# Multiklient Invest AS

# Multiklient Invest Newfoundland Offshore Seismic and Environmental Data Collection Program, 2025–2029

# Environmental Assessment Scoping Document

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## 1. Purpose

This document provides scoping information for the Environmental Assessment (EA) of the proposed seismic and environmental data collection program in the eastern and southern portion of the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Area (C-NL Offshore Area) and all other related activities (the Project).

Multiklient Invest AS (MKI) (the Proponent) is proposing to conduct a ship-borne seismic program that includes two dimensional (2D), three dimensional (3D) and/or dimensional four (4D) surveys within its proposed Project Area in the C-NL Offshore Area. In addition, MKI is proposing to collect environmental data (meteorological, oceanographic) via moored instrumentation. The Proponent is proposing to conduct seismic surveys and collect environmental data during one or more years within the 2025–2029 timeframe.

Included in this document is a description of the scope of the Project that will be assessed, the factors to be considered in the assessment, and the scope of those factors.

## 2. Regulatory Considerations

The Project will require authorizations pursuant to Section 138 (1) (b) of the *Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Atlantic Accord Implementation Act* and Section 134(1) (b) of the *Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Atlantic Accord Implementation Newfoundland and Labrador Act* (*Accord Acts*).

***The C-NLOPB formally delegates the responsibility of an acceptable environmental assessment report and any supporting documents to MKI, the Project proponent.***

## 3. Scope of the Project

The project to be assessed consists of the following components:

**3.1** To conduct 2D, 3D, and/or 4D seismic surveys between May 1 and November 30 in one or more years between 2025 and 2029 within the Project Area;

**3.2** Potential use of Ocean Bottom Nodes (OBNs) in conjunction with streamers to acquire seismic data;

**3.3** Deployment of one or more Floating Lidar Systems (FLS) buoys to acquire meteorological and oceanographic data;

**3.4** Operation of support craft associated with the above activities.

## 4. Factors to be Considered

The EA shall include a consideration of the following factors:

**4.1** A description of the Project and components as summarized in Section 3;

**4.2** The purpose of the Project;

**4.3** The environmental effects of the Project, including those due to malfunctions or accidents that may occur in connection with the Project and any change to the Project that may be caused by the environment. Environmental effect is defined as: any change that the Project may cause in the environment, including any such change on health and socio-economic conditions, on physical and cultural heritage, on the current use of lands and resources for traditional purposes by Indigenous persons, or on any structure, site or thing that is of historical, archaeological, paleontological or architectural significance; and any change to the Project that may be caused by the environment, whether any such change occurs within or outside Canada;

**4.4** Cumulative environmental effects of the Project that are likely to result from the Project in combination with other projects or activities that have been or will be carried out;

**4.5** Emissions and climate change must be considered in the EA. In doing so, emissions will need to be calculated, including any offsets, and the Proponent is expected to speak to how the Project meets regulatory requirements arising from commitments by governments related to greenhouse gas emissions. In the effects assessment, the impact of the Project on the dynamic issue of climate change will need to be adequately discussed, as will the effects of climate change on the Project;

**4.6** The significance of the environmental effects described in 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5;

**4.7** Measures, including contingency and compensation measures as appropriate, that are technically and economically feasible and that would mitigate any significant adverse environmental effects of the Project;

**4.8** The significance of adverse environmental effects following the employment of mitigative measures, including the feasibility of additional or augmented mitigation measures; and

**4.9** Report on engagement undertaken by MKI with interested other ocean users who may be affected by program activities and/or the general public respecting any of the matters described above. The One Ocean documents Fact Sheet for Non-One Ocean Petroleum Members (2015 Non One Ocean PIM Fact Sheet) and One Ocean Protocol for Consultation Meetings: Recommendations for the Fish and Petroleum Industries in Newfoundland and Labrador (One Ocean Protocol for Consultation Meetings: Recommendations for the Fishing and Petroleum Industries in Newfoundland and Labrador) can assist in planning these engagements.

## 5. Scope of the Factors to be Considered

MKI will prepare and submit to the C-NLOPB an EA for the above-described physical activity, and as described in the *Project Description: Multiklient Invest Newfoundland*

*Offshore Seismic and Environmental Data Collection Program, 2025–2029* (LGL Ltd. 2024). The EA will address the factors listed above and the issues identified in Section 5.2 (following), and document any issues and concerns that may be identified by the Proponent through regulatory, stakeholder and public engagement.

The proposed Project Area falls within the eastern and southern portions of the C-NL Offshore Area, which have been studied in recent EAs, the *Eastern Newfoundland & Labrador Offshore Area Strategic Environmental Assessment Update* (August 2014) (Eastern SEA Update), the *Southern Newfoundland Strategic Environmental Assessment* (February 2010) (Southern SEA) and the Regional Assessment of Offshore Oil and Gas Exploratory Drilling East of Newfoundland and Labrador (February 2020) (Regional Assessment). For the purposes of this EA, the information provided in the Eastern SEA Update, the Southern SEA and the Regional Assessment Geographic Information System (GIS) Decision Support Tool (updated May 2021) should support the EA to avoid unnecessary duplication of information. Appropriate references should be included in the EA.

It is recommended that the "valued component" (VC) approach be used for this EA. A definition of each VC (including components or subsets thereof) identified for the purposes of environmental assessment, and the rationale for its selection, shall be provided.

The scope of the factors to be considered in the EA will include the components identified in Section 5.2 - Summary of Potential Issues, setting out the specific matters to be considered in assessing the environmental effects of the Project and in developing environmental plans for the Project, and the "Spatial Boundaries" identified below (Section 5.1). Considerations relating to definition of "significance" of environmental effects are provided in the following sections.

Discussion of the biological and physical environments should consider the data available from the sources referred to in this section. Where data gaps exist, the EA should clearly identify the lack of data available.

## 5.1. Boundaries

The EA shall consider the potential effects of the proposed seismic survey program within spatial and temporal boundaries that encompass the periods and areas during and within which the Project may potentially interact with, and have an effect on, one or more VCs. These boundaries may vary with each VC and the factors considered, and should reflect a consideration of:

- the proposed schedule/timing of the seismic survey program;
- the natural variation of a VC or subset thereof;
- the timing of sensitive life cycle phases in relation to the scheduling of seismic survey activities;
- interrelationships/interactions between and within VCs;
- the time required for recovery from an effect and/or return to a pre-effect condition, including the estimated proportion, level, or amount of recovery; and
- the area within which a VC functions and within which a project effect may occur.

The Proponent shall clearly define and provide rationale for the spatial and temporal boundaries that are used in its EA. The EA report shall clearly describe the spatial boundaries (e.g., Study Area, Project Area) and shall include figures, maps and the corner-point coordinates. Boundaries should be flexible and adaptive to enable adjustment or alteration based on field data. The Study Area will be described based on consideration of potential areas of effects as determined by the scientific literature, and project-environment interactions. A suggested categorization of spatial boundaries follows.

### 5.1.1 Spatial Boundaries

**Project Area**
The area in which seismic survey activities are to occur, including the area of the buffer zone normally defined for line changes.

**Study Area**
The area which could potentially be affected by project activities beyond the "Project Area".

**Regional Area**
The area extending beyond the "Study Area" boundary. The "Regional Area" boundary will also vary with the component being considered (e.g., boundaries suggested by bathymetric and/or oceanographic considerations).

### 5.1.2 Temporal Boundaries

The temporal scope should describe the timing of project activities. Scheduling of project activities should consider the timing of sensitive life cycle phases of the VCs in relation to physical activities and the timing (and location) of active commercial fishing activities and other marine users.

## 5.2 Summary of Potential Issues

The EA shall contain descriptions and definitions of EA methodologies employed in the assessment of effects. Where information is summarized from existing reports, the sections referenced should be clearly indicated. Effects of relevant Project activities on those VCs most likely to be in the defined Study Area shall be assessed. Discussion of cumulative effects within the Project Area and with other relevant marine projects shall be included. Issues to be considered in the EA shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

*Physical Environment*

**5.2.1** The Eastern SEA Update, the Southern SEA, and the Regional Assessment GIS Decision Support Tool provide information on the eastern and southern Newfoundland offshore physical environment. They provide descriptions of the meteorological and oceanographic characteristics, including extreme conditions. Only new information for the Study Area that has

become available since the publication of the above noted documents, and that is relevant to the consideration of environmental effects, should be provided in the EA.

*Biological Environment*

**5.2.2** The Eastern SEA Update, Southern SEA, and Regional Assessment GIS Decision Support Tool provide information on the eastern and southern Newfoundland offshore biological environment. They provide descriptions of: marine birds; fish and fish habitat; marine mammals and sea turtles; species at risk; sensitive areas; and human activities, including marine fisheries. Only relevant new information for the Study Area that has become available since the publication of the above noted documents should be provided in the EA, in particular species at risk, sensitive areas, and marine fisheries, as well as any new or updated information that addresses any data gaps identified in these documents. The project EA will acknowledge data gaps identified in the Eastern SEA update, the Southern SEA, and Regional Assessment relative to marine fish/fish habitat, species at risk, sensitive areas, and commercial fisheries, as well as how the Project EA will describe the relevance of such gaps to the Project.

### 5.2.3 Marine and/or Migratory Birds

The EA shall provide only new or updated information, where applicable, to address any changes to the following and any data/information gaps noted with respect to Marine and/or Migratory Birds in the relevant SEAs and Regional Assessment:

- Noise disturbance from seismic equipment including both direct effects (physiological), or indirect effects (foraging behaviour, prey species, adult attendance at the nest);
- Physical displacement as a result of vessel presence (e.g., disruption of foraging activities);
- Attraction of, and increase in, predator species as a result of waste disposal practices (e.g., sanitary and food waste);
- Nocturnal disturbance from light (e.g., increased opportunities for predators, attraction of birds to vessel lighting and subsequent collision, disruption of incubation);
- Procedures for handling birds that may become stranded on survey vessels;
- Means by which bird mortalities associated with project operations may be documented and assessed;
- Effects of hydrocarbon spills from accidental events, including fluid loss from streamers and operational discharges (e.g., deck drainage, gray water, black water);
- Means by which potentially significant adverse effects upon birds may be mitigated through design and/or operational procedures; and
- Environmental effects due to the Project, including cumulative effects.

### 5.2.4 Marine Fish and Shellfish

The EA shall provide only new or updated information, where applicable, to address any changes to the following and any data/information gaps noted with respect to Marine Fish and Shellfish in the relevant SEAs and Regional Assessment:

- Distribution and abundance of marine fish and invertebrate species utilizing the Study Area with consideration of critical life stages (e.g., spawning areas, overwintering, juvenile distribution, migration);
- Description, to the extent possible, of location, type, diversity and areal extent of marine fish habitat in the Study Area. In particular, those indirectly or directly supporting traditional, Indigenous, historical, present or potential fishing activity, and including any essential (e.g., spawning, feeding, overwintering) habitats;
- The means by which potentially significant adverse effects upon fish (including critical life stages), fish habitat (including any potential effects on sensitive benthic habitat resulting from the placement of OBNs) and commercial fisheries may be mitigated through design, scheduling, and/or operational procedures; and
- Environmental effects due to the Project, including cumulative effects.

### 5.2.5 Marine Mammals

The EA shall provide only new or updated information, where applicable, to address any changes to the following and any data/information gaps noted with respect to Marine Mammals in the relevant SEAs and Regional Assessment:

- Spatial and temporal distribution;
- Description of marine mammal life stages/life histories relevant to the Study Area;
- Disturbance to/displacement of marine mammals due to noise and the possibility
- of ship strikes;
- Means by which potentially significant adverse effects upon marine mammals (including critical life stages) may be mitigated through design, scheduling, and/or operational procedures; and
- Environmental effects due to the Project, including cumulative effects.

### 5.2.6 Sea Turtles

The EA shall provide only new or updated information, where applicable, to address any changes to the following and any data/information gaps noted with respect to Sea Turtles in the relevant SEAs and Regional Assessment:

- Spatial and temporal distribution;
- Description of sea turtle life stages/life histories relevant to the Study Area;
- Disturbance to/displacement of sea turtles due to noise and the possibility of ship strikes;
- Means by which potentially significant adverse effects upon sea turtles (including critical life stages) may be mitigated through design, scheduling, and/or operational procedures; and
- Environmental effects due to the Project, including cumulative effects.

### 5.2.7 Species at Risk (SAR)

The EA shall provide only new or updated information, where applicable, to address any changes to the following and any data/information gaps noted with respect to Species at Risk in the relevant SEAs and Regional Assessment:

- A description of SAR as listed in Schedule 1 of the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA), and those under consideration by COSEWIC in the Study Area, including fish, marine mammal, sea turtles, and seabird species. It is advised that the SARA Registry and COSEWIC website be referred to for the most recent information;
- A description of critical habitat (as defined under SARA), if applicable, to the Study Area;
- Monitoring and mitigation, consistent with recovery strategies/action plans (endangered/threatened) and management plans (special concern);
- A summary statement stating whether project effects are expected to contravene the prohibitions of SARA (Sections 32(1), 33, 58(1));
- Means by which adverse effects upon SAR and their critical habitat may be mitigated through design, scheduling, and/or operational procedures; and
- Assessment of effects (adverse and significant) on SAR and critical habitat, including cumulative effects.

### 5.2.8 Sensitive Areas

The EA shall provide only new or updated information, where applicable, to address any changes to the following and any data/information gaps noted with respect to Sensitive Areas in the relevant SEAs and Regional Assessment:

- Sensitive Areas in the Study Area deemed important or essential habitat to support any of the marine resources identified, including the Northeast Newfoundland Slope Closure, the Division 3O Coral Closure, the Laurentian Channel Marine Protected Area, and the Funk Island Deep Closure;
- Environmental effects due to the Project, including cumulative effects, on those Sensitive Areas identified; and
- Means by which adverse effects upon Sensitive Areas may be mitigated through design, scheduling and/or operational procedures.

*Marine Use*

### 5.2.9 Noise/Acoustic Environment

The EA shall provide only new or updated information, where applicable, to address any changes to the following:

- Disturbance/displacement of VCs and SAR associated with seismic survey activities;
- Description of sound levels that may be expected at distances from the source throughout the water column, and how these may affect pelagic and benthic species;
- Means by which potentially significant effects may be mitigated through design, scheduling and/or operational procedures; and
- Effects of seismic activities (direct and indirect) including cumulative effects, on the VCs and SAR identified within the EA. Critical life stages should be included.

### 5.2.10 Presence of Seismic Survey Vessel(s)

The EA shall provide only new or updated information, where applicable, to address any changes to the following:

- Description of project-related traffic, including routings, volumes, scheduling and vessel types;
- Effects upon access to fishing grounds;
- Effects upon general marine traffic/navigation, including fisheries research surveys, and mitigations to avoid research surveys; and
- Means by which potentially significant effects may be mitigated through design, scheduling and/or operational procedures.

### 5.2.11 Fisheries and Other Ocean Users

The EA shall provide only new or updated information, where applicable, to address any changes to the following:

- A description of fishery activities (including traditional, existing and potential commercial, recreational and Indigenous/subsistence and foreign fisheries) in the Study Area;
- Consideration of underutilized species and species under moratoria that may be found in the Study Area as determined by analyses of past DFO research surveys and Industry Groundfish Enterprise Allocation Council survey data, with emphasis on those species being considered for future potential fishers, and species under moratoria;
- Traditional historical fishing activity, including abundance data for certain species in this area, prior to the severe decline of many fish species (e.g., a general overview of survey results and fishing patterns in the survey areas for the last 20 years);
- An analysis of the effects of Project operations and accidental events upon the foregoing. The analysis should include consideration of recent scientific literature on effects of seismic activity, including identified data gaps;
- Fisheries liaison/interaction policies and procedures;
- Program(s) for compensation of affected parties, including fisheries interests, for accidental damage resulting from project activities;
- Means by which adverse effects upon commercial fisheries may be mitigated through design and/or operational procedures; and
- Environmental effects due to the Project, including cumulative effects.

### 5.2.12 Accidental Events

- Discussion on the potential for spill events.
- Environmental effects of any accidental events arising from the use of streamers and OBNs or accidental releases from the seismic and/or support vessels (e.g., loss of product from streamers). Cumulative effects in consideration of other oil pollution events (e.g., illegal bilge disposal) should be included.
- Mitigations to reduce or prevent such events from occurring.
- Contingency plans to be implemented in the event of an accidental release.

*Environmental Management*

**5.2.13** The EA shall outline MKI's environmental management system and its components, including, but not limited to:

- Pollution prevention policies and procedures;

- Fisheries liaison/interaction policies and procedures;
- Program(s) for compensation of affected parties, including fishery interests, for accidental damage resulting from project activities; and
- Emergency response plan(s).

*Biological and Follow-up Monitoring*

**5.2.14** Discuss the need for and requirements of a follow-up program to verify the accuracy of the EA, to verify the effectiveness of any mitigation measures identified in the EA, or both. The discussion should also include any requirement for compensation monitoring (compensation is considered mitigation).

Discuss how the proposed mitigations in the EA Report will be undertaken and clearly describe the monitoring and reporting aspects on the implementation and effectiveness of the mitigation measures contained in the EA Report.

Details regarding the monitoring and observation procedures to be implemented regarding marine mammals, sea turtles and seabirds (observation protocols should be consistent with the C-NLOPB *Geophysical, Geological, Environmental and Geotechnical Program Guidelines* (June 2019).

For each annual seismic program a report on mitigation undertaken during the program should be submitted to the C-NLOPB by January 31 the following year in a format that is suitable for public release (e.g., searchable PDF). The report should include a description of the mitigation and monitoring measures identified in the EA and including those implemented during the program and assessment of effectiveness of these measures.

## 5.3 Significance of Adverse Environmental Effects

The Proponent shall clearly describe the criteria by which it proposes to define the "significance" of any residual adverse environmental effects that are predicted by the EA. This definition should be consistent with the Impact Assessment Agency's March 2015 Technical Guidance, *Determining Whether a Designated Project is Likely to Cause Significant Adverse Environmental Effects under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012*, and be relevant to consideration of each VC (including components or subsets thereof) that is identified. SARA species shall be assessed independent of non-SARA species. The effects assessment methodology should clearly describe how data gaps are considered in the determination of significance of effects.

## 5.4 Cumulative Effects

The assessment of cumulative environmental effects should be consistent with the principles described in Impact Assessment Agency's March 2015 Technical Guidance, *Assessing Cumulative Environmental Effects under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012*. It should include a consideration of environmental effects that are likely to result from the proposed project in combination with other projects or activities that have been or will be carried out. These include, but are not limited to: proposed oil and gas activities under EA

review (listed on the C-NLOPB Public registry at www.cnlopb.ca); other geophysical activities; fishing activities, including Indigenous fisheries; and marine transportation. The C-NLOPB website lists all current and active offshore petroleum activity within the C-NL Offshore Area.

## 6. Projected Timelines for the Environmental Assessment Process

The following are estimated timelines for completing the EA process. The timelines are offered based on experience with recent environmental assessments of similar project activities.

| ACTIVITY | TARGET | RESPONSIBILITY |
|---|---|---|
| EA review upon receipt from Proponent | 6 weeks | C-NLOPB & Expert Departments and Agencies |
| Compile comments on EA | 1 week | C-NLOPB |
| Review of EA Addendum/Response Document (*if necessary*) | 2 weeks | C-NLOPB & Expert Departments and Agencies |
| Determination of Significance of Project Effects | 3 weeks | C-NLOPB |
| Total | 12 weeks | |