Human Health Effects in Impact Assessment: Air Quality</i>.</p>

			<p>Residences and commercial activities are located near the project. Traditional Indigenous fishing practices take place in the port area.</p> <p>Health impacts depend on the nature of the contaminant, its concentration, and the duration of exposure.</p>	<p>related health impacts are generally not explicitly addressed outside of impact assessments.</p> <p>A comparison of modeled concentrations at sensitive receptor locations against Canadian Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS) and World Health Organization guidelines should be carried out to assess health risk. Limiting the analysis to provincial criteria when they are less conservative (e.g., 1-hour NO₂) could underestimate the health risk for more sensitive populations.</p>		<p><u>grounded in public health considerations.</u></p> <p>However, the above-mentioned organizations should be contacted to confirm their participation in the provincial impact assessment process and to clarify the air quality criteria they would like to see applied to the project.</p>	<p>Available online: https://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/9.902734/publication.html</p>
HC-03	Human Health – Annoyance and Sleep Disturbance Related to Noise	<p>The following activities are common for port facilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction work; • Transport and traffic of road vehicles and ships (construction and operation) 	<p>Noise levels can increase locally due to construction activities, the use of machinery, and increased traffic on and off the site. Human health impacts may vary depending on the timing of the activity (night/day), the characteristics of the noise (tonal, impulsive, highly impulsive, or high energy impulsive), the sound level, the duration, and the frequency of exceedances of criteria (reference values) based on human health.</p>	<p>Under the <i>Impact Assessment Act</i> (IAA), Health Canada (HC) provides expert information and knowledge to support the assessment of health impacts.</p> <p>The “sound environment” is a common valued component for this type of project, but health impacts are generally not explicitly addressed in impact studies.</p> <p>Health-based criteria applicable to the project should be used.</p>	<p>The project represents a federal undertaking, where the issue would correspond to a “non-negligible adverse effect” (IAA, end of section 2).</p> <p>Residences and commercial activities are located near the project.</p> <p>Traditional Indigenous fishing practices take place in the port area.</p>	<p>The <i>ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux du Québec</i> and/or the <i>Direction régionale de santé publique</i> du CISSS du Bas-Saint-Laurent could be involved in the provincial impact assessment process.</p> <p>The provincial guidelines also state that potential health impacts will be estimated based on criteria grounded in public health considerations and invite the proponent to consult the <i>Institut National de Santé Publique du Québec’s Avis sur une politique québécoise de lutte au bruit environnemental : pour des environnements sonores sains.</i></p> <p>However, the above-mentioned organizations should be contacted to confirm their participation in the provincial impact assessment process and to clarify the noise criteria they would like to see applied to the project.</p>	<p>Since the proponent has carried out noise modeling and states that very few exceedances of applicable criteria are expected (IPD, p.109), the next step would be for the proponent to complete a pathways of effects analysis up to the impact on human health.</p> <p>Health Canada recommends that an a health assessment be conducted using health-based criteria applicable to the project, such as sleep disturbance, the percentage of highly annoyed individuals, etc., taking into account existing background noise (baseline + project).</p> <p>Health Canada recommends the proponent provide details of the complaint reception and resolution process. Beyond applicable noise thresholds (decibels), the uncertainty and variability of reactions to noise underscore the importance of a community engagement approach prior to the start of construction.</p> <p>For more information, please consult:</p> <p>HEALTH CANADA (HC), 2023. <i>Guidance for Evaluating Human Health Effects in Impact Assessment: Noise.</i> Available online: https://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/9.930338/publication.html</p>

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