Federal Authority Advice Record (FAAR)
FAAR Response must be submitted by September 29, 2026
Eastern Bridge Project – Public Services and Procurement Canada – Ontario and Quebec
Canadian Impact Assessment Registry (CIAR) Reference Number: 90709

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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?

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;

According to the information provided in the Initial Project Description (IPD), here are the powers that Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) could exercise and their level of likelihood:

Likely: The scale of the proposed works within fish habitat makes it highly likely that the project will require an authorization under paragraphs 34.4(2)b) and 35(2)b) of the *Fisheries Act* (FA). This authorization would be required for the proposed works, undertakings, or activities that could result in the death of fish and/or the harmful alteration, disruption, or destruction of fish habitat.

Likely: Based on the IPD, the Hickorynut (*Obovaria olivaria*), which is listed as endangered under Schedule 1 of the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA), was observed in the project area during the freshwater mussel surveys and may be impacted by the project. As a result, the project is likely to impact this species and may require a relocation of the individuals present in the project area of influence. The project is likely to require a permit under SARA. Preliminary activities, such as borehole drilling, may also require standalone applications for SARA permits if they may impact Hickorynut.

Furthermore, one or more aspects of the project could be subject to the Aquatic Invasive Species Regulations under the FA, for which DFO has a regulatory role.

b) Describe any associated Indigenous or public consultation, including timelines;

If DFO determines that an authorization under the FA is required following the project review, DFO will have a duty to consult and, where appropriate, accommodate

Indigenous communities whose Aboriginal or treaty rights may be affected by regulatory decisions made under the FA and SARA, pursuant to section 2.4 of the FA. This may involve consultation and/or accommodation regarding potential impacts on Indigenous peoples of Canada and/or the traditional use of lands and resources related to fish and fish habitat. DFO expects the proponent to engage with Indigenous peoples potentially impacted by the project in a substantive, meaningful, two-way dialogue, demonstrate an understanding of the concerns raised and the nature and seriousness of potential impacts on rights, and, where appropriate, identify and provide accommodation. The engagement should be documented and will be expected in support of an application for authorization.

With respect to public consultations, DFO does not consult the public prior to issuing a FA authorization and/or a SARA permit; however, information on the issued authorization will be made available to the public through the FA registry and, if applicable, SARA registry should an authorization under that Act also be required.

DFO will also support the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (IAAC), if required, during its Indigenous and public consultations on matters within DFO's mandate.

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;

The information requirements associated with obtaining an authorization under paragraphs 34.4(2)b) and 35(2)b) of the FA are outlined in the Applicant's Guide supporting the *Authorizations Concerning Fish and Fish Habitat Protection Regulations*. Please note that regulatory amendments coming into force on October 15, 2026, will result in changes to the authorization process, including the introduction of an online application portal and provisions related to technical standards and mitigation procedures. Additional information may be requested to obtain a permit under SARA.

DFO recommends that the proponent review the following guidance documents to meet the above requirements:

- Measures to Protect Fish and Fish Habitat
- Standards and Codes of practice for managing risks of harmful effects to fish and fish habitat (please note that DFO expects to release new technical standards for watercourse crossings in fall 2026)
- Fish and Fish Habitat Protection Policy Statement, August 2019
- Policy for Applying Measures to Offset Harmful Impacts to Fish and Fish Habitat
- Timing Windows for Activities in Fish Habitat (FR)
- Guidelines for Watercourse Crossings in Quebec (2016 Edition) (FR)
- Aquatic Species at Risk Map and Species at Risk Public Registry
- Aquatic Invasive Species Regulations

Other relevant documents are available at the following link: Request a review of your project near water.

Although DFO cannot issue an authorization or permit until the impact assessment under the *Impact Assessment Act* is completed, the authorization application and review process can proceed concurrently during the impact assessment process. To this end, the proponent could submit a request for review under the FA early in the impact assessment process in order to initiate DFO's regulatory process.

d) Identify any associated project-specific guidance or issues of which the proponent should be aware, or information the proponent should provide; and

Project-specific issues and associated guidance are listed in Table 1 below.

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.

DFO is not in a position at this stage to rule out the exercise of its authorities. As indicated in 1a), the project is likely to require an authorization under the FA and a permit under SARA.

2. **Using Table 1**, identify project- and context-specific **key issues** based on the expertise within your mandate[1] 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.

Please note for designated projects that are a *federal work or undertaking*, such as an interprovincial bridge, per section 2 of the *Impact Assessment Act*, adverse effects within federal jurisdiction takes on a broader meaning and includes any non-negligible adverse effects on environmental, health, social or economic conditions.

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 is a key issue based on:
   i. biophysical effect pathway(s) from the specific project component or activity.
   ii. concerns unique to the project or a priority within your mandate.
   iii. the issue being material[2] to decision-making under the *Impact Assessment Act*.
d) Identify how the issue could be resolved, including through other means than an impact assessment (e.g., other regulatory oversight).
e) Identify additional information the proponent could provide to build confidence about how the issue could be addressed through other means.

Poirier, Melanie

Signature numérique de Poirier, Melanie
Date : 2026.10.02 11:39:32 -04'00'

Name and title of Departmental / Agency Responder

2026-09-29

Date

[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.

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**

Identify comments by organization and comment number.
 	
e.g.: IAAC-01
	Specify each key issue (e.g., specific species and location).	*Identify the project component or activity linked to the key issue.*
		
		Be specific about the nature, scale, novelty and complexity of the component or activity.
			Identify the specific effect pathway between the project component or activity and the affected environmental or human receptor (including Indigenous Peoples).	*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.*
				
				Identify if the key issue is common for project activities of this nature or in this sector, or whether it is unique to this project due to the project's complexity, size or novelty; a sensitive or rare receiving environment; and/or proximity of sensitive environmental or human receptors (including Indigenous Peoples).
					Describe why the key issue is material to decision-making as either:
					• *an adverse effect within federal jurisdiction, or a direct or incidental adverse effect, that may be significant based on available evidence including:*
					  ○ *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 obligations or climate change commitments or in supporting governmental priorities, such as reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.*
						Describe how the key issue could be resolved or addressed by:
						• *Any means, including powers, duties, functions, frameworks, policies or guidance for which your department or agency is responsible;*
						• *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).*
							Describe information the proponent could provide, or commitments the proponent could make, that would provide confidence that the issue can be resolved by existing means (to be considered for the final Initial Project Description, future Summary of Issues and response, or (potential) Tailored Impact Statement Guidelines.
							
							Consider whether information, studies, analyses or collaborative work with other authorities would be required to address the issue beyond existing means.

DFO-01	Permanent impacts: alteration and/or destruction of fish habitat in the Ottawa River, four additional watercourses, and several ponds that may support fish or provide fish habitat.	All permanent works, undertakings, and activities within fish habitat including, among others, the new bridge abutments, piers and footings.	The installation of new bridge structures in the Ottawa River is expected to destroy or alter various types of fish habitats, resulting in both direct and indirect permanent impacts. Direct impacts include the destruction or alteration of habitat due to encroachment by bridge structures, leading to the loss of natural riverbed substrate and bank vegetation, which are essential for ecological	Although additional fish habitat characterization has been completed since the Draft IPD, there remains insufficient information on the location and dimensions of permanent in-water works to accurately quantify the magnitude of permanent impacts on fish habitat. Permanent alteration and destruction of fish habitat are common outcomes associated with bridge construction. Since the project does not involve replacing an existing structure, all permanent impacts generated by the	DFO anticipates that, even with the development and implementation of appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures, the scale of impacts on fish habitat will likely require an authorization under the FA. Such authorization would also necessitate the application of relevant and sufficient offsetting measures to counterbalance these effects. Furthermore, the decision to issue an authorization entails a duty to consult and accommodate where Aboriginal or treaty rights may potentially be adversely affected. Species that could be impacted by the project include those of cultural and ecological importance to Indigenous Peoples in the area, such as Lake Sturgeon. In addition, freshwater mussel surveys conducted in 2025 confirmed the presence of Hickorynut (*Obovaria olivaria*), listed as endangered under Schedule 1 of SARA, at five survey stations within the LSA.	Authorization under the FA will include terms and conditions that must be followed to avoid, mitigate, offset (counterbalance impacts) and monitor the impacts on fish and fish habitat resulting from the project. For example, monitoring reports can be required to demonstrate that the impacts of the project are as described, that the mitigation measures put in place are effective or that the benefits to fish habitat generated by the offsetting measures are as described in the authorization.	The proponent should demonstrate how the results of the 2025-2026 aquatic surveys and fish habitat characterization have informed the selection and design of the preferred bridge alignment and the location of permanent in-water works. Once the project design is sufficiently advanced, permanent impacts should be quantified and mapped according to fish habitat type and function, including spawning, rearing, feeding and fish movement habitats. DFO encourages the proponent to use the

			functions such as spawning. Indirect impacts involve changes to the riverbed, banks, vegetation communities, and flow regime caused by the bridge structures, including potential scour associated with piers and/or abutments, as well as potential harm or mortality of fish due to increased turbidity, physical contact with construction materials and equipment, and stranding, impingement, or entrainment during dewatering operations. Additionally, fish-bearing watercourses beyond the Ottawa River may be affected by the construction of approach roads.	project would constitute additional pressures on fish habitat within the Ottawa River. Under the FA, it is prohibited to cause the harmful alteration, disruption, or destruction of fish habitat unless the activity is authorized by DFO and carried out in compliance with the prescribed conditions.			methodology outlined in the *Méthode de classification des habitats fluviaux* (attached to the present advice) to support a consistent classification and mapping of fish habitat and the assessment of impacts based on habitat characteristics and sensitivity.
DFO-02	Temporary impacts: disruption of fish habitat in the Ottawa River, four additional watercourses, and several ponds that may support fish or provide fish habitat.	All temporary works, undertakings, and activities within fish habitat may include, among others, dredging, pile driving, in-water site isolation and dewatering, the installation of coffer dams (if required), the use of barges and marine cranes, and the construction of one or more temporary docks or jetties.	The placement of temporary structures in the river and other watercourses may alter hydraulic and hydro-sedimentary conditions in adjacent fish habitats, potentially modifying and/or reducing their functionality for fish, including migration. In addition, localized and temporary noise generated by engines, impact or vibratory pile driving, excavation, and other construction activities could negatively affect fish and potentially disrupt critical life stages of aquatic wildlife.	Although additional information on potential construction methods and mitigation measures is now available, there remains insufficient information on the location, extent and duration of temporary in-water works to accurately assess the magnitude of temporary impacts on fish habitat. Temporary disruption of fish habitat is a common outcome associated with bridge construction. Under the FA, it is prohibited to cause the harmful alteration, disruption, or destruction of fish habitat unless the activity is authorized by DFO and carried out in compliance with the prescribed conditions.	DFO anticipates that, even with the development and implementation of appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures, the combined scale of temporary and permanent impacts on fish habitat will likely require an authorization under the FA. Such authorization would also necessitate the application of relevant and sufficient offsetting measures to counterbalance these effects. Furthermore, the decision to issue an authorization entails a duty to consult and accommodate where Aboriginal or treaty rights may potentially be adversely affected. Species that could be impacted by the project include those of cultural and ecological importance to Indigenous Peoples in the area, such as Lake Sturgeon. Freshwater mussel surveys conducted in 2025 also confirmed the presence of Hickorynut (*Obovaria olivaria*), listed as endangered under Schedule 1 of SARA, at five survey stations within the LSA.	Authorization under the FA will include terms and conditions that must be followed to avoid, mitigate, offset (counterbalance impacts) and monitor the temporary impacts on fish and fish habitat resulting from the project. For example, monitoring reports can be required to demonstrate that the restoration of habitats affected by temporary works has been carried out in accordance with the objectives of the authorization, thereby avoiding additional and unaccounted effects.	The proponent should identify, map and quantify all temporary in-water works and disturbances in relation to the fish habitat types and functions identified through the 2025-2026 aquatic surveys. The anticipated duration of each temporary disturbance and the proposed restoration measures should also be provided. Construction activities that may generate underwater noise at levels that could affect fish should be identified, including the anticipated pile-driving methods and locations. The proponent should provide the proposed underwater noise mitigation and monitoring approach, including applicable thresholds and response measures. DFO encourages the proponent to

							apply the methodology outlined in the document *Méthode de classification des habitats fluviaux* (attached to the present advice) to classify and map the various types of fish habitats present in the project area. This approach enables a detailed description and categorization of impacts based on habitat characteristics and their respective sensitivity.
DFO-03	Potential impacts on SAR and potential effects of in-water works on Hickorynut (*Obovaria olivaria*), listed as endangered under Schedule 1 of the Species at Risk Act and confirmed at five survey stations within the LSA during the 2025 freshwater mussel surveys.	All permanent and temporary works, undertakings and activities in fish habitat.	Several SAR are likely to occur in the project area and could be impacted by the proposed works, including Hickorynut (Endangered), River Redhorse (Special Concern), Channel Darter (Special Concern), Cutlip Minnow (Special Concern), Silver Lamprey (Special Concern), and Northern Brook Lamprey (Special Concern). Potential direct impacts include construction activities and fish relocation from dewatering areas. Indirect impacts, such as water quality degradation caused by sedimentation and scouring, may lead to habitat loss or alteration of critical functions (spawning, rearing, feeding) and disrupt life cycles by harming or displacing host fish species. Additionally, noise generated during construction could negatively affect these species and interfere with sensitive life stages. Freshwater	Under SARA, it is prohibited to kill, harm, harass, capture, or take any individual of a wildlife species listed as extirpated, endangered, or threatened. Potential impacts on species of Special Concern must be assessed and authorized under the FA, while any potential impacts on Hickorynut, an endangered species, would require an authorization under SARA. If the presence of the species is expected, inventory and relocation activities are usually required under a SARA authorization in this type of development project to avoid killing individuals in the project area. Hickorynut is an aquatic species listed as endangered under Schedule 1 of SARA and is therefore a priority within DFO's mandate for the protection and recovery of aquatic species at risk. Its confirmed presence within the LSA increases the importance of understanding the spatial relationship between the proposed in-water works and areas occupied by the species.	Potentially impacted species include those of interest to Indigenous Peoples in the area, such as Hickorynut. The confirmed presence of a SARA-listed endangered aquatic species within the LSA is material to federal decision-making because project activities could affect individuals of the species and their habitat. The location and extent of potential effects remain uncertain because the final bridge alignment and the location and dimensions of permanent and temporary in-water works have not yet been determined.	Applying for a FA authorization that also serves as a SARA permit may be necessary if the project is likely to affect Hickorynut. Potential effects should first be avoided and minimized through project design, including consideration of the location of Hickorynut observations when selecting the preferred bridge alignment and locating permanent and temporary in-water works. Species-specific mitigation measures and any applicable regulatory requirements under SARA should be identified as the project design advances, in consultation with DFO. Relocation of individuals present in the project's area of influence should only be considered once all feasible avoidance and mitigation measures have been identified and proposed.	The proponent should map the confirmed Hickorynut occurrences in relation to the alternative and preferred bridge alignments and all proposed permanent and temporary in-water works. Once the project design is sufficiently advanced, the proponent should identify potential direct and indirect effects on Hickorynut and its habitat and describe species-specific avoidance and mitigation measures. Additional information should also be provided on any further surveys required to adequately delineate the species' distribution within areas that may be affected by the project.

			mussel surveys conducted in 2025 confirmed the presence of Hickorynut at five survey stations within the LSA. Permanent and temporary in-water works could result in direct effects to individuals and alterations to habitat used by the species through the placement of structures, disturbance or removal of substrate, dredging, site isolation and dewatering, sedimentation, changes in flow and scour, and accidental releases of contaminants.				
DFO-04	Information on the location, dimensions and configuration of permanent and temporary in-water works remains limited, which restricts DFO's ability to quantify potential effects on fish and fish habitat and determine the measures that may be required.	Key parameters and configurations of the proposed bridge and associated permanent and temporary in-water works remain under development, including the exact number, size and location of piers and/or abutments and the associated in-water footprint.	Missing or limited information on the footprint, location, dimensions, construction methods and duration of permanent and temporary in-water works limits the ability to quantify the harmful alteration, disruption or destruction of fish habitat and potential death of fish.	Under paragraphs 34.4(2)b) and 35(2)b) of the FA, it is prohibited to carry out any work, undertaking, or activity that causes the death of fish (except during fishing) or results in the harmful alteration, disruption, or destruction of fish habitat. These prohibitions, however, do not apply when the activity is authorized by DFO and conducted in accordance with the conditions set by DFO.	All potential impacts on fish and fish habitat must be assessed and identified to ensure they are addressed in compliance with the FA. The proponent will need to provide details on the listed components to ensure that impacts are adequately avoided, mitigated, and offset under the FA.	The process of applying for authorization under the FA would require the proponent to provide these details on the planned works as part of their application. DFO must ensure during the regulatory phase that the proponent provides the necessary information on the proposed works to identify all potential project impacts. Additional avoidance, mitigation, and offsetting measures may be required.	As mentioned in the IPD, details of the final design will allow a better understanding of the potential effects of the project and identification of appropriate mitigation measures to avoid or reduce the significance of such effects. As the design advances, DFO will require sufficient information to quantify the permanent and temporary in-water footprints and associated impacts on each fish habitat type and function, and to determine applicable avoidance, mitigation, monitoring and offsetting requirements.