

Summary Statement

This report summarizes the consultation process undertaken between May 2018 and November 2025 to inform the development of the Interim Management Plan (IMP) for Tallurutiup Imanga National Marine Conservation Area (NMCA), in Nunavut. The IMP is a legislative requirement under the *Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act* and is a key step toward formal establishment of the NMCA. It will guide management for up to five years until a full management plan is developed and tabled in Parliament.

Tallurutiup Imanga NMCA spans approximately 108,000 km² across Lancaster Sound and surrounding waters, representing nearly 2% of Canada's marine area. It is ecologically significant, supporting diverse Arctic marine species and serving as a critical migratory corridor. The area is also central to Inuit culture, subsistence, and food security, providing essential access to country food and sustaining traditional ways of life.

The IMP was developed collaboratively by a Planning Committee composed of the Qikiqtani Inuit Association (QIA), the Government of Nunavut, and the Government of Canada, with support from federal departments. Governance of the NMCA is guided by the Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement (IIBA), signed in 2019, which established a co-management framework through the Aulattiqatigiit Board.

Consultation Approach

The consultation process was conducted in two phases:

- **Phase I (2018–2019):** Focused on gathering initial input to inform the draft IMP.
- **Phase II (2024–2025):** Focused on reviewing, refining, and validating the draft plan.

Engagement included extensive consultations with five Inuit communities (Pond Inlet, Arctic Bay, Clyde River, Resolute, and Grise Fiord), as well as stakeholders from industry, NGOs, academia, and the general public. Methods included in-person meetings, workshops, open houses, online engagement, and written submissions.

Across both phases, hundreds of participants contributed input, ensuring the IMP reflects a broad range of perspectives.

What We Heard - Key Themes from Consultations

1. Protection of Wildlife and Ecosystems

Communities emphasized the importance of safeguarding marine ecosystems and species such as narwhal, beluga, seals, walrus, and seabirds. Concerns were raised about declining wildlife populations, habitat disruption, and the cumulative impacts of industrial activity and climate change. The communities requested conservation measures

such as seasonal closures, habitat buffers, and protection of critical areas (e.g., calving grounds and polynyas).

2. Management of Marine Shipping and Vessel Traffic

Increased shipping activity was identified as a major concern due to noise, pollution risks, and interference with wildlife and hunting practices. Communities called for stricter controls, including vessel speed limits, designated shipping areas, improved monitoring, and enhanced communication about vessel movements.

3. Sea Ice Protection and Icebreaking

Sea ice is essential for travel, hunting, and ecological balance. Participants expressed concern about icebreaking activities disrupting traditional use and wildlife patterns. Recommendations included restricting icebreaking in sensitive areas and seasons to preserve floe edges and migration dynamics.

4. Tourism Impacts

Growing cruise tourism raised concerns about wildlife disturbance, particularly during sensitive periods such as bird nesting. Communities supported stricter management of tourism activities, including limiting access to certain areas and seasons and ensuring respectful visitor behaviour.

5. Emergency Preparedness and Response

Communities highlighted gaps in preparedness for marine incidents, such as oil spills. There was a strong desire for improved emergency response planning, training, and clear roles for local involvement.

6. Communication and Enforcement

A lack of timely information about vessel activity and uncertainty around permitting were recurring issues. Participants emphasized the need for stronger enforcement mechanisms, consistent regulations across vessel types, and greater community involvement in monitoring and stewardship.

7. Integration of Inuit Knowledge and Governance

The incorporation of Inuit Qaujimaqatuqangit and local knowledge was identified as essential to effective management. Communities stressed the importance of Inuit leadership, co-management, and alignment with cultural values and practices.

IMP Review and Validation - Key Changes to the Interim Management Plan

Feedback from Phase II consultations led to several important revisions to the IMP, that were validated by the associated communities:

- Enhanced vision to emphasize respect for Inuit culture, support for self-determination, and recognition of mental health and well-being.

- Adjusted seasonal zoning dates to reflect changing ice conditions.
- Expanded protections for sea ice, bird colonies, walrus haul-outs, and beluga and narwhal habitats.
- Introduction of Areas of Special Importance (ASIs) to protect culturally and ecologically significant sites with flexible management approaches.
- Strengthened management targets related to enforcement, infrastructure, and community programs.
- Refinements to zoning, including speed recommendations, access restrictions, and activity prohibitions in sensitive areas.

Additional updates clarified governance roles, improved definitions, and adjusted certain operational measures (e.g., flight altitude restrictions, voluntary vessel speed limits).

Conclusion

The consultation process integrated diverse perspectives and strengthened relationships among Inuit communities, governments, stakeholders, and the public. The resulting IMP reflects a balance between conservation objectives, Inuit rights and priorities, and sustainable use.

The Aulattiqatigiit Board will continue to guide management, working collaboratively with partners and communities to ensure adaptive, responsive, and culturally appropriate stewardship of Tallurutiup Imanga NMCA.

The IMP establishes a strong foundation for long-term conservation and co-management, ensuring that this ecologically and culturally vital region is protected for future generations while supporting Inuit livelihoods and well-being.