

# **Independent Geoscience Technical Advisory Committee**

Annual Report 2023-24



# Message from the Chairperson

On behalf of the Independent Geoscience Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), I am pleased to present the TAC's annual report for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2024.

The TAC is classified as a category three entity under the **Transparency and Accountability Act**. Accordingly, the TAC must prepare an annual report that clearly outlines the activities it has undertaken within its mandate for the preceding fiscal year. Recruitment for new members of the TAC was ongoing throughout 2023-24. The report was prepared under the direction of the remaining members of the TAC, which is accountable for the results reported herein.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dorothea L. Hanchar".

Dorothea Hanchar, Director, Geological Survey of Newfoundland and Labrador

## ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24

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## Overview

The TAC serves in an advisory capacity to the Geological Survey of Newfoundland and Labrador (GSNL). This includes providing science-based recommendations on geoscience-project selection and methods, advising on the annual priorities and operational plans of the GSNL, and identifying areas for future geoscience project selection to ensure GSNL's work meets both the mineral industry's needs and the demands for critical minerals to support marketing of Newfoundland and Labrador and enhance exploration investment.

TAC voting members are researchers, resource managers, and exploration geoscientists drawn from industry and academia representing a range of interests and fields of expertise. As of March 31, 2024, the Board members were:

- Alex Smith, Assistant Deputy Minister, Mining and Mineral Development
- Dorothea Hanchar, Director, GSNL
- Wouter Bleeker, Geological Survey of Canada (GSC) Liaison
- Stephen Piercley, Academic Representative, appointed May 27, 2021
- Peter Dimmell, Mineral Industry Representative, appointed May 27, 2021
- Roderick Smith, Mineral Industry Representative, appointed May 27, 2021
- Vacant, Mineral Industry Representative
- Vacant, Mineral Industry Representative
- Vacant, Mineral Industry Representative

The TAC receives operational support from the Department of Industry, Energy and Technology, and does not have a stand-alone budget. Members serve without remuneration but may be reimbursed for travel expenses associated with attending meetings. No expenses were incurred in 2023-24.

## Mandate

The mandate of the TAC is to:

- Provide advice on the annual priorities and operational plans of the GSNL to ensure the industry's perspective is considered;
- Undertake an annual planning and review exercise of proposed and on-going projects to enhance the GSNL outcomes and to identify opportunities to leverage industry support;
- Provide advice and recommendations on regions / commodities for GSNL programs in order to enhance exploration companies' opportunities to focus on areas of higher potential and to make informed decisions regarding their exploration plans;
- Provide advice to GSNL on the plans and implementation strategies of proposed federal geoscience programs and funding;
- Apprise GSNL of emerging exploration trends and issues as they pertain to exploration for new mineral deposits and critical minerals; and
- Provide feedback on how the program can increase mineral industry awareness of GSNL project activities and results.

## Primary Client

The primary client of the TAC is the GSNL, which receives feedback on its annual priorities, operational plans, programs and services.

## Vision

The GSNL's annual priorities, operational plans, programs and services are well informed by, and responsive to, industry.

## Highlights and Partnerships

The TAC collaborates with stakeholders in the mineral sector including academic and research institutions, Government, and industry to understand industry needs and foster partnerships for effective project implementation.

## Report on Performance

The TAC is focused on providing advice to guide the programs of the GSNL, advising on the annual priorities and operational plans of the GSNL, and identifying areas for future geoscience project selection. This helps ensure GSNL's work meets the mineral industry's needs and the demands for critical minerals to support marketing of Newfoundland and Labrador and enhance exploration investment.

The TAC reports on the objective and indicators below, through its annual reports for each fiscal year of its 2023-26 activity plan.

### 2023-24 Objective

By March 31 each year, the Independent Geoscience Technical Advisory Committee will have met and provided advice on the annual priorities and operational plans of the Geological Survey of Newfoundland and Labrador.

#### Indicators

- Advised the Geological Survey of Newfoundland and Labrador and recommended areas for future geoscience project selection.

The TAC did not meet in 2023-24 due to recruitment and retention challenges that adversely effected the ability of the TAC to meet. Consequently, the TAC was unable to recommend areas for future geoscience projects.

- Reviewed and provided feedback on the Geological Survey's annual work plan.

The TAC did not meet in 2023-24 due to recruitment and retention challenges that adversely impacted the ability of the TAC to meet. Consequently, there was no opportunity for the TAC to review and provide feedback on the GSNL's annual work plan.

## Opportunities and Challenges

By advising on annual priorities and operational plans, the TAC ensures alignment with industry perspectives, enhancing the attractiveness of Newfoundland and Labrador for exploration investment. The committee's composition, including members from academia, industry, and government, facilitates diverse expertise for strategic advice and project selection.

Recruitment and retention remain significant challenges for the TAC. Despite ongoing recruitment efforts through the Public Service Commission, attracting qualified members with the necessary expertise, experience, and availability continues to be difficult. Ensuring GSNL receives independent science-based recommendations on geoscience-project selection remains a priority. Receiving such advice will help ensure GSNL programs meet industry needs and the demands for critical minerals to support marketing of Newfoundland and Labrador and enhance exploration investment.

