
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AS A TOOL IN DISPUTE PREVENTION: THE NORTHERN CONTAMINANTS PROGRAM

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Executive Summary

Introduction

There has been a shift, over the past few decades, in the expectations of government by the individuals it is charged to govern. With the spread of social media, globalization, increase in education, and increasing ease of access to information, citizens are demanding more input into decisions made by government agencies. This has led to the development and increased use of stakeholder engagement processes to assist in decision-making.

The Government of Canada has launched numerous engagement initiatives on topics ranging from National Security to Election Reform as a way to garner public opinion and develop more informed policies than in the past. The road to increased engagement has not been smooth, with some engagement or consultation processes ending in frustration and, in some instances, leading to conflict. This discontent is evident in recent activist movements against projects such as the Kinder Morgan Pipeline Expansion and the British Columbia Site C Dam process.

There are many factors that may contribute to ineffective engagement resulting in conflict. These factors include a lack of clear, actionable guidelines and smart practices for community engagement. This project examines what elements contribute to an effective process, how an effective process produces overall satisfaction with that process and its results, and how satisfaction with the results minimizes conflict.

The Northern Contaminants Program (NCP) is administered by Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) and funds research projects to monitor and improve understanding of environmental and health related issues associated with contaminants in northern ecosystems. Since its inception in 1991, the NCP has monitored levels of contaminants in traditional food items consumed by Northerners as part of their normal diet.

There is potential for conflict in the NCP decision-making process. As often is the case when funding is available, stakeholders have different ideas regarding how to distribute the funds. To ensure that decisions are well-informed, the NCP uses an inclusive governance process that actively engages numerous stakeholder groups at various stages of the decision-making process. This paper argues that the design of this decision-making process also contributes to conflict avoidance.

The primary research question this project addresses is:

- Does the stakeholder engagement process utilized by the NCP minimize conflict during and after completion of funding allocation decisions?

To support the primary question, the following secondary questions are also examined:

- Does the NCP employ an effective stakeholder engagement process?
- Are stakeholders satisfied with their overall participation in the decision-making process and the final decision?
- Are stakeholders satisfied with the components of the current NCP engagement process and is stakeholder satisfaction or dissatisfaction consistent with their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the final decisions regarding project funding?
- Does satisfaction with the decision-making process influence the implementation of the decision and the level of conflict after the process is complete?

Methodology and Methods

Quantitative and qualitative research methodologies are used in this research project. A review of relevant literature produced a list of elements considered to be key to an effective engagement process. A quantitative methodology was used to assess the satisfaction of individual stakeholders participating in the engagement process with respect to the key elements of the engagement process, the overall engagement process, and the final decisions. The quantitative research methodology is supported by a qualitative research methodology to help provide background and deeper understanding of the quantitative data.

A case study design was selected to explore whether the effectiveness of stakeholder engagement reduces dissatisfaction in final decisions as well as potential conflict. Surveys and interviews of stakeholders who had participated in previous NCP led engagement processes were used to gather the data for this research project. Surveys allow for a quantitative examination of individuals' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the engagement process and whether this was related to overall participant satisfaction with the decision-making process and final funding decisions. Interviews were chosen to allow for a deeper investigation into the survey results.

Key Findings

The results of the survey supported a positive picture of the NCP engagement process. All but one of the eleven questions received more positive results than negative. For the interview portion, the overall response was also positive.

Based on the results of the surveys and interview, the researcher concludes that the NCP uses an effective stakeholder engagement process that contributes to overall satisfaction in the final decision, and likely, contributes to the lack of observable conflict.

The researcher recommends that, when practical, INAC consider using stakeholder engagement processes similar to that used by the NCP for developing and implementing projects in northern communities.

Options to Consider and Recommendations

After reviewing the results of both the surveys and interview, the researcher identified one area for potential improvement, namely, consistent interaction with the NCP Secretariat. This involves all types of interaction, including: in person meetings, through email, or through formats such as Skype or teleconferences. To help develop options for the Client that would address the issue identified, the researcher took into consideration the following questions:

- Does the option address the issue of consistent interaction?
- What are the financial implications?
- Will the option impact overall satisfaction?

Based on these considerations, the following options were formulated:

- Option 1: Maintain the status quo/continue with other constructive practices
- Option 2: Increase information sessions or meetings
- Option 3: Develop a newsletter
- Option 4: Continuing and strengthening current practices
- Option 5: Ask stakeholders how they would like to be communicated with

After considering the implications of the proposed options, the researcher recommends that the Client consider creating a regular newsletter (Option 3). This recommendation addresses the issue of consistency of interaction and messaging. It has the additional benefit of keeping all participants involved and informed regarding what is going on in other jurisdictions and the cost of producing a newsletter would be minimal to the NCP Secretariat.

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1.0 Introduction

Over the past few decades, there has been a noticeable difference in the way governments around the world engage their citizenry (Cavaye, 2004). This is in part due to an understanding that the more concerned individuals are involved in decision-making, the less likely those individuals are to have issues with the resulting decisions (Mayer, 2012). Currently, many individuals are less satisfied with casting their votes, once every few years, for a representative who makes decisions on their behalf. Rather, they want a greater say in the decision-making process (Cavaye, 2004). The increased desire for participation in decision-making, has placed governments around the world in the position of deciding how best to engage their citizenry (Cavaye, 2004).

There is abundant support in the literature for community engagement and “whole of government coordination,” or coordination between different government departments and agencies to produce more effective and efficient program delivery at every level of government and among different stakeholder groups (Cavaye, 2004; Innes & Booher, 2010). In Canada, this can be seen in diverse venues and contexts (INAC, 2010; UVic, 2016; Government of Canada, 2017).

The Supreme Court of Canada has ruled in several decisions including the Haida Nation and Taku River Tlingi decisions in 2004, and the Mikisew Cree First Nations decision in 2005, that the Crown has a “duty to consult, and where appropriate accommodate, when the Crown contemplates conduct that might adversely impact potential or established Aboriginal or treaty rights” (INAC, 2010).

Another example of stakeholder involvement in decision-making is the Community Mapping Collaboratory at the University of Victoria (UVic), which assists local communities in engaging decision makers on issues of community development and planning through collaborative mapping exercises (UVic, 2016). The Collaboratory has used maps to engage local stakeholders in identifying play areas for children, local hotspots, and future growth strategies for their communities (UVic, 2016).

The Government of Canada has also embraced collaborative decision-making by utilizing numerous consultation models in an attempt to engage its citizens on a variety of public policy

decisions. These have included resource development proposals, national security, and electoral reform (Government of Canada, 2017).

In practice, the form of engagement, how it is implemented, when it is utilized, and how appropriate or effective it is, differs greatly (INAC, 2010; UVic, 2016; Cavaye, 2004). For instance, consultation can range in format from simple town hall meetings, where participants contribute by stepping in front of a microphone to voice their opinion, to the recent nationwide engagement processes used to garner public opinion regarding electoral reform which involved both online surveys as well as in-person public consultations.

1.1 Defining the Problem and Client

The Government of Canada, as well as governments around the world, is trying numerous methods to engage their populace; however, in some cases, attempts have resulted in further conflict between the government and the stakeholders they are trying to engage. This problem is evident when considering public reaction to numerous public consultations held across Canada and the United States regarding resource development proposals (i.e. protests during the Site C Dam project public consultations in north-eastern British Columbia (Pawson, 2016)), that ultimately end in lawsuits, direct action, and other forms of conflict. Several factors perpetuate the trend of ineffective engagement, including: a lack of clear, actionable guidelines, and best practices for community engagement; a shortage of skilled and knowledgeable facilitators; a lack of authentic commitment to the process; and a lack of time and resources required for an effective process (Cavaye, 2004; Irvin & Stansbury, 2004; Prebble, 2015).

The Northern Contaminants Program (NCP) was established in 1991 as a multidisciplinary “response to concerns regarding human exposure to elevated levels of contaminants in fish and wildlife species” (CACAR II, 2003) in the northern environment. It is a program administered by Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) that provides funding for research and monitoring on a variety of environmental based issues, such as tracking persistent organic pollutants and heavy metal accumulation in the marine food web, assessing health risks associated with consuming traditional foods derived from that same food web, and ensuring that the data and information generated through the projects is used to inform policy. In the 2016-2017 fiscal year, the NCP funded fifty-three projects costing approximately \$4.1 million (NCP, 2017). These projects are grouped under five overarching themes:

- Human Health;
- Community-based Monitoring and Research;
- Environmental Monitoring and Research;
- Communications, Capacity and Outreach; and
- Program Coordination and Aboriginal Partnerships.

Those responsible for the decisions made under the NCP (i.e. the NCP Management Committee), must ensure that the needs and desires of the communities (projects and constraints that are important to community members) are balanced with contributions that different projects can make to scientific knowledge for use towards international action. It is also important to note here that people in the North have a long and sometimes difficult history with science. There is a perception by Northerners, after years of research being conducted by Southerners (those below 60 degrees latitude), of continually being studied. It is important that the NCP Management Committee takes this, and other sensitivities, into consideration when deciding which projects to fund.

To address the issues noted in the paragraph above, the NCP engages numerous stakeholders through different committees (see Chapter 2) to develop informed decisions regarding funding. Projects are also measured against a clear strategic plan (the “NCP blueprints”), which were developed with stakeholder input. To date, it appears that the decision-making process used by the NCP assists in striking a balance between the various stakeholders’ views. This is illustrated by a perceived lack of conflict, as compared to other INAC programs, after the allocation of funds (Interview, 2016).

1.2 Research Objectives and Questions

Conflict is defined differently throughout scholarly literature. For example, Bernard Mayer defines it as “our belief or understanding that our own needs, interests, wants or values are incompatible with someone else’s” (2012). Gordon Sloan and Jamie Chicanot define conflict as a divergence of “expectations, goals or objectives” (2009). James Schellenberg defines conflict as “the opposition between individuals and groups on the basis of competing interests, differing identities and/or differing attitudes” (1996). However, most definitions agree that there

is a discord “between each side’s needs, desires, concerns, and fears” (Fisher, Ury & Patton, 2011).

To address potential conflict in decision-making, it is generally agreed among scholars that engagement is key (Cavaye, 2004; Irvin & Stansbury, 2004; Mayer, 2012; Prebble, 2015). If a fair process is used and stakeholders are genuinely engaged in the decision-making process, it is more likely that the stakeholders will be satisfied with the final decision, regardless of their position at the beginning. If stakeholders are satisfied with the process, the likelihood of conflict at the end of the process is greatly reduced (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004; Mayer, 2012).

The objective of this research project is to assess, from the stakeholders’ perspective, the effectiveness of the components and overall NCP engagement process, as it relates to the perceived low levels of stakeholder dissatisfaction with project funding decisions. As well as to identify what the NCP does well and where it could possible improve. The research seeks to determine what elements of the process can help explain the apparent lack of conflict? To aid in this objective, this paper examines whether or not participants are satisfied with the engagement processes used by the NCP and if stakeholder satisfaction contributes to reduced conflict. Based on the results of the research, opportunities to improve current NCP stakeholder engagement processes are recommended.

The primary research question is:

- Does the stakeholder engagement process utilized by the NCP minimize conflict during and after completion of funding allocation decisions?

To support the primary question, the following secondary questions are also examined:

- Does the NCP employ an effective stakeholder engagement process?
- Are stakeholders satisfied with their overall participation in the decision-making process and the final decision?
- Are stakeholders satisfied with the components of the current NCP engagement process and is stakeholder satisfaction or dissatisfaction consistent with their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the final decisions regarding project funding?

- Does satisfaction with the decision-making process influence the implementation of the decision and the level of conflict after the process is complete?

It is important to note that although this project is looking at the potential connection between the engagement process used and the perceived lack of conflict, there may be other factors that could contribute to this lack of conflict. For example, decisions about funding for research and monitoring may not be a particularly contentious issue. Unlike the reactions that can be seen towards resource development projects across Canada and around the world, programs such as the NCP, which aims to help the environment and improve the lives of those it impacts, may not have the same type of negative reactions from community members and various stakeholders. These other possible contributing factors were not explored in this project.

1.3 Organization of Report

This report is divided into eight chapters. Chapter 1, titled Introduction, outlines potential issues that could be faced by a government lead program, such as the NCP, as well as the research objectives and questions for this paper. Chapter 2, Background, introduces the Client, its governance structure, proposal review process, as well as areas for potential dispute during the NCP decision-making process. Chapter 3, Literature Review, examines the current scholarly work in the field of dispute resolution. It outlines the different arguments made regarding a fair or good stakeholder engagement process, whether process contributes to participants' perceptions or satisfaction with the results, and whether satisfaction with the process and results leads to a lack of conflict at the conclusion of the process. Chapter 4 delves into the methodologies and method used for this research project, including why the researcher chose to use surveys and interviews and how they were conducted. Chapter 5 presents the findings of the surveys and interview. This chapter is broken down into twelve subsections, eleven of which present the results of the individual survey questions. The twelfth section is dedicated to the interviews. Chapter 6, Discussion and Analysis, discusses the results with reference to the relevant literature. Chapter 7 presents options and recommendations for the Client. The final chapter summarizes the research project and its findings.

1.4 Definitions

The following definitions will be used in this paper:

Community: “a group of people with diverse characteristics who are linked by social ties, share common perspectives, and engage in joint action in geographical locations or settings [...] the participants differed in the emphasis they placed on particular elements of the definition” (MacQueen, et al., 2001). It is important to note that the NCP uses this term to refer to distinct villages or settlements within Canada’s north. Although this is a type of community, the term could also refer to the health community in the north or the research community.

Community/stakeholder engagement: “mutual communication and deliberation that occurs between government and citizens” (Cavaye, 2004) or between individuals or groups that have an interest in a certain decision. Community/stakeholder engagement allows for stakeholders and decision makers to collectively participate in decision-making. For the NCP, a community engagement process is specific to a certain community in the north, whereas, stakeholder engagement includes members from multiple communities.

Effective engagement: Is a process that ensures that all the pertinent individuals and groups are involved, uses open dialogue to ensure that all perspectives are heard, and genuinely considers those perspectives when making the final decision.

Stakeholder: a group that represents individuals that have an interest in the final decision. Note that the terms “community” and “stakeholder” are often used interchangeably in the literature, since a community involved in an engagement process also represent the stakeholders in the process, as the community has a vested interest in the outcome of the engagement process. In the NCP context, this term refers to organizations such as the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC). This term is often used interchangeably with community in the literature.

Participant: for the purpose of this paper, participant will be defined as any member of a stakeholder group. This includes, but is not limited to, federal, territorial, and government employees, aboriginal groups, and academics.

2.0 Background

The following chapter provides a brief history of the NCP. It outlines how the program is governed, introduces stakeholders, and the role of these stakeholders. This chapter outlines the role of the NCP, the research proposal review process used, and the roles of different stakeholders in advising the Management Committee. Moreover, areas for potential conflict in the NCP process are discussed. Finally, definitions of key terms are provided to reduce confusion when reading this report.

2.1 *The Northern Contaminants Program (NCP)*

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, researchers began to notice an increase in pollutants in the northern environment and its wildlife and people.

Increased evidence that traditional/country foods contained contaminants raised questions about resulting contaminants levels in northern Aboriginal peoples. Thus in 1985-87 PCBs were measured in the blood of Inuit from the community of Broughton Island, Nunavut, known to have a relatively high per capita intake of traditional/country food. Results showed that blood PCBs exceeded the tolerance levels set by Health Canada in sixty-three percent of the women and men under 15 years of age, in thirty-nine percent of the women aged fifteen to forty-four, in six percent of the men fifteen years and older, and in twenty-nine percent of women forty-five years and older. This study also revealed elevated organic mercury levels in some individuals. Most alarming was the finding that PCB levels in the milk of Inuit women from the east coast of Hudson Bay in Nunavik (northern Quebec) were approximately five times higher than those in women in southern Canada (Downie & Fenge, 2003).

Researchers started to understand that due to the unique northern ecosystem, these contaminants, traveling from different parts of the world, collect at a higher concentration in the Arctic (NCP, 2016). These contaminants include persistent organic pollutants (POPs), such as DDT, and heavy metals (e.g. mercury).

An ad hoc committee was established in 1985 to work on the issues. Its main objective was to assess the extent of contaminants in traditional/country food in the North. In 1992, a report was published that outlined the state of knowledge at the time as well as to identify the gaps in knowledge. “Once the results of these initial studies were publicly released, the communication and education aspects of the program consisted largely of “fire-fighting” in response to inflammatory media articles” (Downie & Fenge, 2003). The media coverage produced negative results, with some Northerners ceasing to eat country food, and in one case, a mother decided to stop breastfeeding her child which then resulted in the child being malnourished.

In 1989, a workshop was organized, consisting of the federal and territorial governments as well as aboriginal organizations, to create an inter-agency, or collaborative, research and monitoring strategy to address the issue of increased contaminants. In response to the results of the co-operative studies undertaken in the mid to late 1980s, the NCP embarked upon a comprehensive and coordinated approach to addressing the issue of Arctic contamination. This is achieved through the funding of research to identify contaminants within the food sources, and to uncover the potential environmental and health risks of contaminants at current concentrations. Findings from the research are distributed to the public and used in policy processes to inform global action

It is also important to note that engagement or partnership has been a priority of the NCP since its early days.

A program that addresses such scientifically and politically complex issues requires well-developed management, planning, and implementation structures and strategies. The multi-disciplinary nature of the NCP has enabled it to develop such structures and strategies. The program derives much of its strengths from the partnership approach that forms the basis of its management process. The approach encompasses representatives that address the key areas of Arctic contaminants research based on an ecosystem approach, northern community concerns, needs and priorities, and the international and domestic agendas for the control of toxic substances (Downie & Fenge, 2003).

This research that has been conducted to date has been used to inform the domestic population as well as develop international agreements to regulate or eliminate the manufacture, use and release of contaminants. Since its creation, the NCP has aided in the development of numerous agreements, most notably the United Nations Environment Programme's *Stockholm Convention on POPs*, and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe's *Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution, Protocols on POPs and heavy metals*. Both conventions "recognize that the presence of a specific chemical in the Arctic environment represents the strongest evidence that the chemical is a POP and subject to long-range transport" (NCP, 2016).

The NCP has a large area of responsibility, including the "Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Nunavik (Northern Quebec) and Nunatsiavut (Labrador)" (NCP, 2015). It attempts to create a balance between the needs of Northerners (i.e. their reliance on traditional country food for nutrition as well as economic and cultural benefits) with the potential harm that the increase in contaminants could cause (both to individuals as well as food security issues in the north).

2.2 NCP Governance

The NCP is a multidisciplinary initiative that funds monitoring to assess long term trends and geographic trends. The program places an emphasis on communication and outreach activities with various communities throughout Canada's north. It also supports Indigenous involvement through funding and capacity-building opportunities. The NCP Secretariat, which supports the overall program, is located in Gatineau, Quebec. The NCP Management Committee is made up of representatives various stakeholder groups, including federal departments, territorial governments and Indigenous organizations, as well as other stakeholder groups. The Management Committee guides the decision-making process and ultimately, makes the final decisions regarding funding of individual projects and makes program policy and operational decisions. However, the various stakeholder groups involved in the review and making recommendations ensures all voices are heard when making those decisions.

There are multiple stakeholder and community groups involved in the NCP. As will be illustrated in Section 2.3, all proposals go through both a technical and social/cultural review which are conducted by different teams or communities depending on the research being proposed. Each team or community consists of different stakeholder groups. For example, the

Human Health Review Team currently consists of members from the NCP Secretariat, Health Canada, the Government of the Northwest Territories, the Government of Nunavut, Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), and the ICC. It is important to note that the last two stakeholder groups represent a large proportion of indigenous people in the north. The ITK is an organization that advocates for Canada's 60,000 Inuit, most of whom reside in what is referred to as Inuit Nunangat. Inuit Nunangat includes part of the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Nunavik (northern Quebec), and Nunatsiavut (northern Labrador). Moreover, the ICC is an "international non-government organization representing approximately 160,000 Inuit in Alaska, Canada, Greenland, and Chukotka (Russia)" (ICC, 2016).

Although some of the committees have changed since the 2003 publication of the Canadian Arctic Contaminants Assessment Report II, Table 1 illustrates the governance process used at the time of its publication.

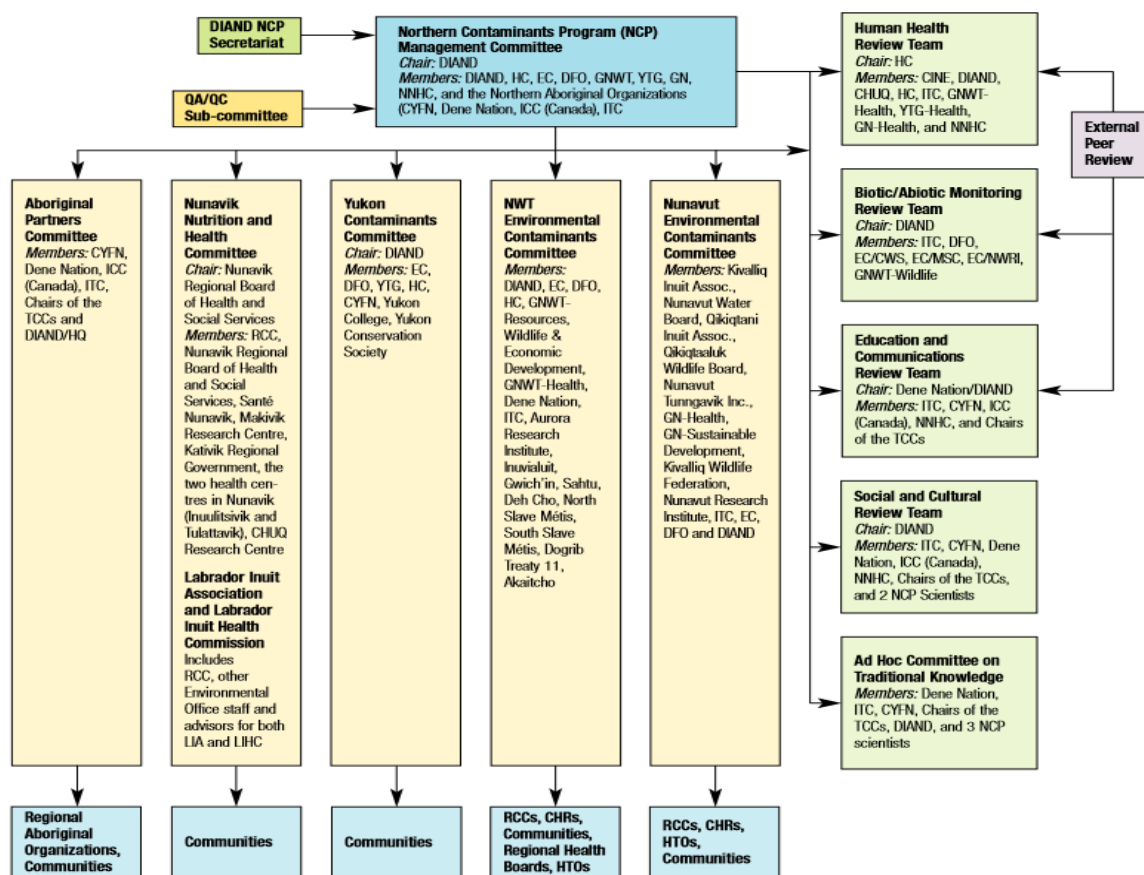


Table 1 - Governance Structure

As can be demonstrated by the table above, numerous stakeholder groups were, and continue to be, involved throughout the decision-making process.

2.3 NCP Proposal Development and Review Process

The proposal review process includes numerous stakeholder groups. Each proposal is reviewed from a technical perspective by one of five technical review teams:

- Human Health Review Team;
- Environmental Monitoring Review Team;
- Environmental Research Review Team;
- Community-Based Monitoring and Research Review Team; and
- Communications, Capacity and Outreach Review Team.

These review teams look over the proposals that are pertinent to their area and assess the merits and relevance of the proposals. This is done by using criteria that are laid out in the NCP annual Call for Proposals and assessing the proposal in relation to the priorities identified in the NCP Blueprints and other strategic priorities. Tables 2 and 3 describe the criteria against which the review teams assess every proposal being considered for funding.

Weighting	Criteria
Y/N	Does the research proposal address one of the key research needs outlined in the Blueprint? If so, which one(s)?
Y/N	Does the proposed work have relevance and applicability in addressing other issues of importance to northerners (e.g. climate change, food security)?
Y/N	Does the team have the necessary capacity and/or track record to conduct described research, and the potential to deliver results that reflect scientific excellence?
Y/N	Where appropriate (e.g. community based monitoring and research proposals), is co-production of knowledge/indigenous knowledge included in the proposal and does the project use participatory research methods?
Y/N	Does the proposal include educational/training elements?

Y/N	If this research project directly impacts northern communities or Indigenous groups, have they been engaged and do they support this research? Have the applicants addressed the NCP Guidelines for Responsible Research and obtained written consent (where applicable)?
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Table 2 - NCP Relevance Criteria

Projects proposals that are submitted under the Environmental Monitoring and Research and Human Health subprograms go through an extra level of review (external peer review). The other three review teams can also request this additional level of review, if they believe that more technical expertise is needed. This external peer review uses the same technical criteria laid out in Table 3.

Weighting	Criteria
20	Scientific excellence/expertise of principal investigator and team (including consideration of relevant publications)
15	Clarity and scope of objectives
15	Clarity, adequacy and inter-comparability of methodology
15	Suitability of proposal design for meeting the objectives (e.g. sample size, etc.)
10	Appropriateness of time frame (e.g. can the project results be delivered within the time frame specified in the proposal and within a time frame appropriate to the NCP?)
10	Appropriateness of budget (e.g. charges for sample analysis)
15	Overall clarity and organization of proposal
Written Assessment	Peer reviewers are asked to provide a brief written assessment of the proposal, including an assessment of the importance of the proposed project with respect to the priority areas identified in the relevant NCP Blueprint.

Table 3 - Technical and External Peer Review Criteria

After the proposals have made their way through the various technical review teams, they then go through a social/cultural review. This review is conducted by the different Regional Contaminants Committees (RCCs). Aspects of the proposal, such as “communications, northern

priorities, capacity building and training, traditional knowledge, and northern consultation” (NCP, 2017) are considered. Proposals are rated based on Table 4 and then recommendations regarding areas for improvement are made to the NCP Management Committee.

Criteria	Attributes
Communications	<p>How complete are the communications activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - prior to project implementation? - during project execution? - after project results are received? <p>How is the rapport of the project applicant within the study area?</p>
Northern Priority	<p>Does the project address a question that is important to Northerners? (Note: Proposal must also meet a priority outlined in the Blueprints.)</p> <p>Has similar work been done already? Recently?</p> <p>Does the proposal build on existing data?</p>
Capacity Building/Training	<p>Does the proposal provide local or northern training opportunities?</p> <p>Does the proposal promote capacity building in the North?</p>
Indigenous Knowledge	<p>Does the proposal make use of appropriate Indigenous Knowledge?</p> <p>Have the relevant communities been consulted on how Indigenous Knowledge could be incorporated into the project?</p>
Past Experience in the Region	<p>Has the project team established and/or previously demonstrated good working relationships with the relevant communities?</p> <p>Does the project team have a satisfactory track record of delivering on social/cultural aspects of project plans?</p>
Other	<p>Additional comments on technical and logistical aspects, budget and other considerations.</p>

Table 4 - Social/Cultural Review Criteria

The five RCCs are:

- Yukon Contaminants Committee;

- Northwest Territories Regional Contaminants Committee;
- Nunavut Environmental Contaminants Committee;
- Nunavik Nutrition and Health Committee; and
- Nunatsiavut Government Research Advisory Committee.

The structure of each of these committees is unique, and consists of members of various stakeholder groups (i.e. federal government, territorial governments as well as different aboriginal organizations). For example, the Northwest Territories Regional Contaminants Committee consists of members from the Northwest Territory Métis Nation, the Indian Research Council, Tli Cho, Gwich'in Council International, North Slave Métis Alliance, DehCho First Nation, ITK, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, the government of the Northwest Territories, Cumulative Impact Monitoring Program, and INAC.

Once a year, the NCP Management Committee meets to review the ratings of the proposals, and the recommendations made by the various teams and committees. This review leads to the final decision regarding which proposals to fund that year, the amount of funding that they will receive, and any conditions that may be tied to that funding. Such conditions may include a detailed communications plan to address issues raised by particular committees.

2.4 Areas for Potential Disputes

There is potential for conflict at any stage throughout the decision-making, and also within the context of the implementation of individually funded projects. The NCP works to address issues regarding how research on contaminants is communicated with, and interpreted by, northern communities. The literature on this issue generally agrees that poor communication is often a catalyst for conflict (Mayer, 2012). Conflict often stems from miscommunication, ineffective communication, or different perceptions, understandings, or world views. Conflict also arises when individual rights are at odds or when one's needs are not being met (Fisher, Ury & Patton, 2011).

Potential areas for conflict at the beginning of the process include leaving out stakeholder groups; whether due to financial constraints or inadequate identification of the different stakeholder groups, the neglected groups could feel like their voices weren't heard. Similarly, if an individual is left out of their stakeholder group, not all voices are heard.

Even if all the stakeholder groups were at the table and all individuals who wished to participate are present, if the process is not conducted in a fair and transparent manner, or an inadequate engagement process is used, similar feelings of mistreatment may occur. Participants may feel that the process or decision makers were biased, that they were kept purposely out of the loop, or that they were misinformed by decision makers. Dissatisfied participants may choose to use various methods to vent their frustration or anger.

Conflict can even manifest itself after the final decision is made and the research is complete. Using the example noted in Section 2, regarding the initial research that found contaminants in food sources, when the results were finally disseminated, due care was not given to fully educating the community regarding the implications of the results. This led to the rejection, by some community members, of food sources critical to their health. In an example like this, community members could lash out at external elements that they believe helped contribute to the problem (i.e. government, corporations). The community, feeling a sense of injustice that their food is being unevenly affected by the actions of others, could potentially set up road blocks or file a lawsuit with the courts. A similar result could result if research recommended that community members no longer fish from a certain lake, one where the community had been fishing for generations. This could cause similar anguish within the community that could manifest outward in many ways (i.e. protests at community meetings, complaints to political representatives, etc.). It is important to note, that the potential areas mentioned above are hypothetical and do not illustrate current areas of contention.

A question faced by this paper is whether its model of stakeholder engagement is an effective model that aides in preventing or addressing potential conflict, such as opposition to certain research projects taking place (i.e. research conducted on traditional territory without proper consultation), or differences in expectations among different stakeholder groups about which projects should be given priority for funding (e.g. a stakeholder group in one region places higher priority for funding a project in their own region than on a project in another region). Is it an effective method in bridging different world views, ultimately setting the ground work for mutual understanding and effective program delivery? If so, what are the best practices that it implements and where could there be improvements?

In summary, there are many points throughout the NCP decision-making process as well as during and after the research is complete, during which conflict can occur. Neglecting to

include all stakeholder groups or individuals, the use of an ineffective or inadequate process, and misunderstood results, all provide potential pressure points from which conflict may arise.

3.0 Literature Review

In 2006, Carrie Menkel-Meadow, a prominent scholar in the fields of conflict resolution and deliberative-democracy, wrote an article titled *Why Hasn't the World Gotten to Yes? An Appreciation and Some Reflections*. In this article, Menkel-Meadow looked back at the environment and circumstances that lead Roger Fisher and William Ury to write their foundational book Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In (1981). The authors, who argued for the use of principled negotiation (based on interests) versus more traditional adversarial negotiation (based on positions), was an example of the thinking in some academic circles at the time. After the heavy losses of the World Wars, and during the protracted and sometimes violent Cold War, these scholars were looking for better, more productive and efficient ways to address conflict. Since 1981, the body of literature that has developed has greatly contributed to the field of conflict resolution.

Parallel to the developing field of conflict resolution, was a noticeable desire by citizens to have more say in decision-making. As noted in the introduction, governments are attempting to engage their citizens more actively. This is in part due to a desire to create good policy, but also because citizens started to demand it (Cavaye, 2004). An increasing number of citizens want to be engaged in important decisions that impact their lives, especially when those decisions address complex and entrenched issues, also known as wicked problems (Feltey, King, & Susel, 1998).

This has marked a shift in the relationship between government and its citizens. Lawrence Susskind provides an evolutionary tale in his article *Can Public Policy Dispute Resolution Meet the Challenges Set by Deliberative Democracy* (2006). He argues that we have started to pass the time of representative democracy, where individuals vote for a representative that then makes decisions on their behalf. This type of representation, Susskind contends, quickly falls short, “elected officials seem more worried with getting re-elected than they do about solving the difficult problems [...] they seem more responsive to those who finance their re-election campaigns than to those with the greatest needs [...] while representative democracy puts a premium on majority rule, it doesn't guarantee that the wisest agreement will emerge” (2006). We have begun the move to public policy dispute resolution (PPDR). PPDR goes a long

way to address many of the issues with representative democracy. It increases the number of stakeholders and voices at the table (see Appendix 1).

“It has emerged as a more effective way of responding to the most vexing aspects of public policy-making – moving quickly when controversial decisions have been made, ensuring that scientific and technical considerations are given their due, guaranteeing that all groups (not just those with the money to control the airwaves or go to court) are given a fair hearing, and restoring the legitimacy of government in the face of widespread cynicism about government’s capacity to solve problems” (Susskind, 2006).

For Susskind, deliberative democracy is the ideal society is working towards. With deliberative democracy “opinions are shared through respectful dialogue... governmental processes give as much attention to the concerns of the average citizen as it does to the most aggressive (and well organized) interest group” (Susskind, 2006).

However, Menkel-Meadow offers a slightly different view in her article, *Deliberative Democracy and Conflict Resolution: Two Theories and Practices of Participation in the Polity*. She argues that the fields of conflict resolution (i.e. PPDR) and deliberative democracy have been working and developing in parallel. These fields of study have the same goal, “theorizing about and attempting to structure processes for increased participation in decision-making by the parties most affected by those decisions” (2006), but come from different backgrounds; the deliberative democracy movement comes from the field of political science, whereas, the conflict resolution movement comes from a multidisciplinary background. Along with this shared goal, these two movements share many of the same beliefs. For example, the belief that the “participatory processes will produce better outcomes... [and] create processes with greater legitimacy and satisfaction” (Menkel-Meadow, 2006). Both movements also believe that decision-making based on interests and not positions, and that uses open and authentic dialogue, produces better outcomes.

This paper examines a specific engagement process and how it contributes to dispute prevention. It fits well within the conflict resolution movement; however, it also helps to

contribute to the ideal of deliberative democracy. The more individuals are engaged in interest based decision-making, the more comfortable they become with the process, the more it will permeate other areas of life.

The following section reviews the literature on conflict resolution as it pertains to community engagement and conflict prevention. As noted above, this research project was designed to answer the following questions:

- What about the funding decision-making process can help explain the apparent lack of conflict?
- Whether or not participants are satisfied with the processes used by the NCP?
- If these processes contribute to reduced conflict?

Researchers in the field of dispute resolution, as well as other social sciences, generally agree that a good engagement process is the same as a fair process (Cavaye, 2004; Irvin & Stansbury, 2004; Prebble, 2015). These terms are often used interchangeably in the literature. When participants feel that a process is fair, they tend to be more satisfied with the outcome, regardless of what their position or opinion was at the beginning (Tyler, 1994; Mayer, 2012). This is known as procedural justice, that “people are influenced by their judgements about the fairness of [...] decision-making procedures” (Tyler, 1994). Tyler states that a participant’s satisfaction is affected by many factors. For example:

- Their buy-in or acceptance of the process;
- Whether they feel their voices or opinions have been heard and fully considered; or
- They perceive bias in the process or by the decision-makers.

It is important to note that the literature also shows that when participants are satisfied with the process, there tends to be less conflict once the final decision is made (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004).

While engagement is generally considered to be positive, it also has many limitations. This chapter will also examine some of these limitations and illustrate that engagement is not always feasible.

Since this project focused on engagement, the following terms were also used to help find appropriate scholarly work to support the arguments being: community/stakeholder engagement, whole of government approach, procedural justice, fair process/decision making, elements of good/effective community engagement, and limitations to stakeholder engagement.

3.1 Effective Community/Stakeholder Engagement Processes

Although it is generally agreed by scholars that engagement has positive effects on decision-making, the sources reviewed differ regarding what essential elements make-up an effective engagement process. Keeping in mind that there are some negative effects of engagement (see Section 3.5) as well as the possible costs (financial, public reputation, relationships, etc.), what are the elements that make an effective engagement process? What best practices can be drawn from the numerous examples and reporting on engagement?

Judith Innes and David Booher, in their book *Planning with Complexity: An Introduction to Collaborative Rationality for Public Service*, argue that times have and continue to change. “Globalization, the rise of instant communications and the internet, the movement of immigration groups to new countries, and increasing levels of education” are changing societies throughout the globe (2010). With these changes has come a desire by citizens to have more say in the operation of various levels of government. Innes and Booher discuss the concept of collaborative rationality as an essential tool in this new context. Simply put, decision-making processes need to be collaboratively rational to make appropriate decisions. They argue “a process is collaboratively rational to the extent that all the affected interests jointly engage in face to face dialogue bringing their various perspectives to the table to deliberate on the problems they face together” (Innes & Booher, 2010). A stakeholder engagement process must meet the test of collaborative rationality before it can be considered good or effective. It is important to note that the concept of collaborative rationality can be applied to all decision-making processes and not just the government-citizen relationship. When deciding where to go for a vacation, a couple consults different literature, talks to friends, and watches travel shows to ensure that different perspectives are considered before discussing the options face to face and making a decision. According to Innes and Booher’s definition, this decision-making process would be collaboratively rational.

Jim Cavaye, in his article *Governance and Community Engagement: The Australian*

Experience, offers a list of ten elements that he argues, based on his research and years of experience as a practitioner, make up a good government-community engagement process. This list outlines key elements that ensure an effective process:

- “Will” or genuine motivation: participants need to be genuinely engaged in the process and committed to an outcome, whether it is their ideal outcome or not;
- Relationships and trust: participants must have sufficient trust in the process and an understanding that their voice will be heard;
- Leadership: there must be shared leadership among the stakeholder groups and leaders must have the sophistication and competency to lead the process;
- Decision-making: those present require sufficient authority to make decisions or an agreement on behalf of their stakeholder groups;
- Inclusiveness: all relevant stakeholders need to be present. If there are circumstances (e.g. financial) preventing a stakeholder from participating, all avenues of accommodation should be explored (e.g. financial support);
- Structure, procedure: the process should be designed by the stakeholders or, at least, all stakeholders must agree on the process before moving forward;
- Accountability: there should always be someone accountable for the outcome of the process. This is often governments, however, it could also be a business or individual;
- Skills: there should be individuals at the table that possess the skills to manage the process, including any conflict that may arise;
- Satisfaction: all participants should be satisfied with the process; and,
- Follow-up: continued follow-up ensures that outcomes are being implemented and addresses any conflict that may arise after the process is complete.

Similar to Innes and Booher, Cavaye talks about the need for all stakeholders to be at the table, which ensures that different perspectives are heard. However, Cavaye goes into more detail. Throughout his elements, there is a common theme of trust and satisfaction with the process. The assumption is that the more stakeholders are involved in the process – whether it be through shared leadership, continual communication or an understanding that the participants are accountable for the outcome – the fairer the process. Perceptions of how involved they are and

whether they feel heard, correlates directly with whether individual stakeholders feel the process is fair.

Renee Irvin and John Stansbury, in their article *Citizen Participation in Decision-Making: Is it Worth the Effort?* propose different conditions to those noted above, but with the same underlying assumptions. They argue that the ideal conditions for a successful engagement process are:

- The careful selection of a representative group of stakeholders;
- A transparent decision-making process to build trust among the participants;
- Clear authority in decision-making;
- Competent and unbiased group facilitators;
- Regular meetings; and,
- Adequate financial resources to support the group during the potentially long learning and decision-making process (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004).

Again these elements speak to participant trust and satisfaction in the process. Ensuring all the stakeholders groups are at the table ensures that all voices are heard. Transparent decision-making, clear authority, competent facilitators, regular meetings and sufficient financial support also speaks to the integrity of the process, which ultimately contributes to overall satisfaction. Irvin and Stansbury even highlights this by noting that integrity of the process is an important factor in building a relationship of trust between the different groups participating in the process as well as trust in the process itself.

The National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation published a report in 2009 titled *Core Principles for Public Engagement*. Similar to Cavaye as well as Irvin and Stansbury, this report outlined various steps for effective, authentic engagement:

- Careful planning and preparation;
- Inclusion and demography diversity;
- Collaboration and shared purpose;
- Openness and learning;
- Transparency and trust;

- Impact and action; and,
- Sustained engagement and participatory culture (National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation, 2009).

These principles, which were established by a working group of practitioners and field experts, speak to the necessity of early and consistent stakeholder engagement to a successful process.

As is evident in the writings of the scholars noted above, there are many different ideas regarding the elements that make up a good stakeholder engagement process. However, throughout the literature there are many common themes (Cavaye, 2004; Irvin & Stansbury, 2004; Innes & Booher, 2010). Of particular note is the overarching theme of the need for a fair process to ensure participant satisfaction. Most scholars agree that a fair engagement process involves: all the pertinent stakeholder groups; an inclusive environment, whether that means shared leadership or the use of a skilled and neutral facilitator; trust between participants as well as in the process; continued and regular authentic communication; and, a shared purpose, whether that be genuine concern for ones' community or a common desire to resolve a long standing dispute. All these aspects contribute to a participant's perception regarding whether a process is fair. If stakeholders are left out of the process, an important voice will be missing and the final decision will not be a fully informed decision. Poor leadership can also undermine the effectiveness of the process and participants' trust. A lack of communication can lead to misunderstanding and leave stakeholders feeling like they are not full participant in the process. Finally, a shared purpose allows for common ground on which to base the process (i.e. trust that no one is participating in bad faith). All these factors have a great impact on participants' perception of the process and ultimately on their acceptance of the conclusion.

3.2 Fair Processes Contribution to Overall Satisfaction

Although there is general consensus that a fair or collaborative process produces better results, does it actually contribute to participant satisfaction with the results? If so, what is it about a fair process that allows participants to look past their original position on the matter and agree with, or at least be content with, the decision that was made? Cavaye argues that the structure of the engagement process is vital to giving participants an opportunity to be heard. Irvin & Stansbury argue that procedure is key to building trust among stakeholders. The National

Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation notes that careful planning of the decision-making process is essential to ensuring its success. But does process lead to participant satisfaction with the results?

The argument that process has an impact on both an individual's perception of the outcome, and those that make the final decisions, can be labelled a procedural justice argument. As was noted in the introduction to this section, procedural justice contends that people are influenced by their perceptions regarding the fairness of a decision-making process and that perception has an effect on their feelings towards those who made the decision, and ultimately the decision that was made. Tom Tyler, Peter Degoey, and Heather Smith discuss the concept of procedural justice and why it affects individuals in their article *Understanding Why Justice of Group Procedures Matter: A Test of the Psychological Dynamics of the Group Value Model*. After reviewing two decades of literature on procedural justice, the authors found that "when people feel that they have been fairly treated, they are more willing to accept the decisions resulting from the procedures, more satisfied with the procedures, more likely to comply with general group rules and laws, more willing to remain a group member and more willing to help the group even at a cost to themselves" (Tyler, Degoey & Smith, 1996). Using the NCP as an example, the procedural justice definition outlined by Tyler, Degoey, and Smith would hold that the more stakeholders are engaged and truly heard, the more likely they are to feel that the process was fair. The stronger the perception participants have regarding fairness, the more likely they are to accept the outcome (i.e. which projects are funded).

Tyler takes this argument further in his article *Governing Amid Diversity: The Effect of Fair Decision-Making Procedures in the Legitimacy of Government*. He writes that a citizen's opinion regarding decisions made by their officials' impact their attitude towards the legitimacy of government. He argues that "several types of judgements about the actions of authorities potentially undermine public judgement about their legitimacy, particularly (1) agreement with policies and decisions; and, (2) judgements about the fairness of decision-making procedures" (1994). The second point is of importance to this research, as it demonstrates that procedure influences the way individuals perceive a decision. A fair and inclusive decision-making process influences an individual's acceptance of that decision and their acceptance of those who made the decision.

Bernard Mayer, in his book The Dynamics of Conflict: A Guide to Engagement and Intervention, also talks about procedure as an essential element of participant satisfaction. When describing interests, he breaks them down into “substantive (concerns about tangible benefits), procedural (concerns about a process for interacting, communicating, or decision-making), and psychological (concerns about how one is treated, respected, or acknowledged)” (Mayer, 2012). When procedural interests are not met, conflict can arise in many different manners. For example, if the NCP Secretariat made a decision regarding which projects to fund without consulting certain stakeholders, they could run the risk of approving research that is to be conducted on traditional or sacred land. The community, feeling a sense of injustice or a lack of procedural justice since they were not included in the decision-making process, could potentially set up road blocks or file a lawsuit with the courts. Unless the procedural interests are met, it is likely that the conflict will continue to escalate. Mayer argues that at the very core of democracy is a promise to address “procedural interests, even when substantive interests cannot be met. Citizens continue to feel loyalty to their government, even when they disagree with its policies and have not voted for its leader, if they fundamentally support the process by which these leaders are elected” (2012). This is another example of the procedural justice argument.

Furthermore, the procedural justice argument is supported by a 2009 report released by the Building Capacity Together Project (conducted by the Public Policy Forum) titled *Rethinking the Public Policy Process: A Public Engagement Framework* (Lenihan, 2009). This report contends that in the traditional models of public engagement, regardless of what “decision the government makes, someone is going to disagree because they feel like they lost the argument” (Lenihan, 2009). Since stakeholders are generally involved, if at all, at the beginning of the decision-making process, with little to no follow-up, stakeholders often feel their voices were ignored. However, when stakeholders are meaningfully engaged through every step of the process, despite the results of the decision, they feel heard. This increases overall satisfaction, or at least acceptance, with the decision made. This report speaks to both the elements of an effective engagement process as well as whether it contributes to overall satisfaction. Simply put, if stakeholders are properly engaged earlier in, and continuously throughout, the process, they have more time to voice their concerns, listen to the concerns of others, and become engaged in meaningful dialogue. This gives stakeholders a better understanding of the issues and concerns of all stakeholders involved, which leads to a deeper understanding of the decision being made.

Even though the decision may not be what they were hoping for, at least their voice was heard, and considered in the final decision.

3.3 Sources of Conflict

Theories regarding the origins conflict are as divergent as theories regarding how to

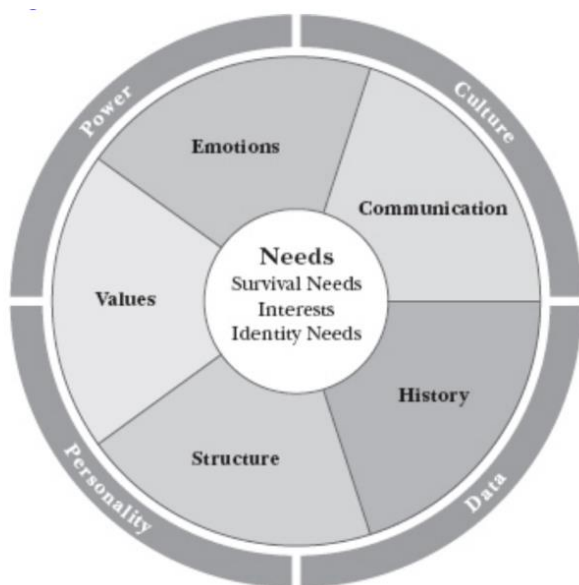


Table 4 – Bernard Mayer’s Human Needs in Conflict (2012)

resolve them. Mayer created a conflict wheel (see Table 4) as a tool for identifying sources of conflict. At the middle of the wheel are one’s needs. Unlike Abraham Maslow who proposed a hierarchy of needs, with the most basic needs (i.e. food shelter, clothing) at the bottom and self-actualization needs at the top (Maslow, 1954), Mayer proposes a model with three overlapping circles: survival needs, interests, and identity needs. Conflict arises when one or more of these needs are not being met. In the case of the NCP, identity needs could pose potential conflict. The need for a sense of community, something to belong to, a sense of connection, is strong in northern communities. A connection to a community and to the land on which one’s community lives, is ingrained in one’s identity. Any threat to this community is deemed a threat to the individual. Also at play are survival needs. As mentioned above, the NCP was established as a response to an increase of contaminants in northern food supply, most notably in marine mammals and fish. This represents a threat to food security, a basic human need, as defined by both Mayer (2012) and Maslow (1954).

After needs, the wheel is broken down into five components that contribute to conflict: emotions, communication, history, structure and values. Mayer describes emotion as the “energy that fuels conflict. If we could always stay perfectly rational and focused on how best to meet our needs and accommodate those of others [...] then many conflicts either would never arise or would quickly de-escalate” (2012). For example, fears over food security, the effects of increased pollutants on local health, and even the melting of ice are prevalent. Also, a desire to

preserve traditional territory and practices are evident throughout these communities. All these emotions have the potential to contribute to conflict if it arises throughout and after the decision-making process.

Communication, or rather poor communication, is also a potential catalyst for conflict. Many factors, such as “culture, gender, age, class, cognitive capacity, and environment” (Mayer, 2012) can impact communication. The differing cultures (i.e. Aboriginal, academic, government) involved in the NCP provide many avenues for potential conflict. These groups do not use the same discourse, leaving room for misunderstanding and miscommunication. Miscommunication can lead to the misinterpretation of actions, which could cause a clash between stakeholder groups.

History is also at play in the NCP. The Government of Canada has a long and difficult history with its Aboriginal people. Programs, such as residential schools and High Arctic relocation, have had long-standing, negative effects. There is also a difficult history of “studying” communities in the Arctic. When working with Aboriginal communities, governments (both federal and territorial) need to be aware of this history and its influence on current interactions with these communities.

Mayer describes structure as “the framework within which an interaction takes place or an issue develops [...] structural components of conflict include available resources, decision-making procedures, time constraints, legal requirements, communication mechanism, and physical setting” (2012). Many of these factors represent areas for potential conflict within the NCP. Catalysts such as a lack of resources to send participants to meetings, time constraints on research projects and even the physical setting of meetings could also be at play.

The final component in Mayer’s conflict wheel is values. He defines values as “the beliefs we have about what is important, what distinguishes right from wrong and good from evil, and what principles should govern how we live our lives” (2012). Many values are at play in the NCP. The values of the researcher (to collect data), may differ greatly to the values of the communities (who place a premium on the preservation of their traditional territory). Academics conducting research on traditional territory could potentially spark conflict between the two groups.

3.4 Participant Satisfaction and its Contribution to a Lack of Conflict

Mayer also touches on the issue of procedural justice and how it helps to prevent or reduce conflict. “Conflict is natural, inevitable, necessary, and normal, and the problem is not the existence of conflict but how we handle it” (2012). He outlines two different approaches to conflict prevention – substantive and procedural. The substantive approach anticipates issues before they arise and lays the groundwork to deal with conflict should it materialize (i.e. a conflict resolution clause of a treaty). The procedural approach “could involve opening more effective channels of communication or decision-making, such as arranging for regular meetings between contractors and their clients [...] or establishing an employee council, citizen advisory group, or effective public participation process” (Mayer, 2012). In this last point, Mayer is arguing that a fair process can contribute to conflict prevention or mitigation.

Irvin and Stansbury make a similar argument – that good engagement has the potential to reduce disputes after the conclusion of the decision-making process. Stakeholder engagement is based on the belief that “with citizen participation, formulated policies might be more realistically grounded in citizen preferences, the public might become more sympathetic evaluators of the tough decisions that government administrators have to make, and the improved support might create a less divisive, combative populace to govern and regulate” (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004). This suggests that “improved citizen participation could stem the deterioration of public trust evidenced by widespread hostility towards government entities” (King and Stivers, 1998). As noted above, there is great potential for conflict if stakeholders feel that their voices are not heard. For example, if a local community is left out of the discussions regarding the scope of a research project in their area, they may feel that their opinions do not matter. However, when all voices of considered accommodations can be made to avoid conflict between stakeholders. The possibilities for meeting the needs and interests of stakeholders are countless, if the right participants are at the table and have the opportunity to voice those needs and interests.

3.5 Limitations of Community/Stakeholder Engagement

Although research continually demonstrates the benefits of community/stakeholder engagement, there are also limitations to how effective engagement can be in decision-making. Mark Prebble, in his article *Public Value and Limits to Collaboration*, reviews the current

literature on stakeholder engagement and collaboration. Many scholars argue that engagement marks a shift in how government does business and enhances its legitimacy. Scholars have “looked at partnerships as a management tool to better meet the needs of communities. But few consider whether collaborative management make a general contribution to public well-being” (Prebble, 2015). He outlines three conditions required to ensure engagement enhances public value: benefit, support, and acceptability. For an engagement process to be successful, the process must meet the following criteria: produce better results/benefits for the community than could be or would have been achieved through the normal governmental decision-making process; the overall cost (financial and resources) cannot be more than the overall benefit to the community; and the process requires buy-in or basic acceptance of the greater administration. Prebble argues that if these conditions are not met, engagement would be a detriment. Flying all pertinent stakeholders to one city to have a meeting to discuss a new group logo, could eat away at valuable dollars that could be put to better use, such as a new bike lane. In this example, the cost of engagement could be very high; therefore, engagement may not be the best process.

Greg Leichty in his article *The Limits of Collaboration* argues that there are “cases in which collaborative public relations is not practiced because it is unfeasible or unwise” (Leichty, 1997). He goes further to highlight the importance of goal compatibility. That “two-way symmetrical theory [cooperation and engagement] assumes that parties to the dispute have a shared mission of social progress overarching their specific issues or points of disagreement” (Leichty, 1997). It assumes that there is trust, which allows for the truthful exchange of information. He argues that this is not always the case and outlines three situations in which opponents will be “unreasonable” or unwilling to engage in a collaborative process: “to retaliate for some wrong done to a person or group [...], when groups or public draw an intrinsic motivation or symbolic gratification from the confrontation [...], and when parties derive substantial extrinsic reward from promoting a confrontation, where there is an advantage, financial or otherwise, to be gained by initiating and promoting a public controversy” (Leichty, 1997). In these situations, engagement will be ineffective. It is important to note that many of the elements described by Leichty (shared goals, trust, authentic dialogue, etc.) are elements outlined earlier in this literature review as essential elements of good engagement. If these elements do not exist, engagement will likely be ineffective.

3.6 Summary of Literature Review Findings

In summary, current literature on community/stakeholder engagement argues that if the process is deemed fair or good, stakeholders are more likely to accept the final decision (Tyler, 1994; Tyler, Degoey & Smith, 1996; Kim & Mauborgne, 2003; Mayer, 2012). Although elements of a fair process differ from author to author, there are common themes (i.e. early engagement, common goals, appropriate stakeholders at the table and skilled facilitators or leaders) (Cavaye, 2004; Innes & Booher, 2010; Irvin & Stansbury, 2004; Mayer, 2012). If these elements are present, the likelihood of participant satisfaction in the process and the results increases. Satisfaction in the process and results contributes further to a reduction in the likelihood of conflict (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004; Mayer, 2012). However, there are also limitations to engagement. Financial limitations, a lack of shared goals, as well as single interests can have a negative effect on the engagement process as well as its outcome.

The survey and interview questions were designed based on the key attributes of stakeholder engagement that were identified in this literature review. In particular Cavaye's elements of relationship and trust, leadership, accountability, satisfaction, and follow-up sustainability were addressed. These elements are also supported by the other scholars discussed.

4.0 Methodology and Methods

4.1 Methodology

Since this research project was designed to examine both universally applicable elements of engagement (what elements or steps should engagement processes follow to ensure a fair or good engagement process), as well as how those elements contribute to overall participant satisfaction and a decrease or lack of conflict at the conclusion, a mixed methodology approach, employing both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, was chosen.

The positivist paradigm looks for "universal truths" that govern interactions in our world. They use research subjects or participants as a means to study, find, and understand these objective truths in society (Olson, 1995). Quantitative research attempts to exclude the researcher from the research, as well as excluding beliefs, values and intentions of both the participants and the researchers. Methodologically, it looks for data that can be measured using reliable and valid methods (Olson, 1995).

Qualitative research is often defined in opposition to quantitative research. Many authors talk about what it is not, rather than what it is. Qualitative research is considered a more holistic approach, looking at the research participant, the environment in which the research is being conducted, as well as the way in which the participant views its own environment. Qualitative research is contextual and inductive (Olson, 1995; Howe, 1992). Data is considered qualitative if it is measurable based on a categorical scale, which cannot be put into a descending or ascending order based on value or be divided up into equally distanced groups. Qualitative analysis requires the researcher to be a part of the project. It recognizes that the researcher's presence has an effect on the participants and the environment, and therefore, acknowledges bias and judgment as part of the research (Howe, 1992).

When designing this research project, the researcher decided to use a mixed methodology approach since the project looked to confirm universal truths or universally applicable elements/steps that anyone wishing to execute an effective and fair engagement process could follow, as well as examining the specifics of why these elements work and how they contribute to overall satisfaction and lack of conflict.

A comprehensive review of the literature identified elements of good engagement. These elements were consistently recommended as best practices across a range of relevant literature. These elements are listed in Section 3.6.

A quantitative case study was designed, based on the funding decision-making process used by the NCP, to determine the presence of these elements of good engagement and their contribution to participant satisfaction. The intention was then to use a qualitative approach to make the connection between good engagement and a lack of conflict. However, due to the limited responses for the qualitative portion of this research, the connection could not be made using the qualitative method alone, and therefore was bolstered with support from the literature.

4.2 Methods

A case study design was used to examine whether community/stakeholder engagement reduces dissatisfaction with the final decisions and possible disputes that are born from that dissatisfaction. A case study design is a type of research method that examines, in detailed, a specific research problem (UVic, 2015). In the case of this research project, it examines whether good or fair engagement contributes to a lack of dispute at the conclusion of a decision-making process. Using the NCP as a real world example of a stakeholder engagement process, the research tests whether the above noted theory, which is strongly supported in the literature, applies to a real world situation.

The methods used for this research project were surveys and interviews. Surveys allowed for a quantitative examination of individuals' feelings regarding their level of engagement and whether this contributed to overall participant satisfaction in the process and the results. Interviews were intended to facilitate a deeper investigation into why participants had these feelings and the connection between process and a decrease or lack of conflict at the conclusion.

The researcher received ethics approval for this project on April 19th, 2016. An application for renewal was submitted on April 18th, 2017, and approved on April 21st 2017.

Surveys were used to quantify stakeholders' overall satisfaction with the process. The NCP Secretariat assisted the researcher by distributing the surveys to all stakeholder groups (see Chapter 2 for a list of the different stakeholder groups) and their contact lists. An initial invitation was sent out by email on April 29, 2016. A follow-up email was sent on May 12, 2016 to remind stakeholders of the pending submission deadline. The initial closure date was May 13,

2016, however it was decided that due to the low number of respondents the survey closure date would be extended by two days. The extension was successful in allowing more respondents to complete the survey.

Due to the scattered geographical locations of the individual members of sample group (northern Canada) an online process was used, to allow for more stakeholders to participate. Fluid Survey, an online survey generator, was chosen to fill this need. This allowed participants to access the survey at their convenience. The survey questions are included in Appendix 4. There were no alternative options to participate provided to participants for the survey portion of this research project.

Interviews were intended to be used to determine if there was a link between engagement and a lack of disputes, as well as provide more context to analyze the statistical data provided by the surveys. The sample group to be interviewed was not chosen at random. The NCP assisted the researcher by identifying stakeholders who held a vast trove of knowledge about the history of the program and how the current process developed over time. Selected participants from all stakeholder groups (the same stakeholder groups that were provided with the invitation to participate in the survey) were invited to participate. Only one invitee agreed to participate in the interview.

This portion of the research project was conducted over the phone. The dispersed geographical location of program participants made the feasibility of face-to-face interviews difficult. The Client sent an invitation email to all identified potential interviewees (as selected by the NCP Secretariat), which included a letter of consent. It was noted in the invitation email that the letter of consent needed to be reviewed and signed before the interviews could be conducted. Potential interviewees were invited to contact the researcher directly if they wished to participate. No reminder email was sent.

Cavaye's elements of good government-community engagement were used as the basis for the design of the survey and interview questions (see Appendices 4 & 11).

- Questions 3, 4, and 5 of the survey (How would you rate the accessibility of members of the NCP Secretariat? Is communication between your stakeholder group and the NCP Secretariat open? Do you interact with the NCP Secretariat on a consistent basis?) were designed to assess the relationship and trust element.

- Question 6 (Would you consider leadership in the NCP to be collaborative/shared?) evaluates the leadership element.
- Accountability was measured by Questions 8 and 9 (Do you feel that your opinion, or the opinion of your stakeholder group, is taken into consideration when making the final decision on which proposals to be funded? And is it your impression that the NCP is accountable for the outcomes of the engagement process; are the projects your stakeholder group approved funded in the end?).
- Question 11 (Is there continued engagement with your stakeholder group once the projects have been funded?) assessed Cavaye's element of follow-up.
- Question 7 (During the decision-making process, in which stage is your stakeholder group involved?) and Question 10 (How satisfied are you with the final decision made?) addressed conditions of effective engagement that came up frequently in the literature, particularly early engagement and whether good and effective engagement leads to satisfaction in the process and the results.

4.3 Data Analysis

The questions for the survey were designed to produce responses that could be measured using ordinal, interval, or dichotomous scales. Questions that examined belonging to certain groups or stages in the decision-making process could be measured using an ordinal scale since the results could be “ranked from high to low... [and] the distance between the first and second category is not necessarily the same as the second and third categories” (Morrell, 2007). Questions that were answered using a five point scale (i.e. very involved, involved, neutral, little involvement, not involved) could be measured using an interval scale, since the distance between each response is equal. Finally, questions that required a “yes” or “no” response produced answers that could be measured using a dichotomous scale.

The data produced by the quantitative method were then broken down into numerous comparative charts, in an attempt to draw a connection between a good community engagement process and overall participant satisfaction with the results of that process. The question design was supported by the literature on good stakeholder engagement and the different elements required. Appendix 5 consists of a frequency distribution table outlining the results for each survey question. Appendix 6 is a percentage distribution table illustrating the results for each

question, broken down further into percentages. The results, based on stakeholder group, are illustrated in Appendix 7. Finally, Appendix 8 shows the connection between the stages of engagement and overall satisfaction.

A qualitative research method was used, in addition to the quantitative method, to yield information about the behaviour and actions of the people investigated and the situations and settings within which they operate” (Taylor & Gibbs, 2005). This portion of the research was included to provide more background to the numbers produced by the surveys. For the qualitative portion of this research, the interviews were analysed using grounded theory. Grounded theory is an “inductive form of qualitative research... where data collection and analysis are conducted together. Constant comparison and theoretical sampling are used to support the systematic discovery of theory from the data. Thus theories remain grounded in the observations rather than generated in the abstract” (Gibbs et al, 2009). Although the argument connecting good and fair engagement processes is well documented in the literature, the researcher wished to examine if the theory applied to a real world situation. Grounded theory was chosen to support or refute the theory.

To aid in the data analysis process, the following themes were identified to guide the coding of the interviews:

- Positive view of the engagement process;
- Negative view of the engagement process;
- Satisfaction with the results; and
- Not satisfied with the results.

The original intention was to refine the themes as more interviews were analysed. However, as only one stakeholder agreed to participate in the interview process, this additional step was not taken.

4.4 Project Limitations and Delimitations

As in any research project, there are always limitations that impact the results that are out of the control of the researcher. For this project, the researcher has identified a number of limits and delimitations.

First, the geographical location of the participants posed issues for this project. As the NCP works mainly with stakeholder groups that are located throughout northern Canada (north of 60 degrees), the majority of potential respondents were located in multiple locations in the north. Although face to face interviews would have been preferable, the geographical distance and associated costs made this difficult. This forced the researcher to opt for an alternative method to conduct the surveys and interviews. It also meant that if a paper version of the survey was to be provided, it would have had to be mailed. This created a financial impediment.

Also, since the Client was in the best position to select potential interviewees, due to their vast experience with the different stakeholder groups, the sample group for the interviews was not random. This may pose a potential issue of bias in the results. Since the Client selected the program participants that received the invites, they could have chosen individuals they knew had a favourable view of the program. It also runs the risk that the Client is more likely to identify which responses belong to which interviewee.

5.0 Findings: Surveys and Interviews

The following chapter outlines in detail the results of both the survey and interview portions of this research project. The survey results can also be seen in Appendices 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 13. The results of the survey are presented first, outlining the individual questions, what the intention was behind the question, how many participants responded and how they responded. This is followed by a review of the interview results (see Appendix 12). This chapter concludes with a summary of the results.

5.1 Survey Results

Forty-three participants from the different stakeholder groups started the survey. Of the forty-three participants, only twenty-one participants (forty-nine percent) completed the survey in its entirety. Furthermore, only thirty-one participants, of the original forty-three, consented to their data being used in this study by checking “yes” on the implied consent form before beginning the survey. Only fourteen participants completed the survey in full and consented to their results being used; seventeen participants did the survey to varying degrees of completion and consented to their results being used; seven participants completed the survey in its entirety, but did not consent to their results being used; and five participants finished the survey to varying degrees of completion, but did not consent to their results being used. These results could have provided a sample size of thirty-one participants who completed the survey to varying degrees; however, in two of the consented surveys the participant did not proceed any further than agreeing to participate. Therefore, only twenty-nine surveys, at varying levels of completion, will be used for this analysis (see Table 6).

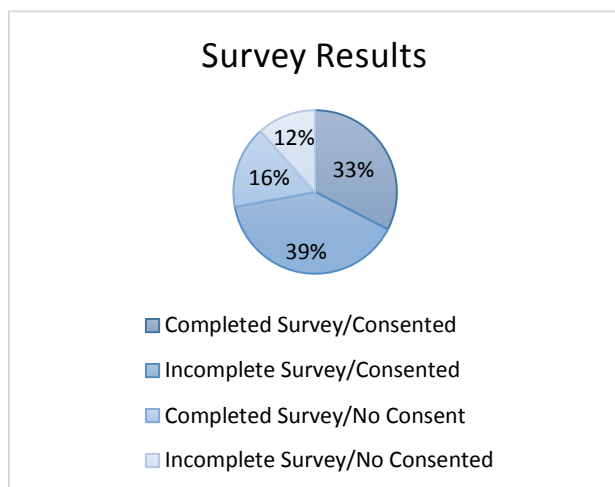


Table 6 - Survey Results

It is important to note that for the purpose of this research paper, a negative result is defined as any question that received more than fifty percent unfavourable responses. For example in Question 2, sixteen participants answered positive (very involved, involved), three

were neutral (does not count towards a positive or negative result), and four answered negative (little involvement, no involvement). This translated into a positive result of seventy percent. For questions that required a “yes” or “no” answer, a negative result was produced if more than fifty-one percent of participants responded “no.”

Question 1 provides some information with respect to the respondents’ involvement in the decision-making process and responses are not considered to be positive or negative.

5.1.1 Stakeholder Groups

Question 1 asked which stakeholder group participants belonged to. Thirty-six participants answered this question. Only twenty-seven of the thirty-six participants consented to their results being used. Of the twenty-seven results:

- Seven participants are members of the NCP Management Committee;
- One is part of an Aboriginal Partners Committee;
- Three participate in the Northwest Territories Environmental Contaminants Committee;
- One is a member of the Nunavut Environmental Contaminants Committee;
- One is part of the Nunatsiavut Government Research Advisory Committee; and,
- Fourteen stated they belonged to a group that was not listed (see Table 7). This may include participants that did not feel the abovementioned labels fit their stakeholder group, such as, territorial and local government officials.

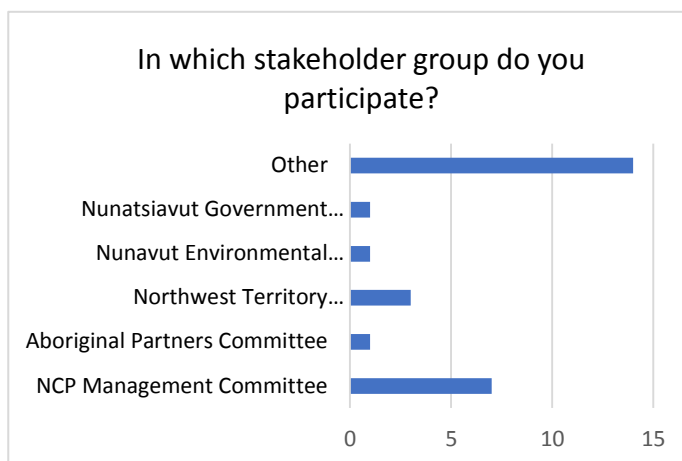


Table 7 – Stakeholder Groups

It is important to note that the stakeholder groups provided as options for this question were not necessarily the titles of the groups themselves, but rather their group type. These titles were used by the NCP in their Canadian Arctic Contaminants Assessment Report II. However, participants may not identify themselves by these titles. This may help explain why over half of the twenty-seven participants that completed this question indicated they did not belong to one of the listed groups. Of note, seven participants responded that they are members of the NCP Management Committee. Arguably,

this group should be the most involved, as they are the group that make the final decisions regarding which projects to fund. However, as the results below will demonstrate, decision-makers have varying levels of involvement.

5.1.2 Involvement in Stakeholder Group



Table 8 - Involvement in Stakeholder Group

Question 2 examined individuals' perceptions regarding how involved they are in their stakeholder group (see Table 8). Of the twenty-three participants, five answered that they are very involved in their stakeholder group, eleven stated that they are involved, three indicated that they were neutral, one participant believed that they have little involvement, and three individuals answered that they have no involvement in their particular stakeholder group. Of

the twenty-three participants who answered this question, seventy percent believe they are sufficiently involved in their stakeholder group. It is interesting to note that of the five individuals that believed they were highly involved, only one was a member of the NCP Management Committee. In fact, of the seven NCP Management Committee participants that responded to this survey, one indicated they are highly involved, two noted they were involved, one was neutral, one had no involvement in their stakeholder groups and one didn't respond to Question 2. This demonstrates that there is a large range of involvement in each stakeholder group.

5.1.4 Communication

Question 4 examined individual perceptions regarding the openness of communication. According the Cavaye, good and open communication helps build trust, a building block for good community engagement. Eighteen participants completed this question, and of that

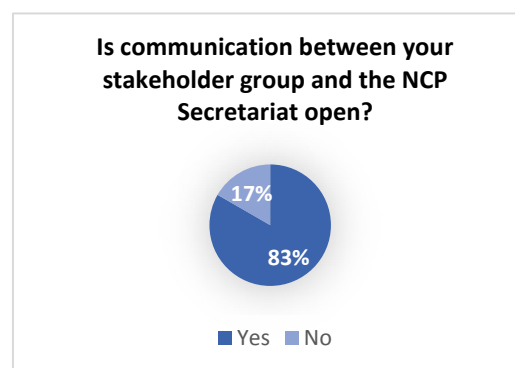


Table 9 - Communication

eighteen, fifteen indicated that they did feel communication with the Secretariat was open. Three responses indicated that they did not believe communication was open. Those that answered positively, represented eighty-three percent of responses for this question (see Table 9).

5.1.5 Consistency of Interaction

Consistency of interaction was examined by Question 5. Consistency is another building block of trust and relationship building as outlined by Cavaye. This question explored whether participants and the Secretariat communicated and interacted on a regular basis, particularly whether the NCP is effective in engaging and communicating with the different stakeholder groups. Question 5 was answered by twenty-eight participants, of which only nineteen responses can be utilized for this research. Of that nineteen, eleven responded that they did not have consistent communication with the Secretariat and only eight felt that communication was continuous throughout the process (see Table 10). This means that fifty-six percent of respondents did not feel that the NCP did a sufficient job interacting with the stakeholders continuously, resulting in a negative response to this question.

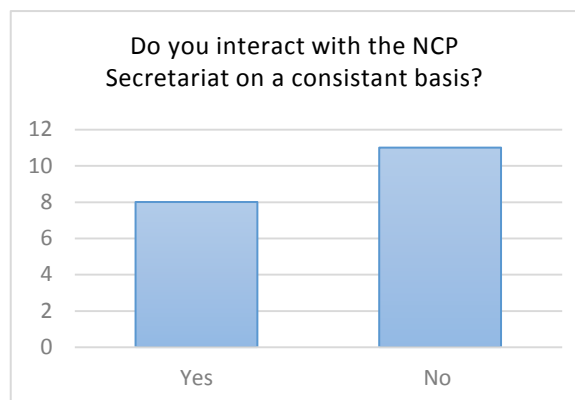


Table 10 - Interaction with NCP Secretariat

5.1.3 Accessibility of the NCP Secretariat

Question 3 examined accessibility of the NCP Secretariat by the different stakeholders involved in the decision-making process (see Table 11). As stated by Cavaye, accessibility helps to build relationships and trust between participants – in this case, accessibility refers to

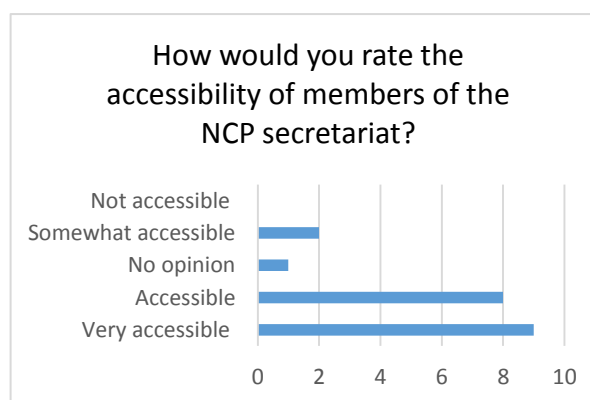


Table 11 - Accessibility

stakeholders' or community groups' access to the NCP Secretariat and by extension the federal government. Twenty-six participants completed this question. Of the twenty-six completed

responses, twenty could be used in this research. Of that twenty, nine indicated that the NCP Secretariat was very accessible, eight believed it was accessible, one individual had no opinion on the matter, and two individuals believed that it was somewhat accessible. Eighty-five percent of those who answered this question were content with their ability to contact members of the NCP Secretariat (i.e. found the Secretariat very accessible).

5.1.6 Leadership

Question 6 explored the element of leadership, specifically whether it is collaborative and

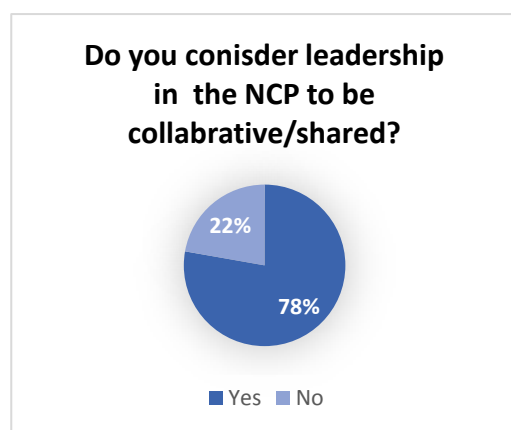


Table 12 - Collaborative/Shared Leadership

shared. Cavaye lists collaboration and shared leadership as an element in good community/stakeholder engagement due to its ability to ensure participants' trust in the process. As noted in the literature review, trust in the decision-making process helps lead participants to believe that the process was fair regardless of whether the results of the decision-making process was in their favour. Twenty-five participants completed this question, with only

eighteen of them consenting to their results being used. Fourteen of those eighteen responses stated that they did believe leadership was collaborative and shared, with only four indicating that this was not their belief (see Table 12). Seventy-eight percent of consenting respondents responded in the affirmative, that leadership in the NCP process is collaborative and shared.

5.1.7 Where in the Process Involvement Starts

In Lenihan's article he argues that the earlier in the engagement process stakeholders get involved, the fairer and amenable the final decision (2009). Question 7 aimed to discern where in the engagement process stakeholders get involved. To simplify this question, the researcher broke the NCP engagement process

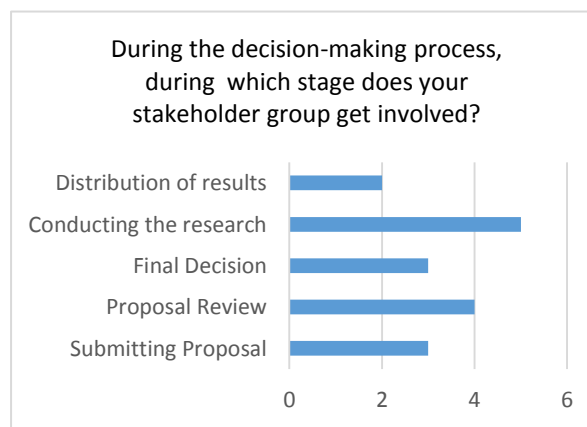


Table 13 - Stage of Involvement

into five stages: submitting proposals; proposal review; final decision on funding of proposals; conducting the research; and, distribution of results. Twenty-five participants completed this question, with only seventeen of those results being used for this research. Of the seventeen consented results, three respondents stated they first got involved during the proposal submitting phase, four during the proposal review phase, three during the decision-making stage, five during the conducting of research and two during the distribution of the results (see Table 13). Of interest, there were equal numbers of participants who were involved prior to the decision regarding which projects to fund was made as those who were involved after the decision was made. It is also important to note that although Lenihan was looking at the pre-decision-making phase, the last two phases are important to identify follow-up and continuity of engagement. These are both elements of good engagement according to Cavaye.

5.1.8 Perception on Whether Opinion is Considered

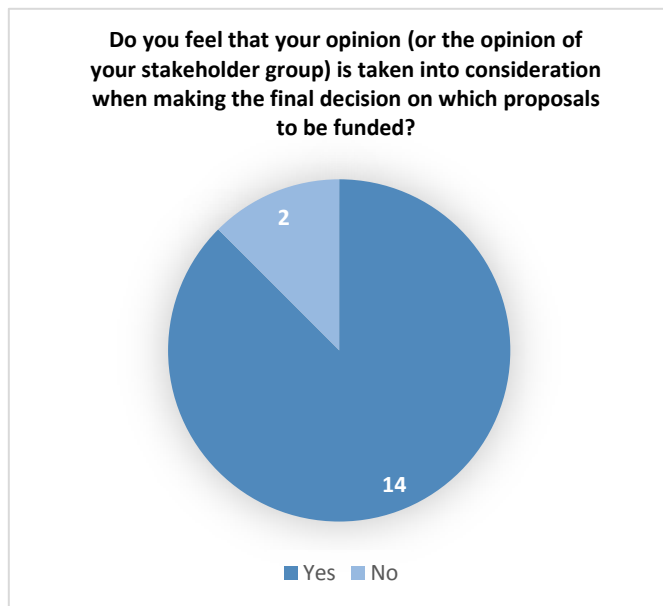


Table 14 - Participants Feeling Heard

Question 8 was designed to explore individual's perceptions of the relationship between the point that they provide their opinion on the matter and the final decision. Do participants feel their voices are being heard? Twenty-four participants completed this question, sixteen of whom consented to having their results used. Of the sixteen participants that completed this question and consented to participate, fourteen stated that they did feel their opinion was considered when making the

final decision and only two indicated that they did not feel their voice was heard (see Table 14). In summary, eighty-eight percent of respondents felt that their opinions, concerns and input were considered when making the final decision regarding the projects that were funded.

5.1.9 Accountability

Question 9 examined participants' perceptions regarding the accountability of the NCP Secretariat. In particular, the researcher was looking to see if participants felt that their involvement made a positive difference in the process, as the NCP Secretariat and ultimately the Management Committee should be accountable to the outcomes of the engagement process. Twenty-two participants completed this question, with only fifteen consenting. Of the fifteen, fourteen answered that they felt the NCP was accountable, with only one believing that the NCP was not accountable (see Table 15). Ninety-three percent of consented respondents indicated that the NCP Secretariat and the management committee were accountable to the stakeholders involved in the process.

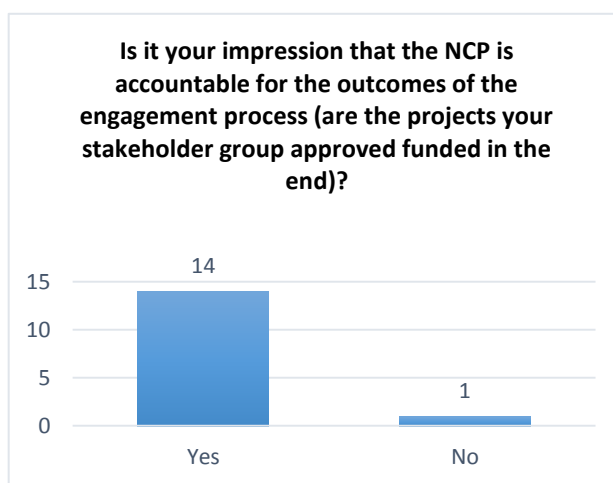


Table 15 –Accountability

5.1.10 Satisfaction with the Final Decision

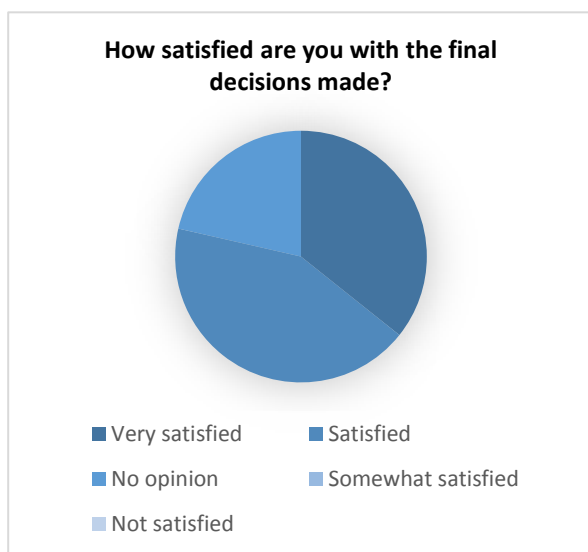


Table 16 - Satisfaction

Satisfaction with the final decision was measured by Question 10. This question examined individuals' perceptions of the decision. As noted in the literature review, many scholars argue that if the process is considered fair, more people will be satisfied with the outcome regardless of their initial position. To discern whether an effective engagement process contributes to participants' overall satisfaction with the results, the researcher first had to determine whether participants were in fact satisfied with the results. Of the fourteen individuals who answered this question and consented to their answer being used, five were very satisfied with the final decision, six were satisfied and three had no opinion (see Table 16). Seventy-nine percent of consented responses were satisfied

with the overall decisions made. None of the responses indicated disapproval of the final decision.

5.1.11 Follow-up and Continued Engagement

The final question of the survey examined follow-up and continued engagement. Cavaye listed follow-up as the final element in a good and effective community engagement process. Of the twenty participants that answered this question, only fourteen consented to their answer being used in the results of this research. Of that fourteen, nine of the respondents felt that the NCP did



Table 17 - Continued Engagement

continually engage participants after the decision-making process. Five indicated that there was no engagement once the decision was made (see Table 17). This equates to sixty-four percent of respondents stating that they had continued follow-up.

5.2 Interview Results

Although the Client sent invitations to numerous program participants, only one participant responded to the request to participate in an interview. While the response from one interviewee is not sufficient to draw results of significance, it does help provide context to the statistical results from the survey. For the purpose of this paper, significance is defined as the “threshold used to demonstrate the probability that a given result... cannot be simply explained by chance” (Morrell, 2007). The interview also highlights some important conclusions made in the literature regarding stakeholder engagement. For example, the interviewee indicated that their stakeholder group was involved throughout the decision-making process. Since it was involved at the very beginning, through the discussions regarding which projects to fund, right through to the dissemination of the results, there were no surprises throughout the process. The interviewee felt their stakeholder group was always satisfied with the results since they were involved in informing the decision-making process. When asked if the interviewee felt their

stakeholders' voice was heard, they answered "the Secretariat has always done a good job of making sure that each of us, that each jurisdiction gets its say [...] we have always been happy with the results because, we know that there are limitations that the Secretariat has in regards to how much funding they can provide, and they have always been good at making sure [each jurisdiction] is heard and receives the research that we are interested in."

A coding sheet was designed to discern different themes from the interview transcript. Note that the questions used for the interview were revised from the survey questions (see Appendix 10). Since only one participant agreed to be interviewed, the themes were not refined further as would normally be done with Grounded Theory data analysis. As noted in Chapter 4 of this paper, four themes were distinguished: positive view of the engagement process; negative view of the engagement process; satisfaction with the results; and not satisfied with the results. After analysing the transcript of the interview, substantial support was found for both the positive view of the engagement process, and satisfaction with the results themes (see Appendix 12). For example, in response to interview Question 3 (Would you describe the NCP as a collaborative program? If so, why? If not, why?), the interviewee responded "A lot of jurisdictions are involved and given that each jurisdiction has a different way of approaching things we often have to work together, collaborate, to find new ways to deal with things." This speaks to Cavaye's element of inclusiveness that all relevant stakeholders need to be present. As well, in response to Question 4 (How would you rate the accessibility and communication with the NCP Secretariat?), the interviewee stated the Secretariat "are excellent to work with [...] typically if I contact the Secretariat, if I don't get an answer in the first day, it will certainly be by the next day." This answer speaks to Cavaye's elements of relationship and trust building. The interview also supports the argument that a good engagement process produces results with which participants are often satisfied. In response to Question 6 (At the end of the project are you generally content with the outcome? If so, why? If not, why?), the interviewee responded

"Yes, we go in knowing which ones [projects] are most relevant to [our stakeholder] and from my experience, we have always been well represented. I think a lot of it is with the Secretariat itself. They make an effort to ensure that project funding is distributed around each of the jurisdictions. The Secretariat has always done a good job of making sure

that each of us, that each jurisdiction gets its say. So yeah, at the end of the day, I think we have always been happy with the results.”

This statement supports the procedural justice argument by noting that its stakeholder group, as well as other stakeholder groups, are satisfied with the results of the decision-making process because they feel that they had a say and their voices were heard by the decision makers.

Throughout the interview, only one negative statement was made. In response to Question 4 (How would you rate the accessibility and communication with the NCP Secretariat?), the interviewee noted that “the only one [communication with the Secretariat] that takes a little time is financial things, but that is just the nature of financial things, it can sometimes take a couple of weeks to get through those issues.” Although this statement can be interpreted as negative, taken in context the interviewee was pointing out that in general, communication with the Secretariat is very good, except for when the question is in regards to financial matters. The stakeholder interviewed recognized that financial questions required extra time since different individuals at INAC would need to be involved to provide a response.

5.3 Summary of Findings

For the survey portion of this research project, all but one question (Question 5, which looked at consistency of interaction between the NCP Secretariat and the various stakeholder groups) received more positive results than negative. Questions 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 11 were all designed to examine whether the NCP employed a good and fair engagement process when making decisions regarding funding of research projects. The conclusion that can be drawn from the results of these questions is that, stakeholders are satisfied with the process. The results of these questions also correlate positively with Question 10 (How satisfied are you with the final decision made?).

For the interview portion of this research, the overall response was positive. The interviewee found working with the NCP Secretariat to be easy and productive. The interviewee found the engagement process used by the NCP to be collaborative, accessible, and communicative. Finally, in the numerous years that the interviewee has been working with the NCP, they were always satisfied with the results of the decision-making process. They felt that funding was distributed evenly between the different jurisdictions, as well as the different stakeholder’s voices and opinions were used to inform the final decision.

6.0 Discussion and Analysis

There is general support in the literature to make the connection between the use of a good or fair engagement process and overall participant satisfaction with the results. There is also significant support for the connection between stakeholder satisfaction and a reduction or lack of conflict at the conclusion of the decision-making process. The objective of this research project is to assess, from the stakeholders' perspective, the effectiveness of the components and overall NCP engagement process, as it relates to the perceived low levels of stakeholder dissatisfaction with project funding decisions.

The NCP was chosen for this case study based on initial conversations with members of the NCP Secretariat as well as other colleagues of the Northern Strategic Policy Branch at INAC that indicated this program transcended many of the conflict catalysts that plagued other programs in the branch as well as INAC as a whole.

The following section of this report discusses the findings of the Literature Review (Chapter 3) and the results of the stakeholder surveys and interview (Chapter 5) to determine if there is support for the statement that an effective stakeholder engagement process reduces conflict during and after completion of the decision-making process.

Cavaye argues that there are eleven elements of good community engagement (see Appendix 2): will, genuine motivation; relationships and trust; leadership; decision-making; inclusiveness; structure, procedure; accountability, skills, satisfaction; and follow-up, sustainability (2004). As noted above, many of the survey (Questions 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, and 11) and interview (Questions 3 and 4) questions were designed to determine whether the NCP engagement process can be considered a good process.

Questions 3, 4, and 5 of the survey, and Questions 3 and 4 of the interview, all examined the element of relationship and trust. As argued by Irvin and Stansbury, trust among participants is key to an effective engagement process (2004). For a process to help build a relationship between various stakeholder groups, the process must be accessible. This means accessibility to the facilitators (in this case the NCP Secretariat), to the physical process or meetings, as well as to other stakeholder groups. For a process to be accessible there cannot be barriers, whether physical or financial. This is supported by Innes and Booher in their concept of collaborative rationality which argues that face to face dialogue and the bringing together of various

perspectives are key to good government-citizen engagement (2010). Participants must also be able to communicate efficiently with other stakeholders. In the case the NCP, participants must have a reasonable expectation that their questions and concerns are answered fully and in a reasonable timeframe by the Secretariat. Finally, for a process to meet the criteria for the element of relationship and trust there must be consistency, both in communication and in how issues are handled (Cavaye, 2004). Based on the survey results, the NCP received positive results for both accessibility and communication. However, one area that the NCP could work on is consistency of interaction, as a majority of survey responders found that interaction with the Secretariat was not regular.

Another element noted by Cavaye is leadership. Leadership should be shared among the different stakeholder groups, it should be collaborative in its focus, and the leaders should be skilled facilitators. The element of strong leadership is supported by Irvin & Stansbury in their argument that a good engagement process requires competent and unbiased group facilitators or leaders (2004). The leaders of the NCP engagement process belong to the Management Committee. As noted in the Chapter 2, the Management Committee is made up of members from the various stakeholder groups and is supported by the NCP Secretariat. The results of Question 6 found that the majority of respondents felt that leadership in the NCP is collaborative and shared. This further supports the assumption that the NCP uses a good and fair engagement process.

Accountability is another element of good engagement found in the literature (Cavaye, 2004). Those involved in a fair engagement process, particularly the decision-makers, should be accountable to the outcomes of the process. For example, if the outcome of the engagement process is to fund a certain project, then the NCP needs to ensure that the funding is provided. The various levels of government and the different communities have a mutual obligation to ensure that the results of the engagement process are carried through. To aid in this endeavor, it is helpful to ensure that those at the table have the power to make decisions and carry through with the outcomes (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004). Question 8 examined accountability, asking whether stakeholders felt the NCP was accountable to the decisions made by the engagement process. Fourteen out of fifteen participants felt that the NCP was accountable. Once again, the NCP met another element set out in the literature for a good community engaged process.

The final element that was explored by the survey and interview questions was that of follow-up and sustainability. Although follow-up was not addressed at length in the literature, Cavaye's work noted that follow-up is important to ensure appropriate ongoing engagement and to receive feedback (2004). It is an important step in a good engagement process. In both the surveys and interview, the respondents found that there was continued engagement with the NCP after the final decisions regarding funding were made.

The literature argues that relationship and trust, leadership, accountability, and follow-up are all important elements of good community engagement. Based on the positive results from both the surveys and interview, in response to the questions regarding these elements, this researcher concludes that the NCP does utilize an effective and fair stakeholder engagement process.

However, does this mean that the stakeholders are satisfied with the resulting decisions regarding project funding? Procedural justice contends that procedure has an impact on one's perception of the outcome and those who make the decisions. How people feel about the decision-making process has a direct effect on what they think about the decision (Tyler, 1994; Tyler, DeGoeij & Smith, 1996). This argument is supported by Mayer, who wrote that procedure is crucial to participant satisfaction with the end result (2012). Kim and Mauborgne as well as Lenihan take this argument one step further noting that if participants are satisfied with the process, then they will be happy, or at least content with, the results of that process (2003; 2009). Question 10 of the survey and Question 6 of the interview both queried whether participants were satisfied with the results of the engagement process. For the survey, the results were significantly positive. For the interview, the sole respondent noted they were continually satisfied, year after year, with the process and final decisions made regarding funding. These findings support the theory that stakeholders in the NCP are satisfied with their participation and the final decisions.

The final research question inquired whether satisfaction with the process and final decision influences the level of conflict after the final decision is made. The literature supports this argument, stating that procedure can be used as a tool in dispute prevention (Mayer, 2012). Mayer notes that conflict can be prevented by fostering effective communication, arranging consistent meetings between stakeholders, establishing working groups, councils, advisory, or any other authentic engagement process. Irvin and Stansbury make a similar argument when

talking about government-citizen engagement. They contend that with participation, policies or decision will be grounded in informed discussions (taking different perspectives into account), people might have a better understanding of the brevity of the decision being made and the different perspective being considered, which leads to a better understanding and improved support for the final decision. This, they argue, creates a less divisive and argumentative citizenry (2004). This specific argument was not tested by the survey nor interview questions; therefore, the direct connection to the NCP cannot be made. However, based on a comparison of the survey results and the literature, this researcher concludes that the engagement process used by the NCP contributes to stakeholder satisfaction in the results, which likely leads to the lack of conflict observed after the decisions are made.

6.1 Limitations

While working through the various steps to draft this report, the researcher identified limitations faced by this project. First was the small sample size. As noted above, forty-three participants responded to the survey portions of this research. However, only thirty-one respondents checked “yes” on the implied consent form. Therefore only thirty-one responses were available for analysis. Of the thirty-one responses that could be used, only fourteen completed the entire survey. The small sample size may limit the statistical significance of the result. It may also make it difficult for other researchers to duplicate the results. A larger sample size would have given more weight to the findings.

Participants were generally satisfied with both the engagement process used by NCP and the final funding decisions made. These results support the conclusion found in the relevant literature that an effective engagement process results in more satisfactory decisions. However, it is possible that the positive relationships between the respondents’ satisfaction with the engagement process and their satisfaction with the final decisions regarding project funding might be unrelated. The use of a control group could further support the relationship between engagement and the lack of conflict with the final decision.

The survey and interview questions did not directly address the query of whether effective stakeholder engagement contributes to a lack of conflict during and at the conclusion of the process. The conclusion of this research, that effective stakeholder engagement results in reduced conflict, is supported by academic literature and the perceived lack of overt disputes,

following the announcement of NCP funding decisions. While this study supports the conclusion that effective stakeholder engagement reduces conflict with respect to funding decisions, additional interviews with members of the various stakeholder groups would likely be beneficial in confirming the causes of this apparent relationship.

The terminology used in the survey and interview questions could have been misleading. Although the questions alluded to the NCP Secretariat as the main point of contact for stakeholder and community groups, this is not always the case. In practice the Chair of the various committees and teams would be the main contact for the participants. This could have been misleading for the survey and interview participants. The terms will also not well defines. For example, Question 2 asked how involved participants felt they were in the decision-making process, without defining what involved meant. For one participant, involvement might be defined as showing-up to all meetings, whereas for another participant it could be defined as responding to emails.

Although this is not an exhaustive list of limitations, the final issue to be discussed here is the issue with Question 4. Question 4 asked whether there was constant communication between the stakeholder groups and the NCP Secretariat. However, since the survey was blind and the researcher is not aware of who responded, there is the possibility that members of the Secretariat answered Question 4, skewing the results.

Although, there are limitations to this project, the researcher concludes that the results of the surveys and interview support the arguments being made in the literature; that good stakeholder engagement contributes to participant satisfaction with the process and the results. Furthermore, participant satisfaction in the engagement process contributes to the reduction or lack of conflict at the conclusion of the decision-making process.

7.0 Options and Recommendations

As noted in Chapter 6, the NCP stakeholder engagement process received positive results from respondents. When questioned about different elements that make up a good engagement process, both the survey and interview participants responded that the NCP met the criteria outlined by Cavaye. A negative response was produced for only one element, consistency of communication with the NCP Secretariat. The following section focuses on this issue, as it was the main one identified by the research and is an important building block for relationships and trust accordingly to Cavaye. Section 7.2 makes a recommendation to the NCP Secretariat and provides a rationale. The final section, make a recommendation to INAC in general.

7.1 Options for the Secretariat

There are many ways in which to approach or increase interaction between different stakeholders (in this case the NCP Secretariat and the various participating stakeholder groups). To develop the following options, the researcher looked at the following considerations:

- Does the option address the issue of consistent interaction?
- What is the financial implication?
- Will the option impact overall satisfaction?

Based on the abovementioned considerations, the following options were formulated:

Option 1: Maintain the status quo/continue with other constructive practices

Although the results of the survey portion of this research identified that participants did not find their interactions with the NCP Secretariat occurred on a consistent basis, this did not have a large impact on overall satisfaction in the process. Of the eight participants that answered “yes” to Question 5 (Do you interact with the NCP Secretariat on a consistent basis?), four responded that they were very satisfied with the final decisions as well as four responded that they were satisfied. Of those who responded “no” to Question 5, one stated they were very satisfied, two were satisfied, and three had no opinion. In general, those who responded to the question regarding the consistency of interaction were satisfied with the final decisions (see Appendix 9).

Therefore, maintaining the status quo would not have a major impact, positive or negative, on the overall stakeholder perceptions of the process.

Options 2: Increased information sessions or meetings

The issue identified in the survey did not specify what type of interaction stakeholders were missing. A lack of consistent interaction, whether through email, teleconference, phone call, in person meetings, could all contribute to the negative response to this question. Having an increase in the number of information sessions or meeting could address all of the potential causes for the respondents' perception of a lack of interaction. One benefit is that this type of interaction would be face to face, an element outlined in the literature as key to collaborative rationality (Innes & Booher, 2010). However, due to the substantial cost of travel to northern communities, this option may be unfeasible.

Option 3: Develop a newsletter

To bridge the gap made by inconsistent communication and interactions, the NCP Secretariat could look at creating a regular newsletter to update participants on the status of projects, potential community job offers as research assistants, disseminating results, and other important information. This would allow community/stakeholder groups to keep up-to-date with the research projects being conducted, advise community members on how they can participate in research projects, and would be a good venue to announce dates for presentations by the research groups. It would also allow stakeholders to learn from each other, giving them exposure to the work being conducted in different regions and potential lessons learned from neighbouring experiences. This option could have a financial implication, as more resources may be required to support such an initiative. Also, it does not address the issue of in person interactions that some stakeholder groups may desire.

Option 4: Continuing and strengthening current practices

As identified in the survey, there are many other practices that the NCP uses that are constructive (i.e. shared leadership, open communication, and accountability). This option would see the NCP continue with, and strengthen, these constructive practices. For example, the chair, or leadership, of some of the RCCs are shared between two stakeholder groups. In the Yukon Contaminant

Committee the leadership is shared between INAC and the Council of Yukon First Nations. However, the Nunavik Nutrition and Health Committee is chaired by the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services. The NCP could strengthen this practice (the element of shared leadership) by ensuring that all committees and teams have shared leadership among the multiple stakeholder groups.

Option 5: Ask stakeholders how they would like to be communicated with

As noted above, question five did not ask what type of interaction the different participants were looking for. This would involve engaging with the various stakeholders to see how they would like to be engaged. It could be that increased interaction means more facetime with the Secretariat or even a yearly public meeting. Once the preferred manner of interaction is identified, it should be implemented to demonstrate accountability to the process.

7.2 Recommendation for the Secretariat

As highlighted in the interview, most stakeholder groups only get involved when needed. Some stakeholder groups are not fully aware of what other groups are doing, as they have limited involvement in the process. Even the results among the most engaged stakeholder group, arguably the NCP Management Committee, are mixed. Out of the seven individuals who identified themselves as being part of the NCP management committee, four answered “no” to the question of whether the Secretariat consistently engaged the stakeholder group, one answered “yes”, and two did not answer Question 5.

Taking this into consideration, the researcher recommends that the NCP Secretariat consider creating a regular newsletter (Option 3). This would address the issue of consistency of interaction and communication. It would have the added benefit keeping all participants involved and informed regarding what is going on in other jurisdictions. The cost of starting a newsletter would be minimal to the NCP Secretariat.

7.3 Recommendation to INAC

This research found that the engagement process used by the NCP is an effective engagement process. It is recommended that, whenever possible, INAC should use this model, or a similar model, with other programs under its mandate.

8.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, this research paper examines whether effective stakeholder engagement has an impact on participants' perceptions of final decision, whether participant satisfaction with the engagement process contributes to their satisfaction with the results, and whether acceptance of the final decision contributes to a lack, or at least reduction, in conflict at the conclusion of the decision-making process. Using Cavaye's Elements of Good Community Engagement as well as the supporting body of literature on the issue of stakeholder engagement and conflict prevention, the researcher designed eleven survey and seven interview questions to measure whether the NCP uses a good stakeholder engagement process and whether it contributes to overall satisfaction in the results. The analysis found, that in ten out of the eleven survey questions, the NCP received a high percentage of positive results from the stakeholders. Also, the researcher found that the interviewee responded positively to the questions. Based on the results of the survey and interview, this researcher concludes that the NCP uses a good and effective stakeholder engagement process, which contributes to overall satisfaction in the process and the results, and likely contributes to the lack of observable conflict.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Advantages of Citizen Participation in Government Decision-making

Advantages of Citizen Participation in Government Decision-making		
	Advantages to citizen participants	Advantages to government
Decision process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education (learn from and inform government representatives); • Persuade and enlighten government; and • Gain skills for activist citizenship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education (learn from and inform citizens); • Persuade citizens; build trust and allay anxiety or hostility; • Build strategic alliances; and • Gain legitimacy of decision.
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Break gridlock; achieve outcomes; • Gain some control over policy process; and • Better policy and implementation decision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breaks gridlock; achieve outcomes; • Avoid litigation costs; and • Better policy and implementation decisions.

Disadvantages of Citizen Participation in Government Decision-making		
	Disadvantages to citizen participants	Disadvantages to government
Decision process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time consuming (even dull); and • Pointless if decision is ignored. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time consuming; • Costly; and • May backfire, creating more hostility toward government.
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worse policy decision if heavily influences by opposing interest groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of decision-making control; • Possibility of bad decision that is politically impossible to ignore; and • Less budget for implementation of actual projects.

Appendix 2: Elements of Good Government-Community Engagement

Elements of good government-community engagement	Factors that support elements of community engagement
“Will”, genuine motivation	Motivation to engage and achieve an outcome Negotiated expectations and limits
Relationships and Trust	Accessibility Reciprocity Communication Consistency Continuity of contact
Leadership	Shared leadership Collaborative focus for leaders Attitude and skills of leaders
Decision-Making	Legitimacy to influence decisions A decision-making purpose for engagement Appropriate
Inclusiveness	Diversity of community included Equality of opportunity to participate Process that allows broad participation Information and awareness
Structures, procedures	Organizational arrangements Protocol Techniques and methods
Accountability	Engagement processes accountable as good practice Government accountable for outcomes from engagement Government and community with mutual obligations
Skills	Ability to manage conflict, include diversity, maintain quality communication
Satisfaction	Gauging the extent of satisfaction with engagement Managing expectations and distinguishing the process from the outcomes
Follow-up sustainability	Appropriate ongoing engagement Feedback

Appendix 3: Survey Consent Form

Letter of Information for Implied Consent

You are invited to participate in a study entitled The Northern Contaminants Program (NCP): an example of best practices for stakeholder engagement that is being conducted by Alanna Tomich.

Alanna is a Masters Student in the department of the School of Public Administration at the University of Victoria. As a graduate student, she is required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a Masters in Dispute Resolution. You may contact her if you have further questions by emailing alanna.tomich87@gmail.com. You may also contact the research supervisor at jmchale@uvic.ca if you have any concerns regarding this project. If you would like to contact the NCP directly, please contact Scott Tomlinson, Environmental Scientist with the NCP Secretariat Scott.Tomlinson@aadnc-aandc.gc.ca.

Purpose and Objectives: The purpose of this research project is to determine if effective stakeholder engagement contributes to dispute free decision-making in the funding of government programs and research. Importance of this research is that it will contribute to the wealth of knowledge regarding stakeholder and community engagement as a tool in dispute prevention. It could also assist the Client in determining where there is room for improvement in their engagement strategy.

Participants Selection: You are being asked to participate in this study due to your membership in one of the stakeholder groups that make up the NCP. Participation is completely anonymous and voluntary. What is involved? If you consent to voluntarily participate in this research, your participation will include a short 5 minute survey using an online platform, Fluid Survey.

Inconvenience and Risk: Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you, including the time it will take to complete the Survey. There is no risk associated with this survey.

Benefits: The potential benefits of your participation in this research include determining whether the NCP meets its objective of engagement and if there are areas for improvement.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. Please note that since the process is anonymous, once a survey is submitted, it will be impossible to remove the result at a later date.

Anonymity and Confidentially: This process is not completely anonymous and confidential. Neither the researcher, her supervisor nor the NCP will know to identity of those who participated.

Dissemination of Results: The results of this study will be shared with others through the final research paper. A PowerPoint presentation summarizing the study will also be emailed out to all participants.

Data Storage: All data will be stored using on Fluid Survey servers. Disposal of Data from this study will be disposed of 1 year after the completion of the study. After the 1 year period, all data will be deleted from all servers.

In addition, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (250-472-4545 or ethics@uvic.ca). Continuing with this survey indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study, that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers, and that you consent to participate in this research project.

Appendix 4: Survey Questions

- 1) In which stakeholder group do you participate?
 - a. NCP Management Committee
 - b. Aboriginal Partners Committee
 - c. Northwest Territory Environmental Contaminants Committee
 - d. Nunavut Environmental Contaminants Committee
 - e. Nunatsiavut Government Research Advisory Committee
 - f. Other

- 2) How involved are you in your stakeholder group?
 - a. Very Involved
 - b. Involved
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Little Involvement
 - e. Not Involved

- 3) How would you rate the accessibility of members of the NCP Secretariat?
 - a. Very accessible
 - b. Accessible
 - c. No opinion
 - d. Somewhat Accessible
 - e. Not Accessible

- 4) Is communication between your stakeholder group and the NCP Secretariat open?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

- 5) Do you interact with the NCP Secretariat on a consistent basis?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

- 6) Would you consider leadership in the NCP to be collaborative/shared?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

- 7) During the decision-making process, in which stages is your stakeholder group involved?
 - a. Submitting Proposal
 - b. Proposal Review
 - c. Final Decision on Funding of Proposals
 - d. Conducting the research
 - e. Distribution of results

- 8) Do you feel that your opinion (or the opinion of your stakeholder group) is taken into consideration when making the final decision on which proposals to be funded?
- Yes
 - No
- 9) Is it your impression that the NCP is accountable for the outcomes of the engagement process (are the projects your stakeholder group approved funded in the end)?
- Yes
 - No
- 10) How satisfied are you with the final decisions made?
- Very Satisfied
 - Satisfied
 - No opinion
 - Somewhat Satisfied
 - Not Satisfied
- 11) Is there continued engagement with your stakeholder group once the projects have been funded?
- Yes
 - No

Appendix 5: Frequency Distribution Table

Questions	Results
1) In which stakeholder group do you participate?	a. NCP Management Committee = 7 b. Aboriginal Partners Committee = 1 c. Northwest Territory Environmental Contaminants Committee = 3 d. Nunavut Environmental Contaminants Committee = 1 e. Nunatsiavut Government Research Advisory Committee = 1 f. Other = 14 Total = 27
2) How involved are you in your stakeholder group?	a. Very Involved = 5 b. Involved = 11 c. Neutral = 3 d. Little Involvement = 1 e. Not Involved = 3 Total = 23
3) How would you rate the accessibility of members of the NCP Secretariat?	a. Very accessible = 4 b. Accessible = 8 c. No opinion = 1 d. Somewhat Accessible = 2 e. Not Accessible = 0 Total = 15
4) Is communication between your stakeholder group and the NCP Secretariat open?	a. Yes = 15 b. No = 3 Total = 18
5) Do you interact with the NCP Secretariat on a consistent basis?	a. Yes = 8 b. No = 11 Total = 19
6) Would you consider leadership in the NCP to be collaborative/shared?	a. Yes = 14 b. No = 4 Total = 18
7) During the decision-making process,	a. Submitting Proposal = 3

<p>in which stages is your stakeholder group involved?</p>	<p>b. Proposal Review = 4 c. Final Decision on Funding of Proposals = 3 d. Conducting the research = 5 e. Distribution of results = 2</p> <p>Total = 17</p>
<p>8) Do you feel that your opinion (or the opinion of your stakeholder group) is taken into consideration when making the final decision on which proposals to be funded?</p>	<p>a. Yes = 14 b. No = 2</p> <p>Total = 16</p>
<p>9) Is it your impression that the NCP is accountable for the outcomes of the engagement process (are the projects your stakeholder group approved funded in the end)?</p>	<p>a. Yes = 14 b. No = 1</p> <p>Total = 15</p>
<p>12) How satisfied are you with the final decisions made?</p>	<p>a. Very Satisfied = 5 b. Satisfied = 6 c. No opinion = 3 d. Somewhat Satisfied = 0 e. Not Satisfied = 0</p> <p>Total = 14</p>
<p>13) Is there continued engagement with your stakeholder group once the projects have been funded?</p>	<p>a. Yes = 9 b. No = 5</p> <p>Total = 14</p>

Appendix 6: Percentage Distribution Table

Questions	Results
1) In which stakeholder group do you participate?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. NCP Management Committee = 25% b. Aboriginal Partners Committee = 4% c. Northwest Territory Environmental Contaminants Committee = 11% d. Nunavut Environmental Contaminants Committee = 4% e. Nunatsiavut Government Research Advisory Committee = 4% f. Other = 52%
2) How involved are you in your stakeholder group?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Very Involved = 22% b. Involved = 48% c. Neutral = 13% d. Little Involvement = 4% e. Not Involved = 13%
3) How would you rate the accessibility of members of the NCP Secretariat?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Very accessible = 27% b. Accessible = 53% c. No opinion = 7% d. Somewhat Accessible = 13% e. Not Accessible = 0%
4) Is communication between your stakeholder group and the NCP Secretariat open?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Yes = 83% b. No = 17%
5) Do you interact with the NCP Secretariat on a consistent basis?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Yes = 42% b. No = 58%
6) Would you consider leadership in the NCP to be collaborative/shared?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Yes = 78% b. No = 22%
7) During the decision-making process, in which stages is your stakeholder group involved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Submitting Proposal = 18% b. Proposal Review = 24% c. Final Decision on Funding of Proposals = 18% d. Conducting the research = 29% e. Distribution of results = 11%
8) Do you feel that your opinion (or the opinion of your stakeholder group) is taken into consideration when making the final decision on which	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. Yes = 88% d. No = 12%

proposals to be funded?	
9) Is it your impression that the NCP is accountable for the outcomes of the engagement process (are the projects your stakeholder group approved funded in the end)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Yes = 93% b. No = 7%
14) How satisfied are you with the final decisions made?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Very Satisfied = 36% b. Satisfied = 43% c. No opinion = 21% d. Somewhat Satisfied = 0% e. Not Satisfied = 0%
15) Is there continued engagement with your stakeholder group once the projects have been funded?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Yes = 64% b. No = 36%

Appendix 7: Results Based on Stakeholder Groups

Questions	Answers	Management Committee	Aboriginal Partners Committee	Northwest Territory Environmental Contaminants Committee	Nunavut Environmental Contaminants Committee	Nunatsiavut Government Research Advisory Committee	Other
How involved are you in your stakeholder group?	Very Involved	1	1	0	0	0	3
	Involved	2	0	1	0	3	5
	Neutral	1	0	0	1	0	1
	Little Involvement	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Not Involved	2	0	0	0	0	1
	Total	6	1	1	1	1	3
How would you rate the accessibility of members of the NCP Secretariat?	Very accessible	2	0	0	1	2	4
	Accessible	2	1	0	0	1	4
	No opinion	0	0	1	0	0	0
	Somewhat Accessible	1	0	0	0	0	1
	Not Accessible	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	5	1	1	1	1	3
Is communication between your stakeholder group and the NCP Secretariat open?	Yes	3	1	1	1	2	7
	No	1	0	0	0	0	2
	Total	4	1	1	1	2	9
Do you interact with the NCP Secretariat on a consistent basis?	Yes	1	1	0	0	2	4
	No	4	0	1	1	0	5
	Total	5	1	1	1	2	9
Would you consider leadership in the NCP to be collaborative/shared?	Yes	2	1	1	1	2	7
	No	3	0	0	0	0	1
	Total	5	1	1	1	2	8
During the decision-making process, in which stages is your stakeholder group involved?	Submitting Proposal	1	1	0	0	0	1
	Proposal Review	0	0	0	3	2	1
	Final Decision on Funding of Proposals	3	0	0	0	0	0
	Conducting the research	1	0	0	0	0	4
	Distribution of results	0	0	0	0	0	2
	Total	5	1	0	1	2	8
	Do you feel that your opinion (or the opinion of your stakeholder group) is taken into	Yes	4	1	0	1	2
No		0	0	0	0	0	2

consideration when making the final decision on which proposals to be funded?							
	Total	4	1	0	1	2	8
Is it your impression that the NCP is accountable for the outcomes of the engagement process (are the projects your stakeholder group approved funded in the end)?	Yes	3	1	0	1	2	7
	No	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Total	3	1	0	1	2	8
How satisfied are you with the final decisions made?	Very Satisfied	1	0	0	0	1	3
	Satisfied	1	1	0	0	1	3
	No opinion	0	0	0	1	0	2
	Somewhat Satisfied	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Not Satisfied	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	2	1	0	1	2	8
Is there continued engagement with your stakeholder group once the projects have been funded?	Yes	1	1	0	0	1	6
	No	1	0	0	1	1	2
	Total	2	1	0	1	2	8

Appendix 8: Stage of Involvement vs. Satisfaction with the Process

How satisfied are you with the final decisions made?					
	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	No Opinion	Somewhat Satisfied	Not Satisfied
During the decision-making process, in which stages is your stakeholder group involved?	Submitting Proposal	1	1	0	0
	Proposal Review	1	2	1	0
	Final Decision on Funding of Proposals	1	1	0	0
	Conducting the research	1	1	0	0
	Distribution of results	1	1	2	0

Appendix 9: Consistency of Interaction vs. Satisfaction with the Process

How satisfied are you with the final decisions made?						
		Very Satisfied	Satisfied	No Opinion	Somewhat Satisfied	Not Satisfied
Do you interact with the NCP Secretariat on a consistent basis?	Yes	1	1	0	0	0
	No	1	2	1	0	0

Appendix 10: Interview Consent Form

Participant Consent Form - Interview

You are invited to participate in a study entitled The Northern Contaminants Program (NCP): an example of best practices for stakeholder engagement that is being conducted by Alanna Tomich.

Alanna is a Masters Student in the department of the School of Public Administration at the University of Victoria and you may contact her if you have further questions by emailing alanna.tomich87@gmail.com. You may also contact the research supervisor at jmchale@uvic.ca if you have any concerns regarding this project. If you would like to speak with the NCP directly, please contact Scott Tomlinson, Environmental Scientist with the NCP, at Scott.Tomlinson@aadnc-aandc.gc.ca.

As a graduate student, she is required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a Masters in Dispute Resolution.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this research project is to determine if effective stakeholder engagement contributes to dispute free decision-making in the funding of government programs and research.

Importance of this Research

Research of this type is important because it will contribute to the wealth of knowledge regarding stakeholder and community engagement as a tool in dispute prevention. It could also assist the Client in determining where there is room for improvement in their engagement strategy.

Participants Selection

You are being asked to participate in this study due to your depth of knowledge of the NCP program. Your name was provided to the researcher by the NCP, however, participation in completely voluntary. Please note that apart from the initial email, the NCP is not involved in this study. If you choose not to participate, the researcher will NOT convey this information to the NCP Secretariat.

What is involved?

If you consent to voluntarily participate in this research, your participation will include a short 30 minute interview. This can occur over the phone or through an online platform, such as Skype. The interview will be recorded and later transcribed.

Inconvenience and Risk

Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you, including the time it will take to complete the interview. Although, code names will be used in replacement of you real name, there is still some risk that those reading the final report could discern who gave certain responses. To ensure this does not happen, the researcher will not use recognizable details (e.g. which stakeholder group you belong to) in the final report.

Benefits

The potential benefits of your participation in this research include determining whether the NCP meets its objective of engagement and if there are areas for improvement.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you do withdraw from the study your data will be destroyed. To withdraw from this research, please email the researcher at alanna.tomich87@gmail.com.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

This process is not completely anonymous. Since the NCP is involved in the selection of potential interviewees, they will be aware of the individuals they recommended. However, to ensure that readers of the final report do not connect certain responses with certain individuals, code names will be assigned to each interview participant. In addition, the researcher will take all precautions to avoid the use of discernable details (e.g. stakeholder group) in the final report. The raw data (e.g. recordings of interviews, names of participants) will not be shared with anyone.

Dissemination of Results

The results of this study will be shared with others through the final research paper. A PowerPoint presentation summarizing the study will also be emailed out to all participants.

Data Storage

All data will be stored using a password protected computer. Back-up will be stored on a password protected hard drive, which will be kept in a locked cabinet at a secure location.

Disposal of Data

Data from this study will be disposed of 1 year after the completion of the study. This will be accomplished by permanently deleting all recordings and transcripts from the storage device. In addition, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (250-472-4545 or ethics@uvic.ca).

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study, that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers, and that you consent to participate in this research project.

Name of Participant

Signature

Date

*Appendix 11: Interview Questions*Interview Questions

1. In which stakeholder group do you participate?
2. Please describe your experience with the Northern Contaminants Program.
3. Would you describe the NCP as a collaborative program? If so, why? If not, why?
4. How would you rate the accessibility and communication with the NCP Secretariat?
5. How involved is your stakeholder group in the decision-making process?
6. At the end of the project are you generally content with the outcome? If so, why? If not why?
7. Is there continued engagement after decisions have been made? If so, how?

Appendix 12: Coding Sheet

Themes	Supporting excerpts from interview
Positive view of the engagement process	<p>“A lot of jurisdictions are involved and given that each jurisdiction has a different way of approaching things we often have to work together, collaborate, to find new ways to deal with things.”</p> <p>The Secretariat “they are excellent to work with.”</p> <p>“Yes, typically if I contact, um, the Secretariat, if I don’t get an answer in the first day, it will certainly be by the next day.”</p> <p>“We’re involved all the way along [the decision-making process]; we help in the proposal selection process... Once that aspect is over and the projects are underway, we try to keep in touch with the researchers to see what kind of results they are getting that gives us a sort of heads up.”</p>
Negative view of the engagement process	<p>“The only one [communication with the Secretariat] that takes a little time is financial things, but that is just the nature of financial things, it can sometimes take a couple of weeks to get through those issues.”</p>
Satisfaction with the results	<p>“Yes, we go in knowing which ones are most relevant to [our stakeholder] and from my experience, we have always been well represented.”</p> <p>“I think a lot of it is with the Secretariat itself. They make an effort to ensure that project funding is distributed around each of the jurisdictions. The Secretariat has always done a good job of making sure that each of us, that each jurisdiction gets its say. So yeah, at the end of the day, I think we have always been happy with the results because, we know that they are limitations that the Secretariat has in regards to how much funding they can provide, and they have always been good at making sure that [my stakeholder group] is heard and receives the research that we are interested</p>

	<p>in.”</p> <p>“As for the NCP Secretariat, if anything comes up that they perceive might be of interest to us, that might be a little controversial, or just concerning or not concerning sometimes, they are good at flagging that and letting us know beforehand so one way or the other, whether we do it from our own, just asking the researcher or the researchers tell us, or if it’s the Secretariat giving us a heads up, we tend to get good coverage... being kept in the loop as to when the results are coming.”</p>
Not satisfied with the results	None

