

# **Alberta Caribou Action and Range Planning Project**

**Date:**

July 30, 2013



---

# Table of Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Project Overview</b>	<b>2</b>
2.1	Name of Project	2
2.2	Project Sponsors	2
2.3	Charter Purpose and Background	2
2.3.1	Project Statement	2
2.3.2	Business Drivers	3
2.3.3	Linkages to Integrated Resource Management System and Government of Alberta Priorities	3
2.4	Dependencies and Related Projects	4
2.5	Strategic Approach	4
2.6	Project Goals and Objectives	5
2.7	Project Process	6
2.7.1	Staged Approach	6
2.7.2	Plan Development Phases & Process	7
2.8	High Level Scope	8
2.8.1	In Scope	8
2.8.2	Out of Scope	8
2.9	Summary of Key Deliverables and Milestones	8
2.9.1	Little Smoky, A La Peche, and Cold Lake Caribou Range Plans Specific Milestones and Deliverables	8
2.9.2	Northeast and Northwest Caribou Range Plans Specific Milestones and Deliverables	9
2.9.3	Caribou Action Plan(s) Specific Milestones and Deliverables	9
<b>3</b>	<b>Project Framework</b>	<b>10</b>
3.1	Project Governance Structure	10
3.2	Approach to Project governance	10
3.3	Approach to Project development	11



---

# 1 Executive Summary

The Alberta Caribou Action and Range Planning Project (ACARPP) will develop range plans for the maintenance or recovery of Alberta's fifteen caribou populations and one or more action plans as outlined in the Government of Canada's *Recovery Strategy for the Woodland Caribou (Rangifer tarandus caribou), Boreal population, in Canada*.

There are twelve boreal and three southern mountain woodland caribou populations currently on provincial lands in Alberta. One additional southern mountain caribou population is located in Jasper National Park and is under the jurisdiction of the federal government. All woodland caribou in Alberta are listed as *Threatened*, both provincially under the *Wildlife Act* and federally under the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA).

Caribou conservation and recovery are guided by the *Alberta Woodland Caribou Recovery Plan (2005)* and *A Woodland Caribou Policy for Alberta (2011)*. The policy commits the Government of Alberta to achieving self-sustaining woodland caribou populations, and identifies habitat conservation and restoration as important actions. Careful land management is identified as key to reducing the impact of development and restoring caribou habitat and populations.

In 2012 the Government of Canada released its *Recovery Strategy for the Woodland Caribou (Rangifer tarandus caribou), Boreal population, in Canada*. The Government of Canada is currently working to complete the *Recovery Strategy for the Woodland Caribou, Southern Mountains population, in Canada*.

The Recovery Strategy requires the provinces to develop Range plans. Range plans are required for all caribou ranges within 3 to 5 years. The federal *Recovery Strategy* states that the main purpose of a range plan is to outline how land and/or resource activities within a given range will be managed over time and space to achieve interim and long-term management and protection of habitat for boreal caribou. The range plans are one factor considered by the federal Minister of Environment in forming an opinion on whether the laws of the province effectively protect critical habitat.

Taking a strategic approach, the Government of Alberta will develop range plans for each population and will work cooperatively with Canada to develop one or more action plans setting out details on how the recovery strategy will be implemented for all Alberta's caribou populations by December 31, 2015.

The federal *Recovery Strategy* identifies a minimum of 65% undisturbed habitat in a caribou range as the disturbance management threshold in order for a caribou population to have an acceptable probability of being self-sustaining. The location of the 65% undisturbed habitat within the range may vary over time. *Range Plans* will outline how the given range will be managed to maintain or attain a minimum of 65% undisturbed habitat over time. The *Recovery Strategy* recognizes that in some ranges it might take 50 to 100 years to achieve the 65 per cent level of undisturbed habitat, in consideration of current habitat conditions and the time required for forest growth. The Recovery Strategy stipulates that range plans should indicate what laws of the province, licences or other instruments, or binding agreements, the jurisdiction intends to use to protect critical habitat.

---

## 2 Project Overview

### 2.1 Name of Project

The Alberta Caribou Action and Range Planning Project (ACARPP).

### 2.2 Project Sponsors

Project Sponsors:

- Assistant Deputy Minister, Integrated Resource Management Planning Division, Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development
- Assistant Deputy Minister, Resource Development Policy Division, Alberta Energy

Project Sponsors are supported by an Executive Steering Committee comprised of Assistant Deputy Ministers from Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development and Alberta Energy.

### 2.3 Charter Purpose and Background

The purpose of this charter is to clearly define the project. This will establish a baseline for the project's scope, approach, deliverables and timeframe for completion.

#### 2.3.1 Project Statement

Through ACARPP, Alberta will develop range plans as required by the Recovery Strategy and one or more action plans for approval by the Government of Alberta.

An **action plan**, as defined by the Federal Recovery Strategy, provides the public and stakeholders with details on how all aspects of the federal Recovery Strategy will be implemented. It includes a broad spectrum of subjects such as: measures to address threats and to achieve population and distribution objectives; an evaluation of socio-economic costs and benefits to be derived from its implementation; and an approach for monitoring and reporting.

A **range plan** is an outline of how the given woodland caribou local population range will be managed to maintain or attain a minimum of the 65% undisturbed habitat over time and thereby enable a self-sustaining caribou population. Range plans should specifically reflect disturbance patterns on the landscape and outline measures and steps that will be taken to manage the interaction between human disturbance and natural disturbance. Range plans will be components of the larger action plan(s).

Development of Alberta's action plan(s) and range plans is guided by the federal Species at Risk Act, the *Recovery Strategy for the Woodland Caribou (Rangifer tarandus caribou), Boreal population, in Canada (2012)*, *Alberta's Woodland Caribou Recovery Plan (2005)* and *A Woodland Caribou Policy for Alberta (2011)*.

---

### 2.3.2 Business Drivers

The October, 2012 Federal *Recovery Strategy for the Woodland Caribou (Rangifer tarandus caribou), Boreal Population in Canada* directs that action plans must be developed collaboratively with stakeholders and First Nations within 3 to 5 years. These plans must contain range plans which outline how each range will be managed to maintain or attain a minimum of 65% undisturbed habitat over time for a local population to be self-sustaining. The Strategy identifies all of Alberta's caribou populations as currently being unlikely to be self-sustaining.

Caribou are currently assessed as "Threatened" under Alberta's *Wildlife Act*. The Government of Alberta is committed to achieving naturally sustaining woodland caribou populations and approved a *Woodland Caribou Recovery Plan* in 2005, and adopted *A Woodland Caribou Policy for Alberta* in 2011. The Government of Alberta supports the federal recovery strategy for boreal woodland caribou.

Woodland caribou range plans will align with Land-use Framework regional plans and associated Management Frameworks.

### 2.3.3 Linkages to Integrated Resource Management System and Government of Alberta Priorities

An Integrated Resource Management System (IRMS) has been identified as one of the key elements of the Government of Alberta's focused agenda. Alberta has committed to develop an IRMS that will set and achieve environmental, economic and social outcomes that Albertans expect from resource development and that maintains the social license to develop resources. Alberta will achieve this integration through regional planning, establishing the Alberta Energy Regulator, and developing a world-class environmental monitoring system. Caribou range planning will be integrated and aligned with regional plans, and associated management frameworks, further contributing to the Government of Alberta's IRMS and focused agenda.

---

## 2.4 Dependencies and Related Projects

ACARPP dependencies may include:

1. Land-use Framework Initiatives, including:
  - a. Regional Plans;
  - b. Biodiversity Management Frameworks;
  - c. Regional Strategic Assessments
2. Monitoring Agency
3. Other Projects and Initiatives as necessary.

### Linkages and Partnerships

1. The project process supports cross-ministry collaboration and an integrated approach to planning for woodland caribou.
2. Formal linkages with other provinces or territories will be required where caribou ranges straddle these jurisdictions.

## 2.5 Strategic Approach

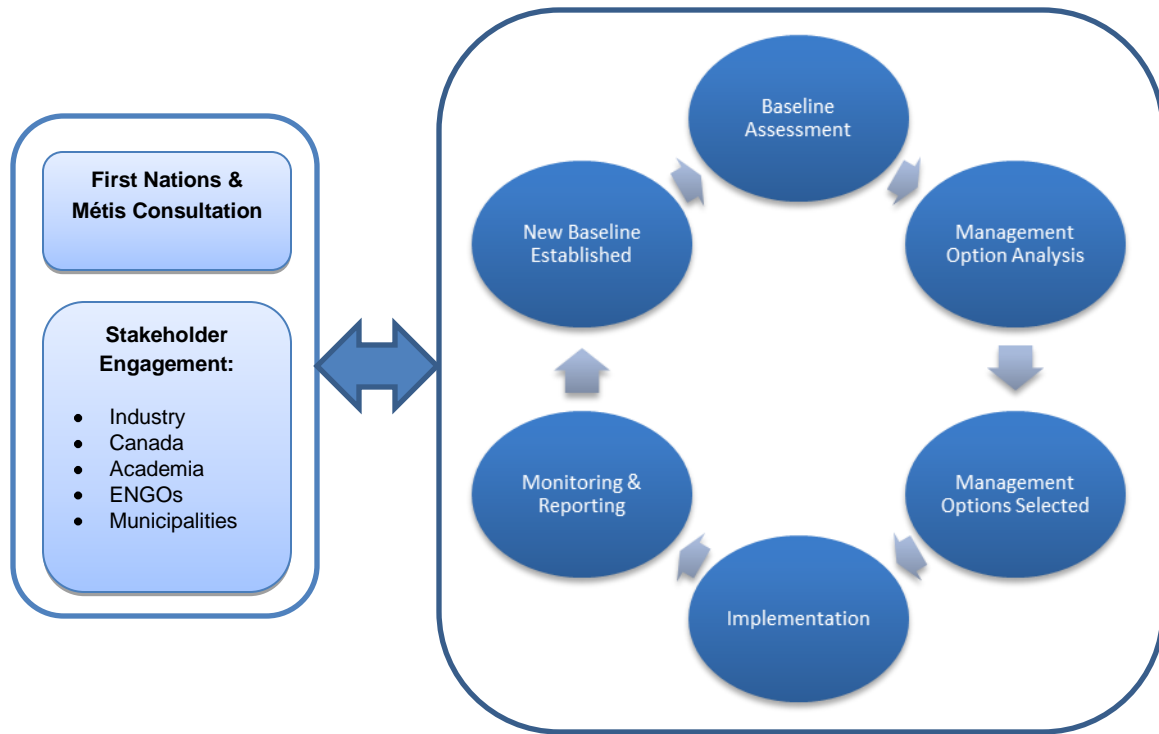
The Government of Alberta will use strategic guiding principles (outlined below) and an adaptive planning approach to develop action plan(s) and range plans that meet the federal Recovery Strategy requirements and allow the province to be responsive to evolving caribou and landscape conditions.

### Guiding Principles:

- The Government of Alberta is committed to working landscapes within the caribou ranges.
- The Government of Alberta is committed to achieving self-sustaining caribou populations.
- The Government of Alberta is committed to a balanced approach to management.
- Range plans will recognize unique conditions where they occur.
- Range plans will be developed in a collaborative manner with First Nations and Métis organizations.
- Range plans will be developed through a variety of engagement mechanisms with key stakeholders.
- Range plans will use sound habitat and population metrics in the setting of priorities and be responsive to evolving caribou and landscape conditions.
- Development of range plans will examine a broad range of tools and management approaches.
- Range plans are sub-regional plans that will be integrated and aligned with regional plans.



## Adaptive Range Planning Approach



## 2.6 Project Goals and Objectives

The project's goal is to develop action plan(s) and range plans for each of Alberta's woodland caribou populations, to guide how Alberta will achieve self-sustaining caribou populations over time. Alberta will forward the plans to the Government of Canada.

Action and range plans will be approved by Alberta Cabinet for implementation, and will be action oriented and outcome focused. Information arising from the approved plans will be used by decision makers to guide authorizations as well as management and compliance actions in Alberta's woodland caribou ranges.

Action Plan and Range Plans Objectives:

- To meet both Government of Canada and Government of Alberta requirements for Alberta's caribou action plan(s) and range plans will:
  - Describe environmental baseline conditions for each caribou local population range;
  - Engage stakeholder groups throughout the planning process;
  - Engage and consult with First Nations and Metis throughout the planning process;
  - Identify environmental, social, and economic outcomes for each range using a balanced approach, including a socio-economic evaluation;
  - Develop management options for achieving outcomes;
  - Demonstrate how self-sustaining caribou populations will be achieved or maintained; and

- 
- Demonstrate how the 65% undisturbed habitat goals will be achieved or maintained over time.
  - Range plans are integrated and align with Land Use Framework (LUF) regional plans, and associated management frameworks, and other Government of Alberta policy and planning initiatives.
  - As sub-regional plans under regional plans, range plans will provide sufficient details for implementation.

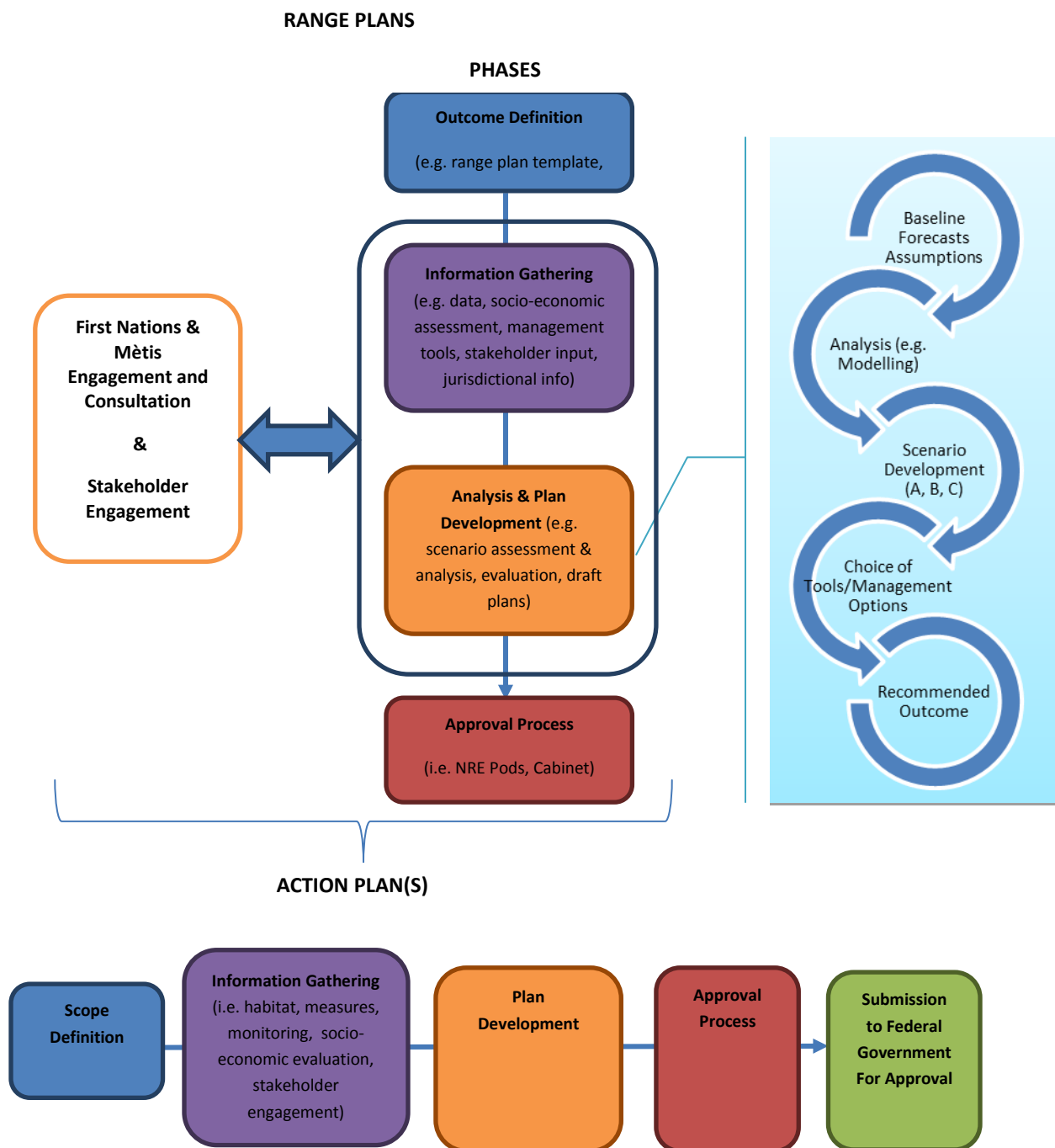
## **2.7 Project Process**

### **2.7.1 Staged Approach**

A staged approach will be used to prioritize the development of range plans for individual populations:

- A. Little Smoky and A La Peche Caribou Ranges
- B. Cold Lake
- C. North-East caribou ranges:
  - East Side of the Athabasca River (ESAR)
  - West Side of the Athabasca River (WSAR)
  - Red Earth
  - Slave Lake
  - Nipisi
  - Richardson
- D. North-West caribou ranges & remaining Mountain Caribou ranges
  - Chinchaga
  - Bistcho
  - Yates
  - Caribou Mountains
  - Redrock Prairie Creek (Mountain ecotype – in anticipation of Federal Recovery Strategy requirements)
  - Narraway (Mountain ecotype – in anticipation of Federal Recovery Strategy requirements)

## 2.7.2 Plan Development Phases & Process



## 2.8 High Level Scope

### 2.8.1 In Scope

The scope of this project includes planning activities in relation to:

1. Caribou, predator and prey management activities;
2. All land use activities within a caribou range boundary (e.g. forestry, energy development, transportation), including identifying and assessing range-specific activities likely to impact critical habitat and affect the achievement of self-sustaining caribou populations status;
3. An approach for measuring landscape disturbance and monitoring critical habitat to ensure that protection mechanisms are in place;
4. An approach for monitoring population trends, natural disturbances, and habitat quality and quantity, including development of indicators to measure and evaluate;
5. Identification of information needs and plans for addressing information gaps;
6. Identification and evaluation of management tools and options, including socio-economic analysis and evaluation;
7. Other information required to support the analysis and development of action plan(s) and ranges plans for Alberta's caribou local populations; and
8. Transition plan to implement action plan(s) and range plans.

### 2.8.2 Out of Scope

This project will not address:

1. Implementation of plan direction and associated recovery actions, including development of operational policy for the implementation of plan direction, and execution of operational activities related to the implementation of plans for Alberta's caribou populations and habitat.
2. Wildlife management and planning not related to planning for Alberta caribou populations.
3. Any management actions required in advance of the completion of range plans; these will be identified as a dependencies to ensure alignment with action and range planning underway.

## 2.9 Summary of Key Deliverables and Milestones

### 2.9.1 Little Smoky, A La Peche, and Cold Lake Caribou Range Plans Specific Milestones and Deliverables

Project Phase	Milestone	Key Deliverables	Target Deadline
Information Gathering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foundations Workshop completed</li> <li>• Range Plan Profiles Finalized</li> <li>• Management Options/ Tools Inventory Finalized</li> <li>• Template for Range Plans Finalized</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop Plan</li> <li>• Jurisdictional Review Summary</li> <li>• Comprehensive Management Tools Inventory &amp; Assessment</li> <li>• Comprehensive Baseline Data</li> <li>• Range Plan Template</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• September/ October</li> </ul>
Analysis & Plan Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management Approaches and Tools analyzed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft Options</li> <li>• Draft Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• November/ December</li> </ul>

<b>Project Phase</b>	<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Key Deliverables</b>	<b>Target Deadline</b>
Approval Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan approved by Government of Alberta Cabinet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Materials for Government of Alberta Cabinet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Early 2014</li> </ul>
Implementation & Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation &amp; Monitoring Commences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation &amp; Monitoring Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TBD</li> </ul>

### 2.9.2 Northeast and Northwest Caribou Range Plans Specific Milestones and Deliverables

<b>Project Phase</b>	<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Key Deliverables</b>	<b>Target Deadline</b>
Information Gathering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Foundations Workshop completed</li> <li>Range Plan Profiles Finalized</li> <li>Management Options/ Tools Inventory Finalized</li> <li>Template for Range Plans Finalized</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workshop Plan</li> <li>Jurisdictional Review Summary</li> <li>Comprehensive Management Tools Inventory &amp; Assessment</li> <li>Comprehensive Baseline Data</li> <li>Range Plan Template</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spring/Summer 2014</li> </ul>
Analysis & Plan Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Management Approaches and Tools analyzed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft Options</li> <li>Draft Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fall, 2014</li> </ul>
Approval Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan approved by Government of Alberta Cabinet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Materials for Government of Alberta Cabinet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spring/Summer 2015</li> </ul>
Implementation & Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation &amp; Monitoring Commences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation &amp; Monitoring Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TBD</li> </ul>

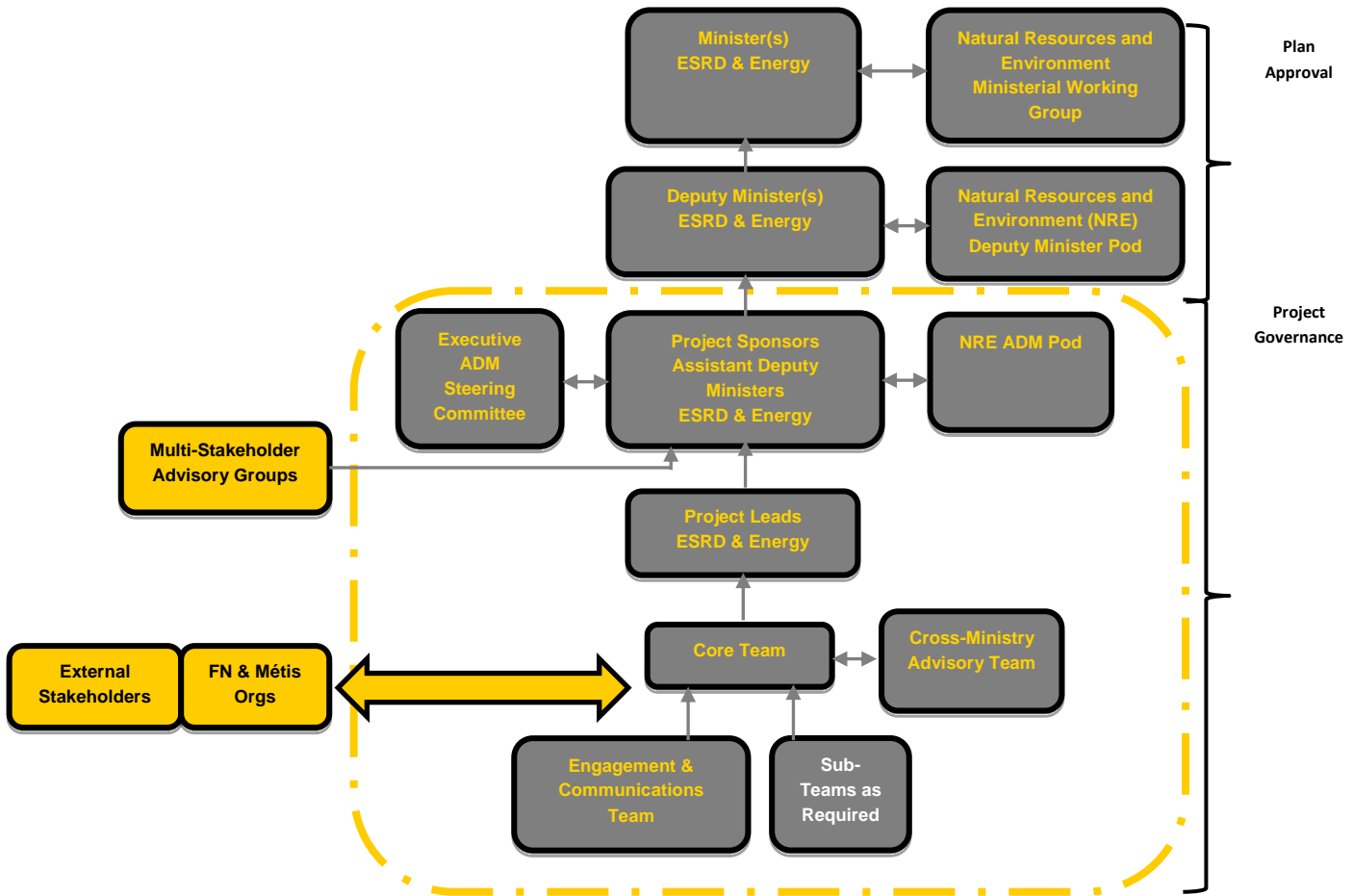
### 2.9.3 Caribou Action Plan(s) Specific Milestones and Deliverables

<b>Project Phase</b>	<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Deliverables</b>	<b>Target Deadline</b>
Outcome Definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Template for Action Plan(s) Finalized</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Action Plan(s) Template</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>December</li> </ul>
Information Gathering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individual Range Plans Completed for inclusion in action plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individual Range Plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2014 - 2015</li> </ul>
Analysis & Plan Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final Draft Action Plan(s)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final Draft Action Plan(s)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2015</li> </ul>
Approval Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan approved by Government of Alberta Cabinet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Materials for Government of Alberta Cabinet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2015</li> </ul>
Submission to Federal Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan submitted to Federal Government for Approval</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final Action Plan(s)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2015</li> </ul>

# 3 Project Framework

## 3.1 Project Governance Structure

The following graphic illustrates the relationships of key parties in the project.



## 3.2 Approach to Project Governance

Project governance is the framework within which decisions are carried out. The role of project governance is to provide a decision making framework that is logical, robust and repeatable, so that the organization has a structured approach to conducting the project, within the context of regular business activities. These activities will be carried out in accordance with the roles and responsibilities described in this document.

---

Project governance provides guidance for three components: structure, people and information.

1. Structure

Structure refers to the groupings / committees in support of core governance functions, such as the Core Team (Leads) and the Working Teams. The broader governance environment is accounted for by including stakeholder and user groups having influence on or a role in the project. The decision rights of these committees, and how they interact and relate to each other, should be laid out and documented in Committee Terms of Reference. Taking this approach, the project governance is integrated within the broader governance environment.

All project governance members will participate in ACARPP for the duration from May 2013 to December 2015, a general timeline subject to change. Members will make every effort to attend meetings and participate as applicable in the project process. If a member is unable to attend a meeting, it is requested that they assign and brief an alternative representative.

2. People

Committee and team effectiveness is associated with membership. This membership should be informed by the nature of the project and other considerations important to the project, and should have purposeful representation. In support of an effective committee, membership will reflect representation from partnering ministries, where possible; and these representatives will engage and act in the interest of their respective ministries, reflecting their respective level of governance. In general, each working group or committee will have an identified lead. The lead will ensure that the mandate of the ACARPP is carried out in a well-coordinated and collaborative manner. Similarly, representatives on task teams are expected to work closely together and coordinate work to ensure fulsome analysis.

3. Information

Good project governance informs decision makers through regular project reporting – including any issues or risks that have been identified by the project manager and key project documents (such as the project business case). Regular status reporting will be provided from committees, reflecting the respective level of governance, as articulated in roles and responsibilities described in this document.

### **3.3 Approach to Project Development**

An iterative approach to project development will be taken, where project team members with relevant information will inform this development. The approach to project development is intended to facilitate change and requires a higher degree of ongoing project team member involvement. A detailed work plan will be developed, and provide flexibility to incorporate an iterative and adaptive approach to project development; governed by the roles of the Project Co-leads and Project Sponsors, in alignment with the roles and responsibilities described in this document. High level deliverables and milestones are set out in this charter and the project will be developed and carried out to meet these requirements.