



Nunavut Marine Council Strategic Plan 2026-2031

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Nunavut Marine Council Mandate	1
Principles for Marine Areas.....	2
Letter from the Council.....	3
Summary	5
Inuit and Nunavut's Marine Environment.....	7
Overview of the Nunavut Marine Council.....	8
<i>Marine Scope</i>	8
<i>Budgeting</i>	8
Marine Governance in Nunavut	9
Strategic Foundations	10
Vision.....	10
Mission	10
What Guides Our Work.....	11
Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and Inuit Qaujimaningit in Action	13
Policy Priorities	14
<i>Strategic Priorities</i>	14
<i>Focus Areas</i>	14
Goals and Objectives (1)	15
Goals and Objectives (2).....	16
Goals and Objectives (3).....	17
Strategic Plan Implementation.....	18
Appendix A – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Analysis.....	19



Nunavut Marine Council Mandate

Established through the *Nunavut Agreement* (s. 15.4.1.), the Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB), the Nunavut Water Board, the Nunavut Planning Commission (NPC), and the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB) may jointly, as a Nunavut Marine Council, or severally advise and make recommendations to other government agencies regarding the marine areas, and Government shall consider such advice and recommendations in making decisions which affect marine areas



Principles for Marine Areas

Section 15.1.1 of the *Nunavut Agreement* affirms the vital connection between Inuit and Arctic marine areas. It recognizes Inuit as traditional and current users, grounds their legal rights in this use, and acknowledges their essential role in sustaining marine ecosystems and governance.

These principles form the foundation for collaborative management, support Canada's sovereignty, and ensure that Inuit knowledge and livelihoods remain central to the future of Nunavut.

- a) Inuit are traditional and current users of certain marine areas, especially the land-fast ice zones
- b) The legal rights of Inuit in marine areas flowing from the Agreement are based on traditional and current use
- c) Canada's sovereignty over the waters of the Arctic Archipelago is supported by Inuit use and occupancy
- d) Inuit harvest wildlife that might migrate beyond the marine areas
- e) An Inuit economy based in part on marine resources is both viable and desirable
- f) There is a need to develop and co-ordinate policies regarding the marine areas
- g) There is a need for Inuit involvement in aspects of Arctic marine management, including research

Nunavut Agreement (s.15.1.1)



Letter from the Council

The Nunavut Marine Council (NMC or Council) is excited to release its 2026-2031 Strategic Plan (the Plan). This plan reaffirms our commitment to Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and Inuit Qaujimaningit, Indigenous stewardship, and collaborative governance in addressing the dynamic and evolving marine issues that affect Nunavummiut and the broader Arctic.

In our first Strategic Plan (2018-2023), the Council focused on building foundational relationships and establishing the framework necessary to play an active role in marine governance in Nunavut. Despite limited funding and capacity, the Council was able to achieve several important milestones, including:

- Staffing of an NMC policy advisor position (2019-2023)
- Launch of NMC social media accounts and a new NMC website (2020)
- Development of NMC Terms of Reference and website Terms of Reference (2020)
- Public logo contest (2021)
- Requests for and provision of advice to the Government of Canada:
 - Response to ban on heavy fuel oil (May 2020);
 - Comments on Ocean Noise Strategy (January 2021);
 - Comments on Blue Economy Strategy (June 2021);
 - Comments on National Marine Conservation Area Policy (March 2022);
 - Comments on Blue Economy Regulatory Review (March 2023).

These achievements reflect the Council's dedication and resilience, and they laid the groundwork for the next phase of our work. The 2026-2031 Strategic Plan sets out a path for deeper coordination, stronger advocacy, and more focused engagement on key marine priorities. It outlines the Council's vision and mission and establishes strategic priorities, focus areas, goals, and objectives for the next five years. An annual implementation plan will be developed to fulfil our important mandate under *Nunavut Agreement* s. 15.4.1.

Amid growing global and national commitments to ocean sustainability and rising geopolitical interest in the Arctic, Nunavut's governance model stands out as a powerful example of Indigenous-led marine stewardship, policy innovation, and partnership. It offers a pathway for how marine governance in Canada can be both effective and deeply rooted in Indigenous rights, knowledge, and leadership.

This Strategic Plan responds to that opportunity. It grounds the work of the NMC in community priorities, informed governance, and the shared goal of protecting and sustaining Nunavut's marine environment for generations to come.

We remain committed to becoming an effective and respected voice on marine issues. Through continued collaboration with Inuit organizations and all levels of government, we will advance marine policy and governance that support resilient communities, healthy ecosystems, and Inuit well-being.

We look forward to continuing this important work in service of Nunavut's marine future, and to strengthening the Council's ability to serve as a trusted voice for Inuit, Nunavummiut, and all Canadians, now and into 2031.

The Nunavut Marine Council

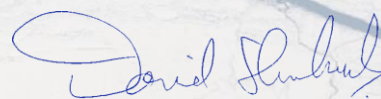
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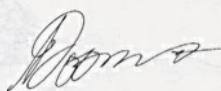
Abert Ehloak, Chairperson,
Nunavut Impact Review Board



Joshua Arreak, Chairperson,
Nunavut Planning Commission



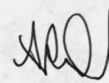
Daniel Shewchuk,
Chairperson, Nunavut Wildlife
Management Board



Lootie Toomasie, Chairperson,
Nunavut Water Board



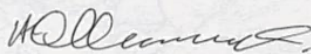
Patricia Enuapik, Commissioner,
Nunavut Planning Commission



Amanda Dumond, Member,
Nunavut Wildlife Management
Board



Elizabeth Copland,
Member, Nunavut Water
Board



Henry Ohokannoak, Member
Nunavut Impact Review Board

Summary

The 2026-2031 Nunavut Marine Council (NMC or Council) Strategic Plan outlines the Council's direction, priorities and objectives over the next five (5) years. Rooted in Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and grounded in the mandate established by s. 15.4.1 of the *Nunavut Agreement*, this Plan strengthens the Council's role as a collaborative and informed voice on marine policy and governance for Nunavut.

The plan was developed through a strategic planning workshop held at the Canadian High Arctic Research Station in Cambridge Bay in January 2025. The session brought together representatives from the four (4) Institutions of Public Government (IPGs)—the NIRB, NWB, NPC, and NWMB—alongside legal counsel and consultants. Facilitated by ERM Consultants Canada with support from Aglu Consulting and Training Inc., the process emphasized collaborative discussion, shared priorities, and alignment with Inuit knowledge and community perspectives.

The direction provided through this Strategic Plan is intended to focus resources while advancing the effectiveness of the NMC as a voice for the people of Nunavut on priority marine issues, while maintaining its ability to be responsive to emerging priorities.



MANDATE



VISION



MISSION



Priorities



The NIRB, the NWB, the NPC, and the NWMB may jointly, as a Nunavut Marine Council, or severally advise and make recommendations to government agencies regarding the marine areas, and Government shall consider such advice and recommendations in making decisions which affect marine areas.

The NMC contributes to Nunavut's marine areas being sustainably managed through collaborative marine governance, in a manner consistent with the principles of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and Article 15 of the *Nunavut Agreement* (Marine Areas).

The NMC serves as a central coordinating and advisory body, providing comprehensive policy recommendations, fostering collaboration, and advocating for effective marine governance. Rooted in Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and Inuit Qaujimaningit and shaped by community priorities, the NMC raises awareness, provides advice and undertakes advocacy around policies and decision-making to respect Inuit rights, reflect traditional and scientific knowledge, and protect the long-term well-being of Nunavummiut and their marine environment.

Strategic Priority 1: Enhance NMC capacity and strengthen collaboration through Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and Inuit Qaujimaningit.

Strategic Priority 2: Support collaborative marine governance through regulatory and policy coordination.

Inuit and Nunavut's Marine Environment

The importance of coastal and marine areas has long been recognized by Inuit of the Canadian Arctic. For thousands of years these ecosystems have provided Inuit with food, clothing, shelter, and spiritual meaning. All but one of Nunavut's communities are located along the coast, and marine areas continue to shape the daily lives of Inuit and Nunavummiut through harvesting, travel, and cultural practices.

The marine environment is central to life in Nunavut. The land, sea, and ice form a continuous and interconnected space where Inuit exercise rights and responsibilities rooted in traditional knowledge and affirmed by modern agreements. The *Nunavut Agreement* explicitly recognizes Inuit as both historic and contemporary users of marine areas and establishes their role in Arctic marine management.

Although Inuit have adapted to a rapidly changing world, the connection to the marine environment remains strong. These waters and the life they sustain are central to their identity, economic stability, and cultural well-being. Marine ecosystems provide essential nourishment through plants, invertebrates, fish, seabirds, and marine mammals—and protecting them is not only a matter of environmental conservation but also a vital response to the challenges of food insecurity and the pursuit of food sovereignty throughout Nunavut. Protection of marine ecosystems must be a critical focus of policy work, as a means through which to either reduce (or avoid worsening) the high incidences of food insecurity or support food sovereignty.



Overview of the Nunavut Marine Council

The NMC was established to provide coordinated advice and recommendations to governments on matters affecting the marine areas of the Nunavut Settlement Area. Rather than creating a standalone organization for marine management, the *Nunavut Agreement* offers a mechanism through which four (4) IPGs can collaborate on cross-cutting marine issues. The NMC's role complements and enhances the day-to-day responsibilities of each IPG.

The NMC is mandated under s. 15.4.1 of the *Nunavut Agreement* and further referenced in s. 41 of the *Nunavut Waters and Nunavut Surface Rights Tribunal Act* and s. 196 of the *Nunavut Planning and Project Assessment Act* (NuPPAA).

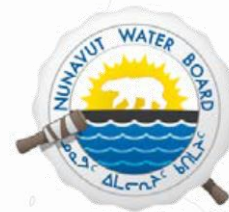
Marine Scope

The geographic scope of that mandate is defined under s. 1.1.1 of the *Nunavut Agreement*:

“marine areas means that part of Canada’s internal waters or territorial sea, whether open or ice-covered, lying within the Nunavut Settlement Area, but does not include inland waters. For greater certainty, the reference to internal waters or territorial sea includes the seabed and subsoil below those internal waters or territorial sea.”

Budgeting

In the 2015-16 fiscal year, the four (4) member IPGs first began receiving \$25,000 annually to support activities undertaken as part of NMC's work. This funding is provided by the Government of Canada through the implementation of the *Nunavut Agreement* and is disbursed in equal amounts to each IPG through annual contribution agreements. In 2025, this funding level was increased to \$104,000 per IPG.



Marine Governance in Nunavut

Marine governance refers to decision-making about the use, protection, and management of marine areas to ensure long term health of marine ecosystems and the wellbeing of communities that depend on them.

Under the Nunavut Agreement, effective marine governance is supported by collaboration among Inuit organizations, Institutions of Public Government, the Government of Nunavut, the Government of Canada, and local communities. Cooperative efforts within this framework have led to meaningful progress in aligning marine management with Inuit rights, values and priorities.

However, marine governance operates within a complex and evolving landscape shaped by overlapping jurisdictions, diverse mandates, and emerging pressures.

Through its work, the NMC supports marine governance that reflects Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and Inuit Qaujimaningit, respects Inuit rights, and responds to emerging issues with collaborative, transparent and evidence-based approaches. Through this Strategic Plan, the NMC will endeavor to advocate for integrated marine policies, improved coordination across jurisdictions, and a deeper incorporation of Inuit knowledge alongside scientific research.



Strategic Foundations

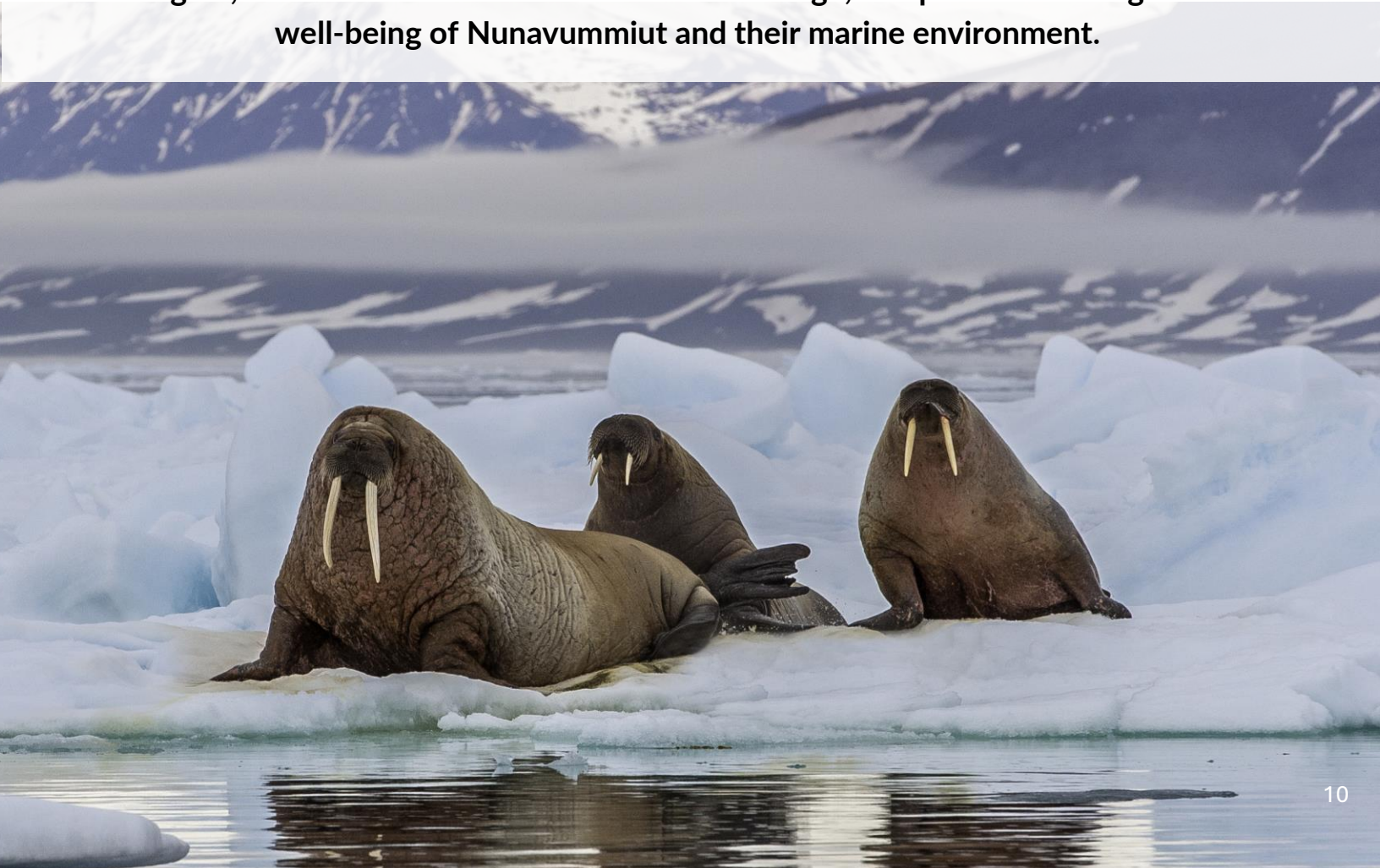
Vision

The Nunavut Marine Council contributes to Nunavut's marine areas being sustainably managed through collaborative marine governance, in a manner consistent with the principles of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and Article 15 of the *Nunavut Agreement (Marine Areas)*.

Mission

The Nunavut Marine Council serves as a central coordinating and advisory body, providing comprehensive policy recommendations, fostering collaboration, and advocating for effective marine governance.

Rooted in Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and Inuit Qaujimaningit and shaped by community priorities, the NMC raises awareness, provides advice and undertakes advocacy around policies and decision-making to respect Inuit rights, reflect traditional and scientific knowledge, and protect the long-term well-being of Nunavummiut and their marine environment.



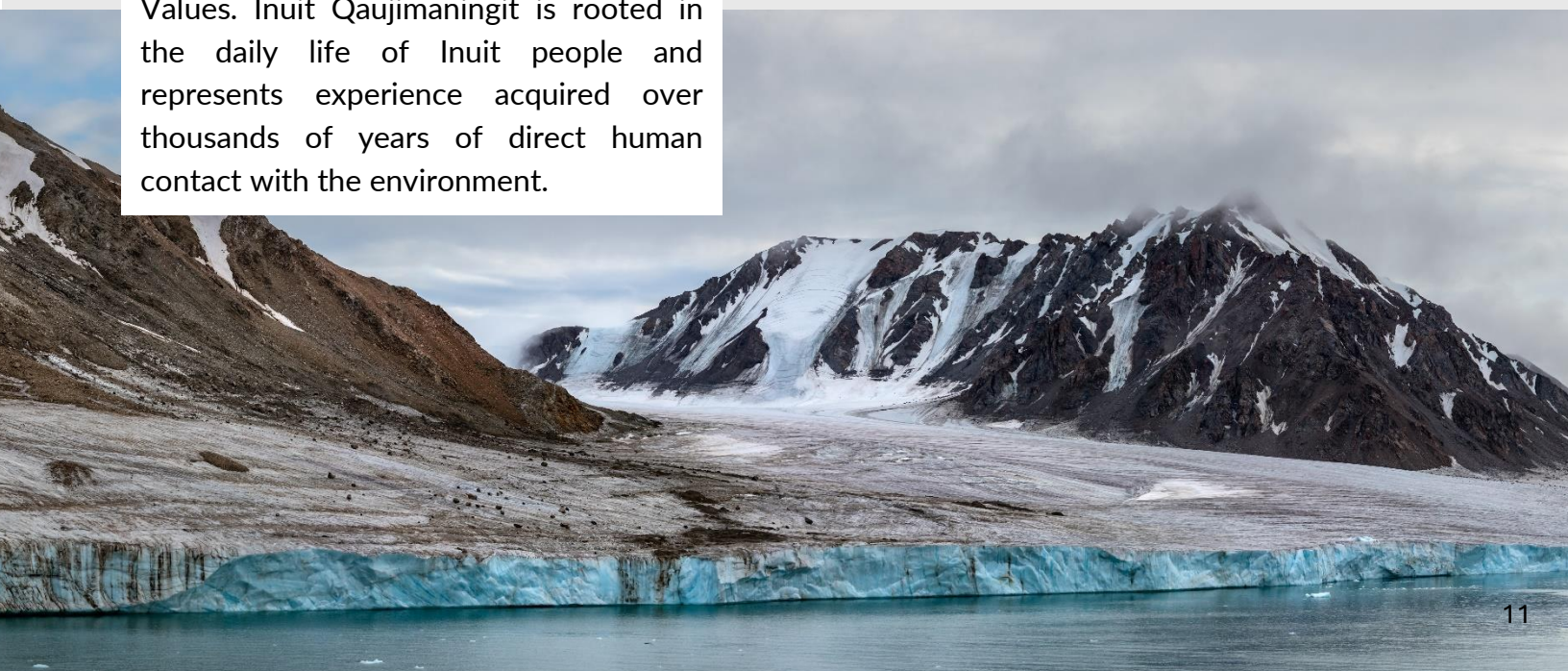
What Guides Our Work

The NMC's work is guided by the values and principles of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit—a living knowledge system passed down through generations. Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit shapes how we relate to one another, how we make decisions, and how we carry out our shared responsibilities. It offers the ethical and cultural foundation that grounds marine governance in Nunavut.

Guided by Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit, the NMC upholds values that are essential to building a just, respectful, and collaborative society. In our work, we strive to create space for open dialogue, shared wisdom, and collective action.

The term Inuit Qaujimaningit is meant to encompass both traditional and contemporary Inuit Traditional Knowledge (and variations thereof or Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit), local and community-based knowledge and reflect Inuit Societal Values. Inuit Qaujimaningit is rooted in the daily life of Inuit people and represents experience acquired over thousands of years of direct human contact with the environment.

Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit refers to traditional values, beliefs, principles and experience regarding the environment and how people interact with the environment and each other. Guiding Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit principles as articulated by the Government of Nunavut and developed with input by Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Knowledge Holders are listed below. While these principles capture core beliefs held by Inuit across Nunavut, there may be variations in terminology and usage by region, community, and relevant organizations. The NMC respects and supports both these similarities and differences and will work to reflect this in its work as appropriate. Each Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit principle guides how we engage with communities, collaborate across institutions, and make decisions that reflect Inuit priorities.



Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Principle

What It Means for Our Work

Inuuqatigiitsiarniq (Respecting others, relationships, and caring for people)	We build trust by treating one another—and communities—with care, dignity, and mutual respect.
Tunnganarniq (Fostering good spirits by being open, welcoming, and inclusive)	We create spaces where all voices are valued, and people feel included.
Pijitsirniq (Serving and providing for family and/or community)	Our efforts support community priorities and contribute to food security and well-being now and for future generations.
Aajiiqatigiinni (Decision making through discussion and consensus)	We take the time to listen, reflect, and reach shared understanding, especially when addressing complex marine issues.
Pilimmaksarniq / Pijariuqsarniq (Development of skills through observation, mentoring, practice, and effort)	We support the development of skills and knowledge of team members and partners through observation, experience, and shared learning.
Piliriqatigiinni / Ikajuqtigiinni (Working together for a common cause)	We strengthen collaboration among the four IPGs and with Inuit organizations, governments, and partners to achieve shared goals.
Qanuqtuurniq (Being innovative and resourceful)	We combine Inuit knowledge and Western science to find creative, culturally grounded solutions to marine governance challenges.
Avatittinnik / Kamatsiarniq (Respect and care for the land, animals, and the environment)	We advocate for policies that protect marine ecosystems and reflect Inuit stewardship of land, ice, and sea.



Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and Inuit Qaujimaningit in Action

Our approach to working together reflects a progression of trust and collaboration. Anchored in Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and reflecting Inuit Qaujimaningit, we move from cooperation, to coordination, to collaboration — each step building stronger relationships, aligning priorities, and supporting meaningful, culturally grounded governance.



Policy Priorities

Reflecting Inuit Qaujimaningit, the NMC takes a holistic view of the environment and considers all parts as interconnected. Rather than separating elements of Inuit culture or the natural world into separate pieces for analysis, Inuit Qaujimaningit considers how each part relates to the whole. Knowledge is generated by understanding the broader context in which decisions are made.

In contrast, the current marine management and regulatory system remains more siloed. Different governments, departments, and Ministers are responsible for various—but interrelated—aspects of the marine environment. Building off the work of the individual IPGs, the NMC is well situated to advance the respectful and appropriate consideration of Inuit Qaujimaqatugangit and Inuit Qaujimaningit into decisions for Nunavut's marine areas.

To fulfill its vision and mission, the NMC has identified two (2) strategic priorities that guide its overall direction. In alignment with the current regulatory structure—and anticipating what is likely to continue throughout the duration of this Strategic Plan—the NMC has also identified four (4) key areas of focus. While these areas help guide the Council's work and allocation of resources, they are not intended to limit its broader mandate or capacity to respond to emerging issues.

Strategic Priorities

1. Enhance NMC capacity and strengthen collaboration through Inuit Qaujimaqatugangit and Inuit Qaujimaningit
2. Support collaborative marine governance through regulatory and policy coordination

Focus Areas

1

Opportunities and impacts of development, shipping, and marine infrastructure

2

Marine Conservation and Planning

3

Community priorities and well-being

4

Food security and sovereignty

Goals and Objectives (1)

Goal 1

Promote collaborative relationships that are guided by the principles of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit

Strategic Objectives

This goal supports **Strategic Priority 1** by emphasizing collaboration as a foundation for the NMC's success. Strong relationships with Inuit organizations, the Government of Nunavut, the federal government, communities and other partners are essential to building trust and advancing marine governance that serves Nunavummiut.

The NMC also draws strength from its unique position as a collaborative body made up of the four (4) IPGs. By working together with intention—sharing knowledge, aligning efforts, and grounding decisions in Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and Inuit Qaujimaningit—we can strengthen our role as a trusted, unified voice for Nunavut's marine areas.

Achieving this goal means deepening engagement with communities and partners, enhancing internal collaboration among IPGs, and continuing to demonstrate that our advice is informed by Inuit values, knowledge, and priorities.

1

Strengthen collaborative relationships and foster strategic engagement

We will build respectful, inclusive relationships across IPGs, Inuit organizations, governments, and communities

We will continue to foster a work culture grounded in Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit, trust, and mutual support

2

Deepen engagement with communities to better understand their interests and concerns

We will engage directly with communities in ways that support listening, respect, and accountability

We will ground our understanding of marine issues in what communities experience, value, and need

3

Ensure that NMC decision-making is consistently guided by Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and Inuit Qaujimaningit

We will consider Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and Inuit Qaujimaningit in all recommendations through inclusive, consensus-driven approaches

We will develop internal processes that uphold Inuit values in policy, planning, and operations

Goals and Objectives (2)

Goal 2

Build long-term organizational capacity and stability



Strategic Objectives

To fulfill our vision and maintain momentum, the NMC must be resilient, well-supported, and future focused. This goal emphasizes the importance of securing sustainable resources, strengthening internal systems, and fostering coordinated efforts across the IPGs. Enhancing our organizational capacity will improve how we work together, respond to new challenges, and uphold our role as a credible and trusted voice in marine governance.

By securing long-term support, promoting innovation, and reinforcing a shared sense of purpose among the IPGs, the NMC will be better positioned to operate effectively, deliver high-quality policy advice, and support marine governance grounded in Inuit values and priorities.

1

Secure sustainable resources to support and strengthen NMC's role in marine governance

We will seek stable, long-term funding to support collaboration, coordination, and engagement

We will pursue partnerships and shared resource opportunities to expand our capacity and impact

2

Strengthen IPG coordination and institutional resilience by fostering innovation and shared purpose

We will strengthen collaboration between IPGs through structured coordination and shared planning

We will support a flexible, resilient operating framework that adapts to shifting capacity and internal priorities

Goals and Objectives (3)

Goal 3

Strengthen the NMC's role as a central advisory and coordinating body for sustainable and culturally grounded marine management in Nunavut

In support of **Strategic Priority 2**, this goal focuses on enhancing the NMC's leadership in shaping marine policy through proactive, integrated, and culturally grounded recommendations. This approach supports recommendations that are not only technically sound, but also culturally meaningful and responsive to the lived realities of Inuit communities.

Recognizing the complexity of marine governance in Nunavut—where mandates are often siloed across agencies—the NMC plays a key role in understanding and navigating these overlapping responsibilities. This includes clarifying how diverse mandates relate to one another and identifying opportunities for more aligned, holistic policy development.

The Council aims to strengthen its role by providing timely, informed, and coordinated advice across institutions and policy spaces—a shift toward more proactive, integrated contributions to marine governance.

Strategic Objectives

1

Strengthen NMC's influence in marine policy and regulatory decision-making

We will provide clear, timely, and well-informed advice that reflects Inuit priorities and long-term marine stewardship

We will maintain a strong presence in policy processes and build credibility as a trusted advisor

2

Serve as a key mechanism for sharing community concerns, priorities, and information related to marine areas in Nunavut, and for communicating back the results of community feedback

We will gather, reflect, and share community input in ways that are accurate, respectful, and actionable

We will support knowledge-sharing between communities, governments, and other marine partners

3

Advocate for Inuit Qaujimaningit and community priorities and concerns to be appropriately and respectfully considered in government decision-making and initiatives

We will promote the respectful and appropriate consideration of Inuit Qaujimaningit and community values in marine policies, programs, and initiatives

We will speak clearly and consistently to ensure Inuit perspectives are heard, understood, and acted on

Strategic Plan Implementation

This Plan will be implemented through a five-year Implementation Plan aligned with the NMC's goals and objectives. Implementation will be carried out by the Working Group, with oversight and approval by the Council, ensuring alignment with IPG mandates and Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit. The Working Group will co-develop an annual work plan that clearly outlines roles, responsibilities, and timelines for approval by the Council. Progress will be measured against annual milestones, as well as the broader objectives of the Strategic Plan. The Implementation Plan may be adjusted over time to reflect emerging priorities or shifts in emphasis. Performance will be reported to the Council

annually, with a comprehensive review provided at the end of the five-year period.

Developing both the Implementation Plan and annual work plans were identified as priorities during the Strategic Planning Workshop. Throughout the development of this Strategic Plan, the Working Group discussed a range of potential actions to guide implementation over the five-year period. These discussions will inform the development of the Implementation Plan and the annual work plans, ensuring that the NMC remains focused, coordinated, and responsive to community and marine governance priorities.



Appendix A – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Analysis

The table below summarizes the inputs from the pre-workshop survey and strategic planning workshop on the NMC's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis.

<p>Strengths: Internal characteristics of the NMC that provide an advantage in successfully fulfilling its mission and vision. These are factors that the NMC controls and excels at. <i>(internal/organizational)</i></p>	<p>Weaknesses: Internal limitations or areas where the NMC may struggle to achieve its goals effectively. These are factors within the NMC's control that may need improvement or present challenges. <i>(internal/organizational)</i></p>
<p>Legislated mandate: The Nunavut Agreement requires governments to consider the NMC's advice and recommendations.</p> <p>NMC structure: The NMC's unique governance model, rooted in Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and Inuit Qaujimaningit, effectively shapes marine management and policy in Nunavut through successful coordination and collaboration between Institutions of Public Government (IPG).</p> <p>IPG strengths: The NMC is able to leverage IPG mandates, experience, knowledge, and relationships to provide recommendations to government.</p> <p>Collective knowledge and experience: Extensive knowledge of the marine environment, Nunavut's regulatory system and policy landscape, as well as experience effectively engaging communities and other organizations.</p> <p>Dedicated Staff: Passionate and dedicated staff members.</p> <p>Resourcefulness and innovation: The NMC was able to achieve a lot during implementation of its first strategic plan.</p>	<p>Complex organizational governance model: The NMC's structure, involving four IPGs and their Board Members, can be challenging to operationalize and implement.</p> <p>Limited financial resources: Limited core funding for IPGs restricts their capacity to act collectively as the NMC.</p> <p>Coordinating multiple IPGs: It is difficult to schedule NMC meetings given each individual IPG's meeting schedule.</p>

Opportunities: External factors or emerging trends that the NMC can leverage to enhance its impact and achieve its strategic goals. These are areas where the NMC can make a meaningful contribution or expand its influence. <i>(external context)</i>	Threats: External factors or challenges that could hinder the NMC's ability to achieve its mission and vision. These are risks or obstacles outside of the NMC's direct control. <i>(external context)</i>
<p>Increased interest in marine issues: Increased federal attention on marine issues and reconciliation.</p> <p>Arctic sovereignty: Opportunity to support the expression of Arctic sovereignty by Inuit, aligning with the Government of Canada's goals.</p> <p>Leveraging existing engagements and resources to inform priorities: Leverage insights from previous engagements and IPG monitoring data to inform ongoing marine conservation initiatives and increase understanding to address priorities of Nunavut communities.</p> <p>Leveraging other initiatives: Coordinate engagements with other IPG efforts, for example, the Nunavut Water Management Strategy and community-based monitoring initiatives.</p> <p>Recognition of the NMC's advisory role: Continued requests for comments as NMC is recognized as a source of advice.</p>	<p>Political factors influence funding availability: Changes in government leadership and priorities may affect commitments and availability of funding for the NMC.</p> <p>Availability of community input: Resource constraints impact the NMC's ability to collect community input from Nunavut communities and organizations to inform marine issues.</p> <p>Timelines prevent provision of timely advice: Turnaround times for comments often prevent the provision of timely advice.</p> <p>Government recognition of Inuit knowledge: Inuit knowledge is not considered equally alongside other knowledge systems.</p>



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