
2024-2025

ANNUAL REPORT

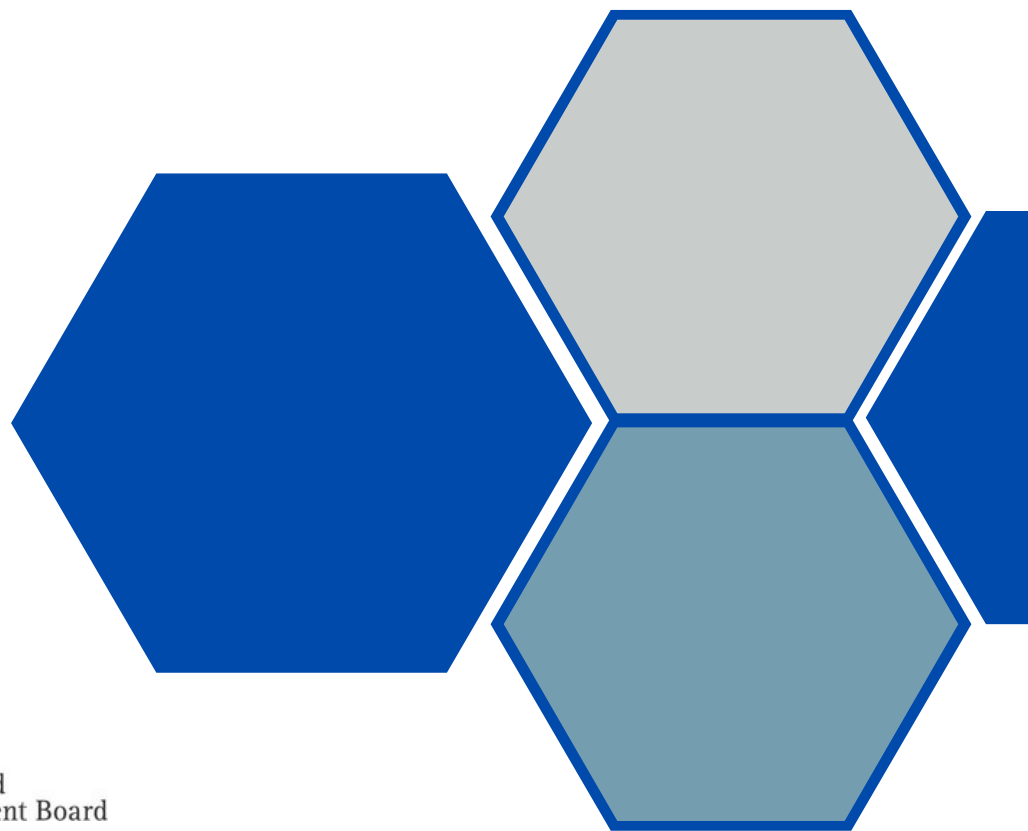






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PURPOSE & CORE VALUES

YESAB Core Purpose

YESAB's purpose, on behalf of all Canadians, is to conduct neutral assessments in the Yukon that contribute to protecting the environment and the social, economic, and cultural well-being of First Nations and residents.

Through our work, YESAB is guided by the following core values:

- **Regard for Our Origins:** We have a special relationship with the Umbrella Final Agreement and the unique environmental and socio-economic assessment legislation that it created. We recognize that we are one of many with a role to play in meeting its spirit and intent.
- **Truth and Reconciliation:** We are committed to establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada by implementing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action.
- **Accountability:** We are responsible for meeting our commitments to each other and participants to deliver a comprehensive environmental and socio-economic assessment process.
- **Respect for Everyone:** There is no room for intolerance, racism, discrimination, or barriers to involvement in the work we do or how we do it.
- **Curiosity:** We are inspired by other ways of learning about the world we live in and how our work is challenged, explained, and conveyed.
- **Learning Together:** We share and invite diverse skills, talent, and knowledge in support of a culture of enthusiasm and caring for each other.
- **Relationships:** We strengthen relationships by welcoming diverse perspectives, building trust, and respectful dialogue.
- **Communication:** We share information and rationale for our recommendations and engage in ways that help us understand one another.



ABOUT THE ACT

Chapter 12 of the Umbrella Final Agreement (UFA) and Yukon First Nation final agreements establish the foundation for a legislated development assessment process applicable to all lands in Yukon. The Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act (YESAA) was enacted by the Parliament of Canada and received Royal Assent on May 13, 2003, and came fully into force in November 2005. At this time, assessments commenced under YESAA.

Assessments Under YESAA:

Assessments are conducted independently by an impartial body. All relevant information relating to an assessment is available to the public, strengthening accountability of decision-making. Set timelines at every stage of the assessment process to provide certainty.

The Act mandates assessors to look at the potential environmental and socio-economic effects of proposed projects and to recommend whether projects should proceed as proposed, proceed with terms and conditions, or should not proceed. When YESAB completes an assessment, a recommendation is sent to the relevant Decision Body(s), who then decide(s) whether to accept, reject, or vary the YESAB recommendation.

This decision is then issued in a Decision Document, which is required before a project proceeds. Decision Bodies may be a Government of Canada department or agency, the Government of Yukon or a First Nation government.

About the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board (YESAB):

YESAB is an independent, arms-length body, responsible for the implementation of the assessment responsibilities under YESAA. YESAA establishes and sets out the responsibilities of the Board. The Chair of the Board and two other Board members form the Executive Committee, which oversees a number of specific responsibilities under the Act.



ABOUT THE BOARD

Appointments to the Board

Board members are appointed by the federal Minister of Northern Affairs after seeking the views of the federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change. Prior to appointments, nominations to the Board are made as specified in YESAA. One member of the Executive Committee is nominated by the Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN) and one member is nominated by the territorial government.

The third member of the Executive Committee, the Chair, is appointed after the federal minister consults with the other two Executive Committee members. Of the remaining four Board members, two are nominated by CYFN, one is nominated by the territorial government and one is a direct appointment by the federal minister. A fully complemented Board would normally comprise seven members. However, YESAA allows for more than seven members to be appointed to the Board.

Board responsibilities

YESAB has a broad range of responsibilities when conducting environmental and socio-economic assessments and providing recommendations to Decision Bodies. The organization notifies interested parties, First Nations, and the public of current project assessments, ensures proponents submit the appropriate information, conducts research related to project activities, and collects and considers public comments before submitting reports and recommendations to Decision Bodies.

YESAB is an impartial and independent body that provides recommendations that eliminate or mitigate potentially significant adverse effects. YESAB provides recommendations to Decision Body(s) but does not issue permits, authorizations or approve projects. The regulatory bodies within government(s) are responsible for issuing all permits and authorizations. When permits are issued, the terms and conditions of those permits are not enforced by YESAB. Enforcement of the terms and conditions within a permit or authorization is the responsibility of government(s).

BOARD MEMBERS & TERMS

Board Member	Title	Nomination	Term of Appointment
Stephen Rose	Chair	Federal Minister	July 5, 2025 – July 4, 2028
Dennis Nicloux	Executive Committee Member	CYFN	November 6, 2023 – November 5, 2026
George Morgan	Board Member	Yukon Government	May 29, 2024 – November 1, 2026
Tim Smith	Board Member	Federal Minister	April 25, 2024 – April 24, 2027
Roberta Joseph	Board Member	CYFN	November 14, 2023 – November 13, 2026
Dianna Mueller	Board Member	CYFN	April 25, 2024 – April 24, 2027



CHAIR'S MESSAGE

As we look back on 2024-25, this year marked a period of significant transformation for YESAB, guided by two priorities: strengthening organizational capacity and advancing relationships with Yukon First Nations and Indigenous partners. We made important progress to position YESAB for the future.

We implemented a new organizational structure to support timely, effective assessments while fostering a workplace where staff can grow and thrive. We also began reviewing the Designated Office Rules drawing on the insights of participants and the public to better address both current and future needs.

Alongside these efforts, we continued to strengthen relationships with Yukon First Nations, transboundary Indigenous groups, and communities across the territory, recognizing that respectful and transparent engagement is essential to carrying out our mandate.

These changes took place amid high levels of public participation and an increased volume of assessments—a testament to the dedication of our staff and the trust placed in YESAB's process. As we enter our 21st year, we do so with renewed purpose: to deliver assessments that reflect current expectations and priorities while upholding the integrity of our mandate.

On behalf of the Board, I extend my sincere gratitude to our staff, participants, and partners for their collaboration during this transformative year. I am confident that the steps we have taken together have positioned YESAB to serve the Yukon well in the years ahead.

-Sincerely,
Stephen Rose
Chair, Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board (YESAB)



Continuous Improvement summary

Since April 2023, the Board has been implementing their current two priorities for the organization which included:

- Board Priority #1: Addressing Organizational Capacity
- Board Priority #2: Advancing First Nations Relations and Consideration of Rights

Over 2024/25, the board has made significant changes to advance the initiative aim to address organizational capacity. When speak about organizational capacity the aim was to empower staff within a workplace that effectively prioritizes an employee's wellbeing while ensure timely and effective assessment.

To achieve this balance and to set up YESAB to thrive in its future 2024/25 saw a restructure of our organization to ensure timely and effective assessments, enhance community engagement and ensure staff are supported and provide opportunity within YESAB for career growth.



A few new positions were added to the organization to ensure effective administration as well as the promotion of constancy specific to process, staff training and deliverables.



2024/25 also saw the Board support the initiation to revise the rules for evaluations conducted by the Designated Office. Guided by input from participants and the public, these revisions aim to modernize DO evaluation process in 2025/26.

For Board Priority #2, YESAB continues to prioritize engagement and relationships with Yukon First Nations, Transboundary Indigenous

Groups and affected communities. By attending General Assemblies, gatherings hosted by Umbrella Final Agreement Boards and Committees and continued communications YESAB is hoping to develop transparent relationships based on trust and common understandings.

2024/25 brought a lot of change to an organization filled with staff passionate for Yukon, the people that live on Yukon Traditional Territories and the mandate we are tasked with. As a result, we enter our 21st year in a new way that can implement our same mandate but in a way that respects and is reflective of the current expectations and priorities.





THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Designated Office Evaluation Summary

The year of April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025 carried important strategic change for the YESAB. This included the creation of new work units and new positions through the implementation of organizational restructuring in the in the final fiscal quarter, the first quarter of the 2025 calendar year. It also included significant preparation for restructuring throughout 2024, including changes in practice for assigning projects aimed at procedural fairness and facilitating strategic monitoring of assessment timelines.

Throughout the preparation and implementation of these operational changes, YESAB received, in 2024-2025, 204 project submission, including 97 placer mining projections—almost twice the average placer mining projects received than in the previous five years. Despite preparing for and commencing significant operational change, the Designated Offices produced 156 recommendations, representing

the first time since 2017 in which the amount of recommendations sent to Decision Bodies increased compared to the preceding year.

2024 saw 1297 comments between the 204 projects submitted, continuing a trend of high public engagement. This included the Whitehorse Rapids Hydroelectric Generating Station, with 71 comments posted to the YESAB Online Registry.

YESAB assessments throughout the year expounded the concerns of commentors and interested parties, integrating values and information to form in-depth analyses for recommendations to facilitate decision making by the various Decision Bodies responsible for Decision Documents. These analyses included discussions of caribou herds, municipal water quality, contaminated soils, and fish habitat, leading to new significance determinations and recommended terms and conditions, among many topics important to the members of First Nations and the Yukon at large.

Executive Committee Screening Summary

In 2024–2025, the Executive Committee (EC) continued to advance projects both in pre-submission engagement and screening phases. The year was marked by major milestones for development projects in Yukon, particularly the issuance of the recommendations for the Faro Mine Remediation Project and Yukon Energy's Callison Thermal Generating Station.

Project Highlights

Faro Mine Remediation Project (CIRNAC)

The Executive Committee published the final screening report for the Faro Mine Remediation Project in July 2024 for decision bodies consideration. The federal decision body referred the recommendation back to the Executive Committee, which following brief public engagement, issued its new recommendation for final decision-making by decision bodies in November 2024.

Callison Thermal Generating Station (Yukon Energy)

This project is the first project to entirely navigate both the pre-submission engagement and screening process since the new Screening Rules were introduced in 2022. The EC completed the Draft Screening Report for Yukon Energy's Callison Generating Station project in Dawson City in early 2024, followed by the publication of the project's final screening report and recommendation by July 2024. Following a referral by decision bodies, the EC issued a new recommendation for the project by November 2024.





Eagle Plains Multi-Well Exploration Program (Chance Oil and Gas)

Chance Oil and Gas submitted their revised project proposal for the Eagle Plains Multi-Well Exploration Program. Originally referred to the Executive Committee in 2017 by the Dawson designated office, this project involves a 10-year exploration program for crude oil and natural gas in the Eagle Plains area. In August, 2024 the EC determined that the proponent did not meet the consultation requirements as set out in section 50(3) of the Act. The EC has requested they re-submit a new consultation record and revised project proposal once the proponent fulfills their consultation and engagement obligations.

Mount Nansen Remediation Project (MNLRP)

Mount Nansen Remediation Limited Partnership provided their response to the EC' Project Proposal Guidelines for the project. Following a public comment period and taking into account the proponent's response, the Executive Committee published the final deliverable in pre-submission engagement, the Project Proposal Report in December

2024. The proponent has up to 24 months to submit their project proposal to the Executive Committee.

Keno Hill Silver District Extension and Power Back-up (Hecla Mining)

Hecla Mining submitted a Project Description for the expansion of its Keno Hill Silver District mine and the construction of a thermal generating station for power-back for its facilities. This project entered the pre-submission engagement process beginning with the participant comment period on the

Panel Review summary

2024-2025 was a year devoted to preparing for Casino Mining Corporation's (Casino) submission of the Environmental and Socio-economic Statement (ESE Statement). Casino was originally planning to submit the ESE Statement in the last half of 2024, but they revised their schedule to submit in or around July 2025.

The Panel team focused on two main objectives this past year:

- 1) developing policies and processes related to establishing a panel of the board, and
- 2) engaging with interested participants (affected First Nations, the Proponent and the Federal and Territorial governments) about these policies and processes.

The EC developed policy guidance on the Primary Location of Effects, which will ultimately inform the Panel composition. An education session was held for all interested participants about this policy in July 2024. The Panel team also provided interested participants with an opportunity to make submissions to the EC regarding their views on Terms of Reference in advance of the ESE Statement being submitted.

The Panel team gave a general panel review process presentation to Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in staff in May 2024, White River First Nation citizens in January 2025 and to the public at an open house in Whitehorse in February 2025.

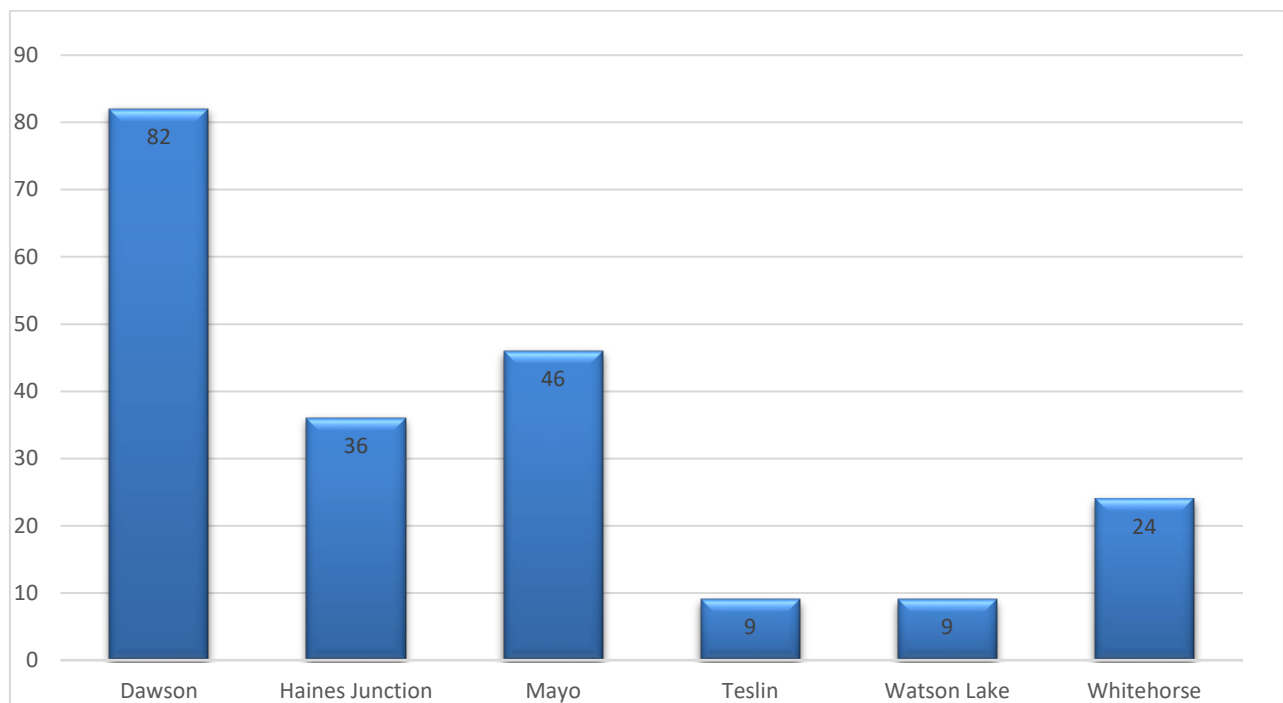


Projects by Assessment types

Submissions between April 2024 and March
2025 Projects within date filter: 205

<u>Total Projects Submitted for Assessment</u>	
Designated Office Submissions	204
Executive Committee Screenings	1
Panel Review	0
Total	205

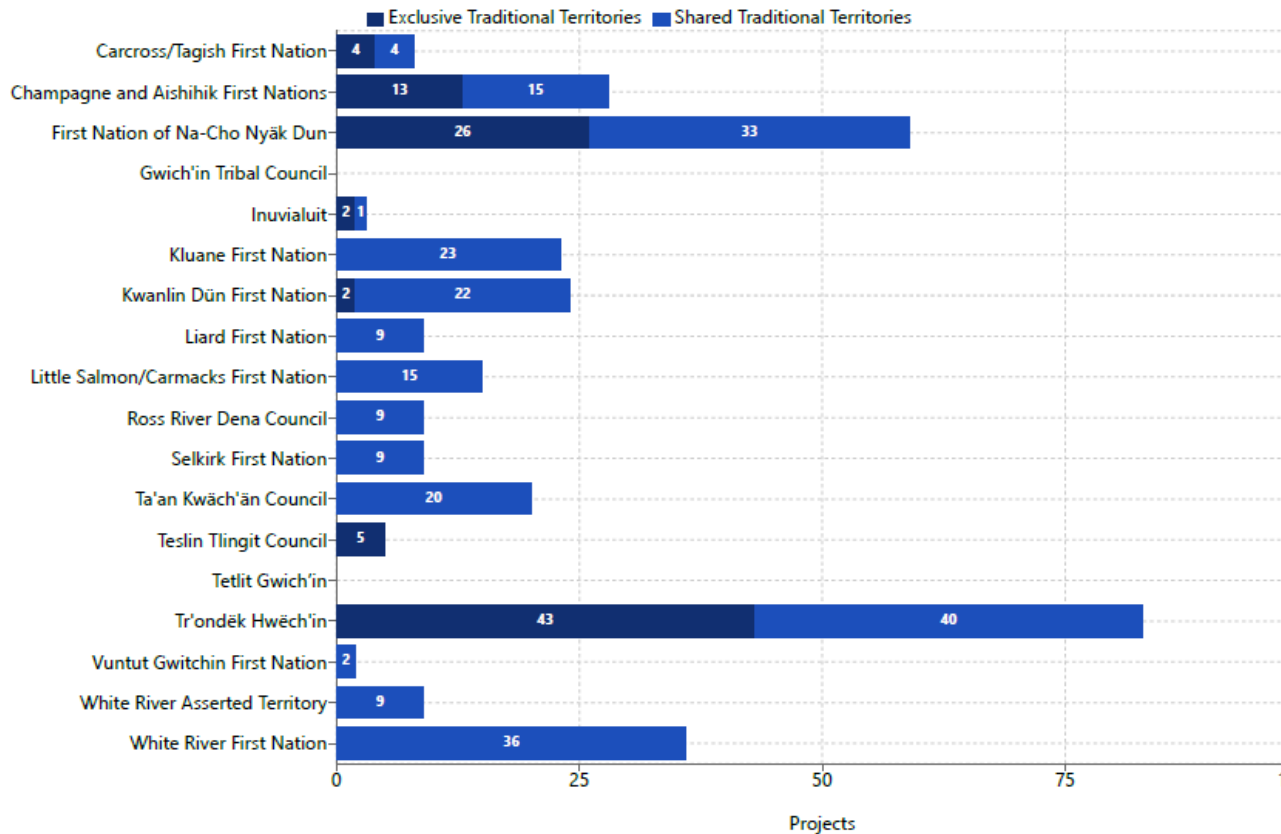
The majority of projects submitted in 2024-2025 were Designated Office Evaluations. one Executive Committee Screenings were initiated in 2024-2025 into the new Pre-submission Engagement Process (PSE). There is one project in the early stages of a panel review of the Board.



The majority of Designated Office projects were in the Dawson City district, followed by Mayo district.

Projects Within First Nation Traditional Territories

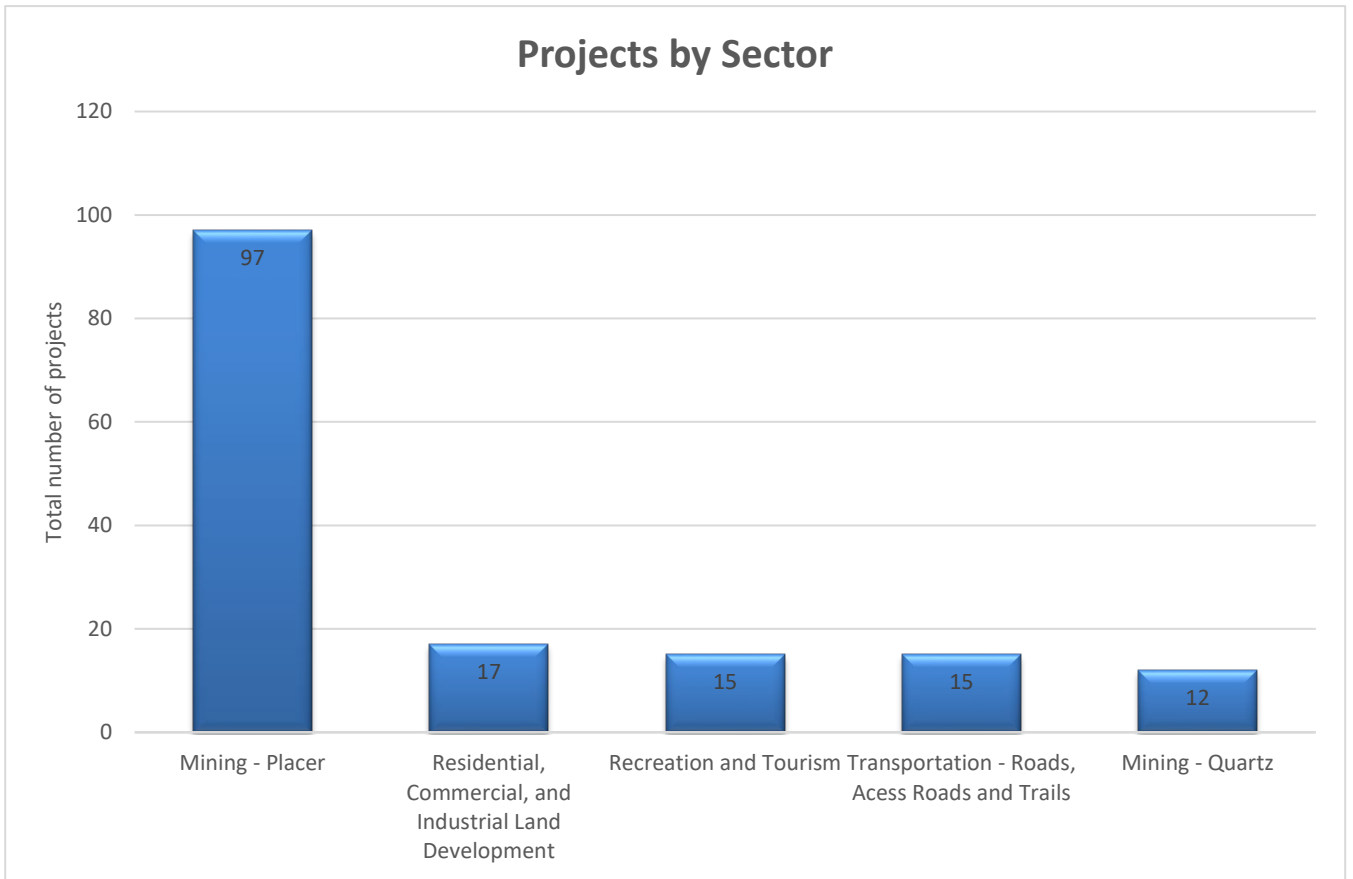
Submissions between April 1, 2024 and March
31, 2025 Projects within date filter: 204



The majority of projects were either in the exclusive or shared traditional territory of Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation; followed by Kwanlin Dün First Nation (shared traditional territory), Ta'an Kwäch'an Council (shared traditional territory), and the First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun (exclusive and shared traditional territory).

Projects by Sector

Submissions between April 1, 2024 and March 31, 2025



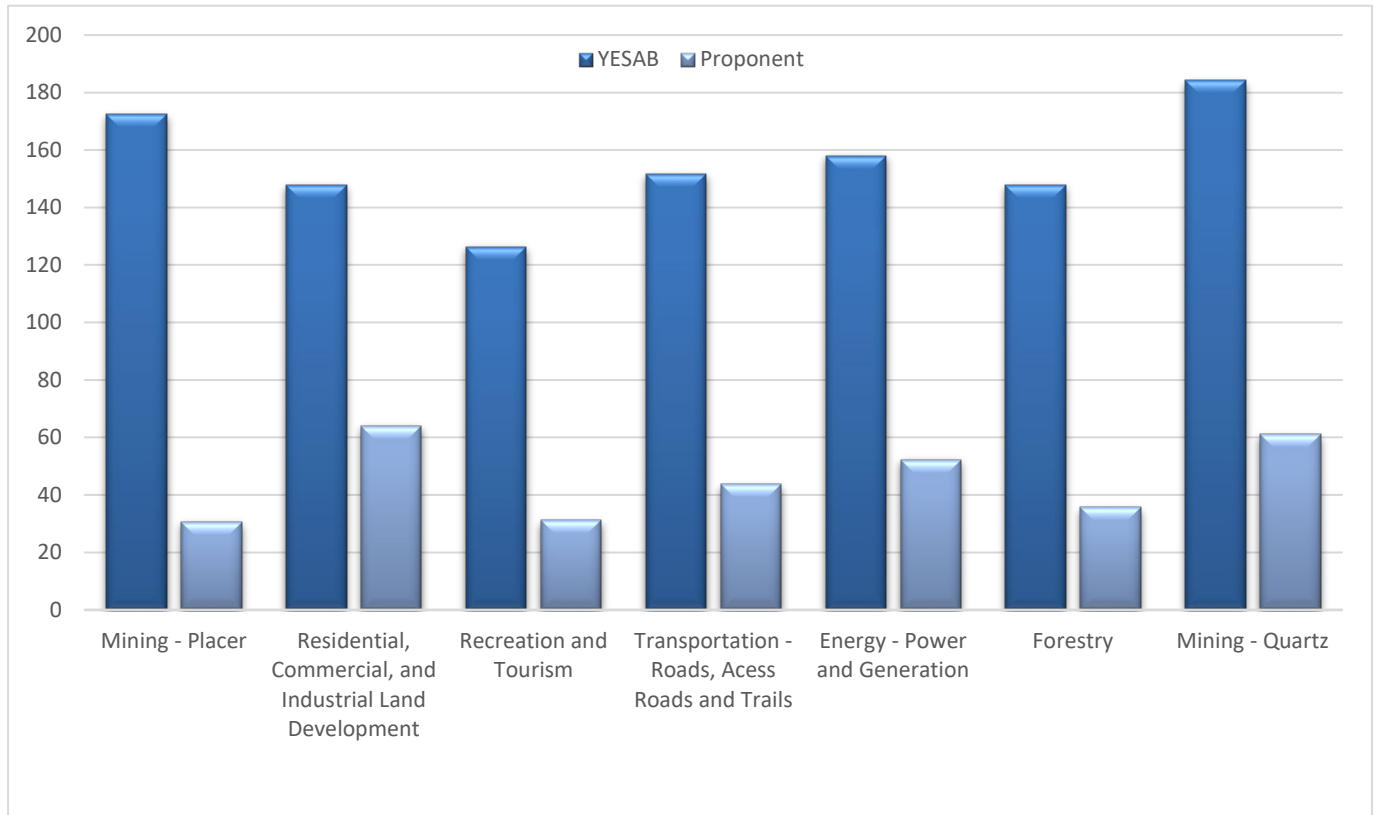
Top 5 Sectors with most projects submitted

In 2024-2025, placer mining sector had most projects submitted, followed by residential, commercial, and industrial land development.

Projects Duration by most common Sectors – designated Office Evaluations

Submissions between April 1, 2024 and March 31, 2025

Projects within date filter: 205



Common Sectors

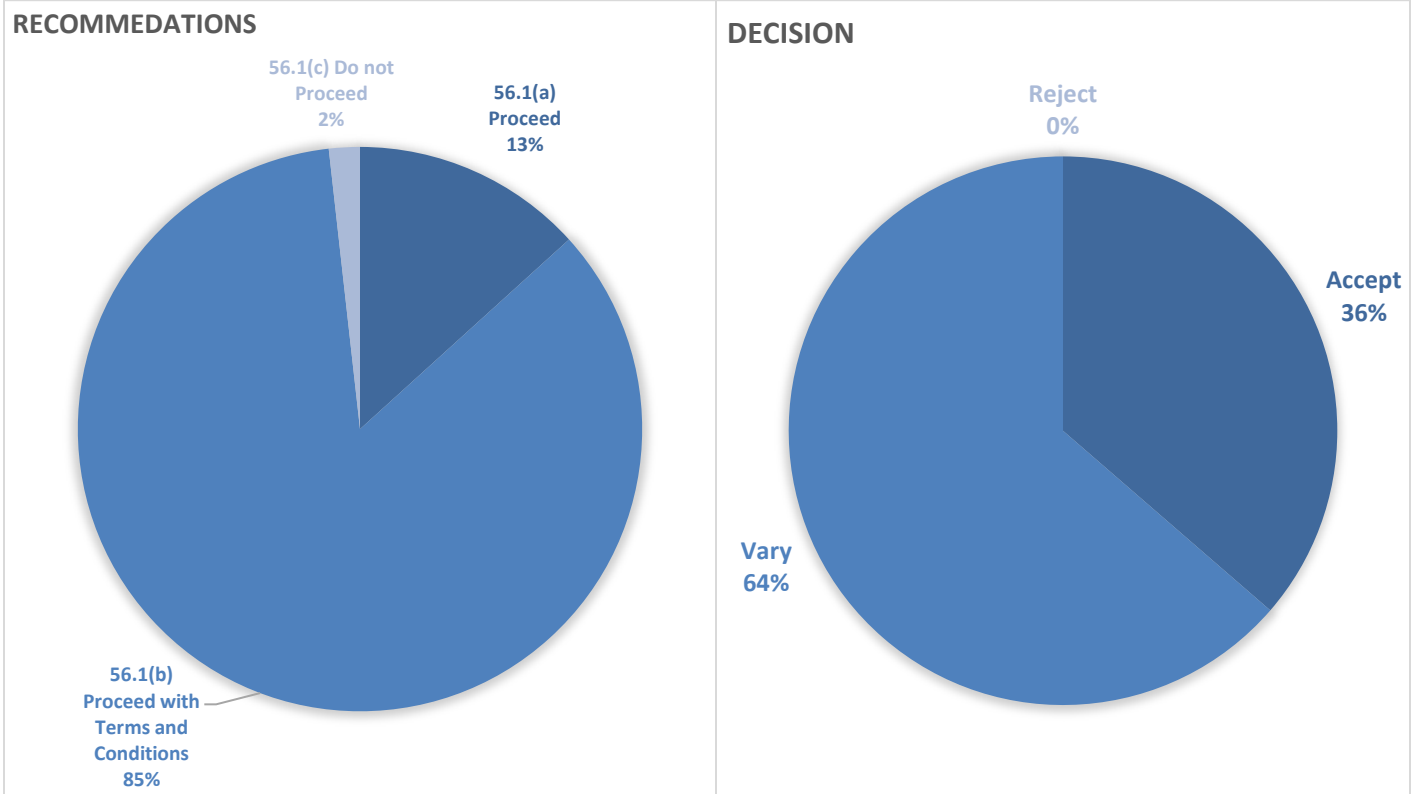
Project assessment timelines are set out in YESAB's Board Rules. Project duration is the total number of days taken by YESAB and the proponent to complete an assessment (from project proposal submission to the issuance of the recommendation). This includes the time taken by a proponent to respond to any information requests issued by the Designated Office. Duration varies between sectors and is influenced by the content and specific requirements of proposed projects as well as public participation (e.g. requests for timeline extensions).

For the mining sector, the average assessment durations were: 207 days for placer projects, 353.86 days for quartz projects. The average duration recreation and tourism projects was 101 days, 216 days for residential, commercial, and industrial land development projects, and 155 days for transportation projects (roads, access roads, and trails).

Projects by Outcome

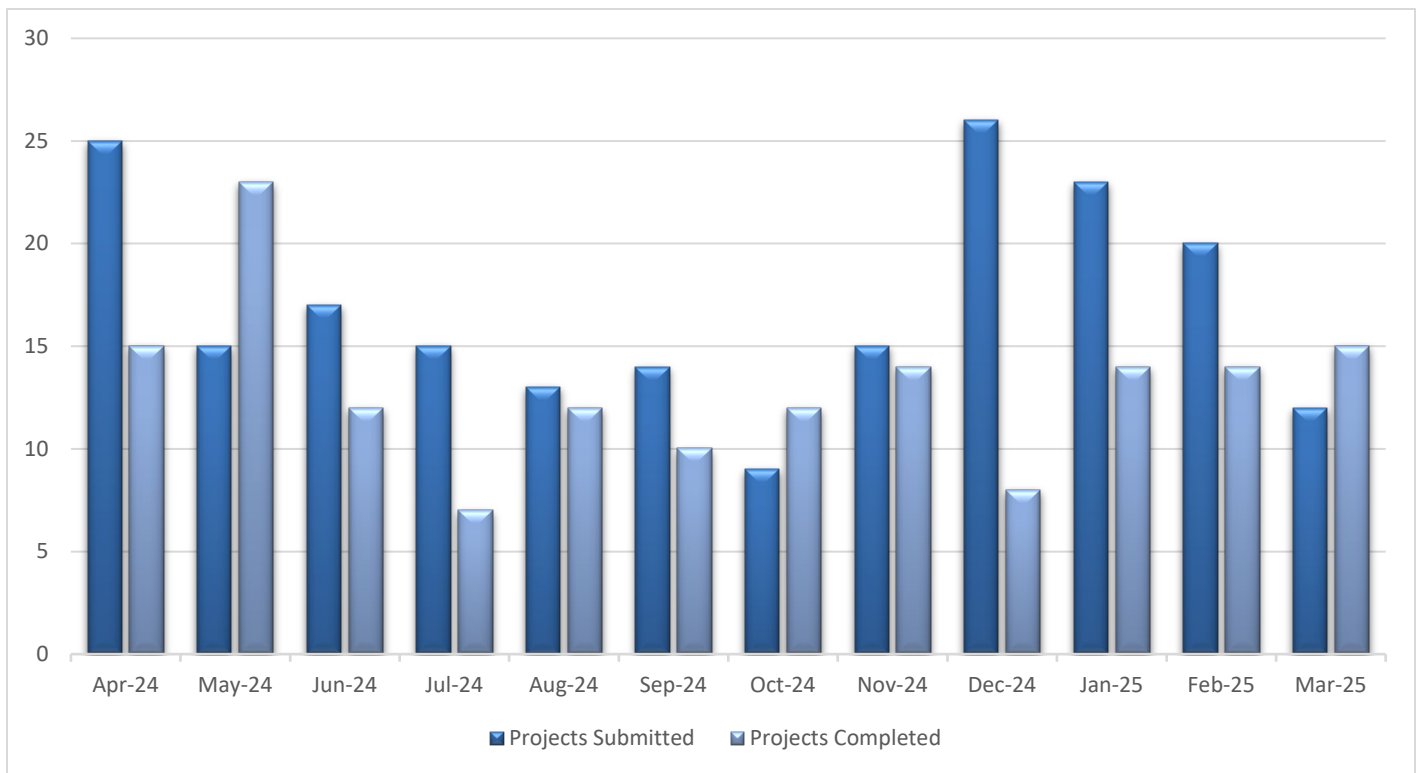
Decision Document Issued between April 01, 2024 and
March 31, 2025

Projects within date filter: 113



In 2024-2025, YESAB recommended that 84.96% of assessed projects proceed subject to specific terms and conditions (YESAA s.56.1(b); 13.27% were recommended to proceed without terms and conditions (YESAA s.56.1(a)), and 1.77% of projects were recommended not to proceed (YESAA s.56.1(c)). The decision body(s) accepted 36.36% of assessment recommendations and varied 63.64% of recommendations.

Comparison of DO projects submitted and completed by month to demonstrate project workload



The majority of projects submitted in 2024–2025 were submitted between December and February.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

MARCH 31, 2025

