

Requests to Federal Agencies and Departments for the Regional Assessment in the Ring of Fire Area from the Regional Assessment Working Group – Package 1

Date: September 25, 2025

Guidance

Please submit responses by **October 31, 2025** via email sent to regionalrof-cdfregionale@iaac-aeic.gc.ca. If you need more time to respond, please provide a progress update by the deadline.

Table 1 below lists all general and targeted requests developed by Regional Assessment Working Group (“Working Group”). The Impact Assessment Agency of Canada has identified recipients by relevance to the topic of the requests. In case any were missed, we encourage all federal departments or agencies that are part of the federal review team to read all requests and respond if you have relevant expertise. If you have already provided the requested information in a previous submission, you may simplify your response by including a reference instead of repeating the information.

The Working Group encourages you to respond in **plain language**, and, where appropriate, to presenting information in graphic formats in addition to text.

Context

The federal review team has provided the Working Group with information to support the Regional Assessment process, such as past and ongoing programs, expertise, funding and other references to relevant initiatives. This information was shared via Federal Authority Advice Records (FAARs) received in March and September 2025, presentations provided on June 4 and 5, 2025, and some via response to the Public Call for Information.

In certain instances, the federal review team made references to initiatives (funding, projects, programs) to which they contribute or collaborate in with other parties, such as academia, industry, other jurisdictions (provincial, municipal), and non-governmental organizations. The Working Group would like to obtain more detail to better understand all projects and initiatives currently underway in the Ring of Fire Area and draw upon the available expertise that is relevant to the assessment priorities listed in section 7.5 of the [Terms of Reference](#). The Working Group is developing an inventory of the programs and initiatives relevant its assessment priorities. Understanding these as well as the various roles and responsibilities from all relevant parties will help the Working Group draft the interim and final reports, including to fulfil the requirement of its [Terms of Reference](#) to formulate recommendations to appropriate entities.

References

- Presentations to Regional Assessment Working Group ([CIAR 186](#))
- Federal Authority Advice Records (FAARs) and other submissions:
 - Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) ([CIAR 179](#))
 - Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) ([CIAR 169](#)),
 - Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) ([CIAR 170](#)),
 - Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario (FedNor) ([CIAR 173](#)),
 - Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) ([CIAR 167](#)),
 - Health Canada ([CIAR 180](#)),
 - Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) ([CIAR 177](#)),
 - Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) ([CIAR 178](#)),
 - Transport Canada ([CIAR 176](#)),
 - Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE) ([CIAR 166](#)),
 - Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) ([CIAR 195](#)),
 - Library and Archives Canada (LAC) ([CIAR 197](#)),
 - Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada (HICC) (CIAR pending),
 - Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) (CIAR pending),
 - Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) ([CIAR 196](#)),
 - Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED) (CIAR pending),
 - Statistics Canada (CIAR pending)
- Call for Information and Data ([CIAR 191](#))

Table 1. Overview – List of Requests and Targeted Recipients

Federal agencies and departments are invited to provide responses to all requests for which they have relevant expertise. The Table below identifies who the Working Group believes might have relevant expertise to contribute, without limiting who can respond.

#	Request	AAFC	CIRNAC	CMHC	ECCC	ESDC	FEDNOR	DFO	Health Canada	HICC	ISED	ISC	LAC	NRCAN	Parks Canada	PHAC	Statistics Canada	Transport Canada	WAGE
1	Projects and Initiatives relevant for the Ring of Fire Area	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2	Priority topics identified by the Working Group – Information and Gaps	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
3	Critical Minerals Strategy – Economics				X						X			X					
4	River systems – Scale of studies, existing information and gaps				X			X						X				X	
5	Community wellbeing, Education, Training and Employment					X	X		X			X							X
6	Health Inequity								X							X			
7	Homelands and Reservations, and Housing			X						X		X							
8	Species at Risk				X		X	X				X							
9	Protected Areas				X			X							X				
10	Federal Initiative on Consultation		X																
11	Bird Conservation Strategy				X														
12	Treaty Rights and Wildlife Management		X		X			X				X							
13	Cumulative Effects Assessments				X									X					
14	Capacity-building						X					X							
15	Education and literacy											X							
16	Food Security and Nutrition	X							X			X							

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17	Language Revival and Cultural Heritage											X	X						
18	Development Scenarios																	X	
19	Feasibility of development in this area				X						X			X				X	

Table 2. Requests to Federal Agencies and Departments

#	Targeted recipient(s)	Topic	Request
1	All	Projects and Initiatives relevant for the Ring of Fire Area	<p>a) Provide a list of the projects and initiatives in which you are involved in that relate to the Ring of Fire Assessment Area. For each item, include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Project name, description and timeframe ii. Lead organization iii. Other collaborators iv. Your role v. Geographic location (include maps if available) <p>b) Explain if and how Indigenous Nations and communities in the Ring of Fire Area collaborated in these projects and initiatives.</p> <p>c) Would you be willing to give a public presentation about any of these initiatives to the working group, and if so which ones?</p>
2	All	Priority topics identified by the Working Group – Information and Gaps	<p>In the Call for Information and Data, the Working Group identified key priorities for information gathering and gap identification at this time. Table 3 reflects these key priorities.</p> <p>Referring to the priorities and issues listed in Table 3, based on your expertise, provide advice on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the best sources of existing data, including means to access it, b) adequate spatial and temporal boundaries to assess impacts, c) key indicators to describe potential impacts, d) known data gaps or uncertainties, and e) suggestions for studies or other ways to fill those gaps.
3	ECCC, ISED, and NRCan	Critical Minerals Strategy – Economics and Valuation	<p>The Working Group requires information to better understand how industry and governments estimate potential benefits from critical mineral development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Describe and explain the choice of methods used in federal reporting to estimate economic benefits related to mining critical minerals in the Ring of Fire Area. b) Share any information you have about how financial revenues from mining in the Ring of Fire might flow to various parties, such as who would benefit at local, regional, national, and international scales. In addition, or if this information is not available, please recommend: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. existing case studies that could be used as examples, and ii. sources of expertise within or outside government that could be approached by the Working Group to provide this information. c) Explain if and how the federal government has conducted studies to value potentially impacted ecosystem goods and services in comparison to projected revenues from critical minerals mining.
4	DFO, ECCC, Transport Canada, and NRCan	River systems – Scale of studies, existing information and gaps	<p>The Working Group is interested in baseline studies and analyses of potential impacts at a river-system scale related to geochemistry, hydrogeology, hydrology, water quality and quantify, fish and aquatic wildlife, and navigability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Identify existing studies at the spatial scale of the major river systems in the Ring of Fire Assessment Area, i.e.: Abitibi River, Attawapiskat River, Ekwan River, Kenogami River, Mattagami River, Missinabi River, Moose River, the Lower and Upper Albany Rivers, and the Winisk River.

			<p>b) If this information does not exist, advise on how it would be possible to obtain portraits of these river systems, including if there are plans underway to conduct these studies.</p> <p>c) Based on your experience in project-level impact assessments, advise whether there are standard mitigation measures that may be applicable to protect the water systems in the Ring of Fire assessment area from potential impacts for development activities in general.</p> <p>d) Include a discussion of the key sources of uncertainty unique to this assessment area related to the effectiveness of these measures, and what your role might be in reducing these uncertainties.</p>
5	Health Canada, ISC, ISC-FNIHB, ESDC, FedNor, WAGE	Community wellbeing, Education, Training and Employment	<p>The Working Group is interested to know federal programs and initiatives related to community wellbeing, education, training, and employment are specifically helpful to meet the needs of communities in the assessment area.</p> <p>The Working Group also identified that groups that have the greatest potential to benefit from potential employment opportunities are often those facing challenges that are barriers to access employment opportunities (e.g. mental health, inter-generational trauma, drugs, and long-term healing programs).</p> <p>a) Identify whether and how your programs and initiatives related to community wellbeing, education, training, and employment are focused on addressing needs of communities in the assessment area. Include lessons learned and best practices from your agency's or department's experience in implementing such programs and initiatives.</p> <p>b) Specifically address how programs can work towards improving level of literacy and bring specialized skills training to remote communities.</p> <p>c) Explain how your programs and initiatives offer support specifically for vulnerable populations to access benefits of potential development. Provide examples relevant to the assessment area.</p> <p>d) If applicable, explain and illustrate the various collaborations and partnership required to carry out these programs and initiatives.</p>
6	Health Canada, PHAC	Health Inequity	<p>a) Provide key findings specific to the partnered First Nations of the Working Group of health inequality data and information produced by the Pan-Canadian Health Inequalities Reporting Initiative for First Nations in Canada.</p> <p>b) Describe existing or planned programs or initiatives to address health inequality in these communities, including sources of uncertainty for health reporting and recommendations on how to reduce this uncertainty.</p>
7	ISC, CMHC, HICC	Homelands and Reservations, and Housing	<p>a) Share what you know about housing and infrastructure trends in the assessment area, such as rates of overcrowding, waitlists for adequate housing, housing in need of repair, and housing deficits.</p> <p>b) Describe the federal initiatives that support housing for community members in the assessment area, and elaborate on the future of these initiatives.</p> <p>c) Identify all mechanisms available to communities in the assessment area to expand their reserves to address growing populations and infrastructure demands related to potential development (not limited to the Addition to Reserve process).</p> <p>d) Based on your experience, share lessons learned and best practices on how Indigenous communities can enhance use of their homelands to build local capacity while also enhancing local economic activities (including traditional activities).</p>
8	DFO, ECCC, FedNor, and ISC	Species at Risk	<p>a) Provide summaries of knowledge on species at risk and their habitat in the assessment area, including but not limited to threats, mitigation options, and knowledge gaps.</p> <p>b) Comment on how Indigenous knowledge is braided in this knowledge.</p> <p>c) Identify any plans for conservation and protection measures focused on the species at risk in the assessment area.</p>

9	DFO, ECCC and Parks Canada	Protected Areas	<p>a) Provide an overview of the various conservation and protection measures and that could contribute to protection of sensitive areas in the assessment area. Include a description of their purpose, how they complement each other, the lead organisations, and current and future priorities related to the assessment area.</p> <p>b) For each measure, identify how federal agencies and departments achieve conservation and protections goals in partnership with other organizations, including First Nations and environmental groups.</p>
10	CIRNAC	Federal Initiative on Consultation	<p>a) Describe the Federal Initiative on Consultation, focusing on how it may be relevant for potential studies related to potential development in the assessment area.</p> <p>b) Provide an update on the program's current funding status and plans to renew funding.</p>
11	ECCC	Bird Conservation Strategy	<p>a) Please summarize the key findings from the Bird Conservation Strategies that overlap with the assessment area as they related to recommended conservation and protection measures.</p> <p>b) Describe how various parties have a role in the implementations of the conservation strategies, with a focus on the assessment area.</p>
12	ISC, ISC-FNIHB, CIRNAC, ECCC, DFO	Treaty Rights and Wildlife Management	<p>a) Explain whether and how you obtain information about non-Indigenous land users on traditional territories for hunting, fishing, and harvesting purposes without consent.</p> <p>b) Explain whether and how this information factors into federal responsibilities related to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. protection of wildlife and their habitat; and ii. documenting and any action relate to protection of Aboriginal and Treaty Rights. </p>
13	ECCC and NRCan	Cumulative Effects Assessments	<p>a) Identify programs and initiatives related to describing or quantifying cumulative effects within the assessment area.</p> <p>b) For each, summarize the focus of the assessment, the approach used to assess cumulative effects, key assumptions and limitations, and any key findings to date as well as future plans to continue or conduct new studies.</p>
14	FedNor	Capacity-building	<p>a) Describe the Prosperity and Growth Strategy for Northern Ontario, the Regional Economic Growth through Innovation program, the Northern Ontario Development Program, the Community Futures Program, and the Economic Development Initiative and how your can facilitate participation by communities in the assessment areas.</p> <p>b) Identify known barriers for participation in these initiatives by Indigenous communities in the assessment area, and potential solutions to address them.</p>
15	ISC	Education and literacy	<p>a) Describe federal roles and responsibilities related to education and literacy in the assessment area.</p> <p>b) Advise on how education and literacy programs can be used or designed to ensure that Indigenous communities have access to education required to benefit from potential development in a manner that is equitable with populations that are non-Indigenous and less remote.</p>
16	AAFC, Health Canada, ISC and ISC-FNIHB	Food Security and Nutrition	<p>a) Share what you know about food security conditions in the assessment area.</p> <p>b) Describe federal programs related to food security and nutrition that are available in the assessment area. Explain whether and how these programs are targeted to address food insecurity and barriers to traditional food access in First Nation communities, which can be associated with negative effects to social, mental, and physical well-being.</p> <p>c) Explain how development has been observed to positively or adversely impact health in Indigenous communities, such as through changes in access to land, changes in cost of living, etc.</p>

17	ISC and LAC	Language Revival and Cultural Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Describe programs or initiatives for learning and preservation of traditional language use, including details on how success is measured for languages in the assessment area. b) Provide information and data about traditional language retention in First Nations communities in the assessment area, and describe any plans or suggestions to enhance learning and preservation of traditional languages. c) Offer suggestions and ideas on how existing federal programs could be focused to the assessment area for language revival and learning about cultural identity. Include example of how other Indigenous communities in Canada have used archives and other historical records to reclaim and revive their cultural heritage.
18	Transport Canada	Development Scenarios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Provide a description of the existing or planned development activities under Transport Canada’s jurisdiction in the assessment area. b) Advise on the development activities you anticipate may occur in the assessment area for different development sectors and intensities, this should include scenarios related to railways, roads, seaports and marine terminals, airports, etc.
19	ECCC, ISED, NRCan, and Transport Canada	Feasibility of development in this area	<p>Based on the sensitivity of peatlands in the assessment area and their role in global carbon sequestration, as well as the challenges related to building infrastructure on peatlands, the Working Group requests that you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Provide a summary of the state of knowledge regarding the sustainability of building on peatlands. b) Advise on the worst-case scenarios that have been explored for impacts of future development on the ecosystems of the Hudson Bay Lowlands, including but not limited to impacts on carbon storage. c) Explain how sensitive the ecosystems in the assessment area are to climate change and explain whether there has been research done on the interactions between climate change and potential development for this area. d) Describe all innovative approaches being explored and invested in by Canada to enable development in the assessment area, across all possible sectors, beyond mining.

Table 3. Key priorities – Existing information and gaps (see request #2)

Theme	Priority	Issues
To be well together (Community wellbeing)	Community safety (especially for Indigenous women, men and youth)	Policing of roads; Drug trafficking; Safety supports/ programs; Safety issues around mining/ work camps (ex: substance use, violence, MMIWG2S); Human trafficking; Environmental hazards & areas of concern; Evacuation plans
	Family, youth and children	Poverty and Homelessness; Elder care; Impacts on the family unit; Services and supports for children and families
	Housing and Infrastructure	Overall housing picture; Infrastructure development and maintenance; Community infrastructure deficit; Land base expansion; Transportation infrastructure; Waste management and recycling
	Education	Special needs within communities; Distance education opportunities; Education levels within communities
	Food Security	Food shipping and storage; Potential for growing food locally; Food insecurity, costs and subsidies
	Economic development and livelihoods	Cost of living; Power supply ownership opportunities; Renewable energies; Employment and jobs availability; Building community economic development; Potential for members to fill project jobs
	Community health, including exceptional needs, mental, emotional and physical wellbeing	Mental wellness; Health issues (incl. rare and chronic conditions)
Cultural and spiritual wellbeing	Physical and cultural heritage, including burial sites	Sites of archaeological significance; Historical trade routes and ecological corridors; Identification of routes, corridors, and cultural sites linked to routes and corridors
	Cultural vitality and traditional practices, including traditional food and medicine	Loss of cultural practices, ceremonies, etc
	Continued way of life and exercising Aboriginal and Treaty rights	Enacting and protecting rights, way of life; Treaty rights education
	Community-based teachings, including oral history	Oral history vs. Crown info
	Language maintenance and revival	Use of traditional languages
	Traditional community processes for deliberation and decisions	Potential for new governance structures
	Exercise of natural law	
Social and Economic Equity	Intra and intergenerational values	Income distribution within communities.
	Social and economic conditions, including immediate and long-term social and economic benefits	Potential partnerships with developers; Industry investment in communities; Regional collective approaches to Ec. Dev.; Capturing economic benefits of projects; Economic leakage
	Diverse economies and livelihoods	Land-based economy; Workforce participation
	Indigenous Women, girls and two-spirit individuals	Economic barriers and benefits for women; Childcare; Violence and harassment
	Current use of lands and resources for traditional purposes, including access to land and resources	On-the- land activities; Harvesting

	Access to skill development and economic opportunities	Successes and challenges re: education/ employment; Indigenous employment at projects
Healthy Environment Relationships	Water and river systems, including flows	Groundwater effects; Water usage (processing); Changes to flow (dams)
	Wildlife and wildlife habitat, including species at risk, migratory birds, and fish and fish habitat	Effects on harvest species; Impacts on ecological corridors; Effects to spiritual beings; New species making use of road corridors; Higher risk of roadkills; Impacts to breeding and migratory areas
	Peatlands and other unique environments	Effects of disrupting peatlands; Permafrost;
	Forest ecosystems, including plants	ITK, 2- eyed seeing in Forest Management Plans; Impacts due to clear cutting
	Climate change adaptation	Use of fossil fuels for electricity; Change in species
	Biodiversity	Change in biodiversity