



POLICY

23.02 Traditional Knowledge

1. Statement of Policy

The Government of the Northwest Territories recognizes that the Indigenous peoples of the Northwest Territories have acquired a vast store of traditional knowledge through their experience of centuries of living in close harmony with the land. The Government recognizes that Indigenous traditional knowledge is a valid and essential source of information about the natural environment and its resources, the use of natural resources, and the relationship of people to the land and to each other and will incorporate traditional knowledge into government decisions and actions where appropriate.

2. Principles

The Government of the Northwest Territories will adhere to the following principles when implementing this Policy:

- (1) The primary responsibility for the preservation and promotion of traditional knowledge lies with Indigenous people.
- (2) Government programs and services should be administered in a manner consistent with the beliefs, customs, knowledge, values, and languages of the people being served.
- (3) Traditional knowledge should be considered in the design and delivery of government programs and services.
- (4) The primary focus of traditional knowledge research should be the aboriginal community.
- (5) Traditional knowledge is best preserved through continued use and practical application.
- (6) Oral tradition is a reliable source of information about traditional knowledge.



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3. Scope

This Policy applies to all departments, agencies, and employees of the Government of the Northwest Territories.

4. Definitions

The following terms apply to this policy:

Indigenous cultural organization - any local, regional or territorial organization, which promotes Indigenous culture in the Northwest Territories.

Research Institute - includes universities, research associations affiliated with universities and government-sponsored research organizations.

Traditional knowledge - knowledge and values, which have been acquired through experience, observation, from the land or from spiritual teachings, and handed down from one generation to another.

5. Authority and Accountability

(1) General

This Policy is issued under the authority of the Executive Council. The authority to make exceptions and approve revisions to this Policy rests with the Executive Council. Authority and accountability is further defined as follows:

(a) Minister

The Minister of Environment and Climate Change (the Minister) is accountable to the Executive Council for the implementation of this Policy.

(b) Deputy Minister



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The Deputy Minister of Environment and Climate Change (the Deputy Minister) is accountable to the Minister and responsible to the Minister for the administration of this Policy.

(2) Specific

(a) Executive Council

The Executive Council may approve government-wide traditional knowledge initiatives.

(b) Minister

Ministers will:

- (i) consider recommendations from communities and Indigenous cultural organizations regarding the incorporation of traditional knowledge into the design and delivery of government programs and take action as appropriate; and
- (ii) respond to requests for in-kind support from non-governmental organizations.

(c) Minister of Environment and Climate Change

The Minister of Environment and Climate Change will:

- (i) co-ordinate Government of the Northwest Territories traditional knowledge initiatives approved by the Executive Council; and
- (ii) ensure that traditional knowledge about the natural environment is taken into consideration in all environmental management actions and decisions of the government.

(d) Deputy Ministers

Deputy Ministers will:



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- (i) assign responsibility for traditional knowledge co-ordination within their departments;
- (ii) identify program areas where the study or application of traditional knowledge is appropriate;
- (iii) make recommendations to Ministers with regard to the incorporation of traditional knowledge into the design and delivery of programs; and
- (iv) make recommendations to Ministers with regard to requests for in-kind support from non-governmental organizations.

(e) Deputy Minister of Environment and Climate Change

The Deputy Minister of Environment and Climate Change will, in consultation with other Deputy Ministers, co-ordinate the implementation of government-wide traditional knowledge initiatives.

(f) Traditional Knowledge Co-ordinators

Traditional knowledge co-ordinators, at the direction of the Deputy Ministers, will:

- (i) monitor traditional knowledge projects, studies and other initiatives relevant to the program areas of their departments;
- (ii) participate in the on-going exchange of information about traditional knowledge research and developments;
- (iii) provide support upon request to communities, Indigenous cultural organizations and research institutions conducting traditional knowledge studies or projects, as time and resources permit; and
- (iv) identify areas where traditional knowledge could successfully be incorporated into the design or delivery of government programs.



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(g) Boards of Governors of the Public Colleges

The Boards of Governors of the Public Colleges will:

- (i) license all scientific research in the Northwest Territories in accordance with the *Scientists Act*;
- (ii) maintain a database of traditional knowledge research conducted in the Northwest Territories;
- (iii) promote and support the study, documentation and application of traditional knowledge; and
- (iv) pursue and support the development of traditional technology for economic development purposes.

6. Provisions

In-Kind Support to Non-Government Traditional Knowledge Initiatives

The Government may provide, upon request, in-kind support to communities, Indigenous cultural organizations and research institutions which wish to conduct studies or projects related to traditional knowledge in the Northwest Territories. Such support might include: providing information, assisting with literature reviews, assisting with program design, or assisting with access to government or non-government funding.

7. Prerogative of the Executive Council

Nothing in this Policy shall in any way be construed to limit the prerogative of the Executive Council to make decisions or take action respecting sustainable development outside the provisions of this Policy.


Premier and Chair of the
Executive Council