

# UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

ACTION PLAN

# DÉCLARATION DES NATIONS UNIES SUR LES DROITS DES PEUPLES AUTOCHTONES

PLAN D'ACTION DU COMITÉ DE PLAN D'ACTION

**June | Juin | 2026**

Le présent document contient la traduction française de l'introduction.



If you would like this information in another official language, call us.

English

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Si vous voulez ces informations dans une autre langue officielle, contactez-nous.

French

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Kīspin ki nitawih̄tīn ē nīhīyawih̄k ōma ācimōwin, tipwāsinān.

Cree

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Tłjchq yatı k'èè. Dı wegodı newq dè, gots'o gonede.

Tłjchq

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ʔerih̄t'is Dēne Sų́nė yatı t'a huts'elkēr xa beyáyatı theʔa ʔat'e, nuwe ts'ēn yóftı.

Chipewyan

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Edı gondı dehgáh got'je zhatié k'ée edat'éh enahddhę nıde naxets'é edahfı.

South Slavey

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K'áhshó got'jne xədə k'é hederı ʔedjhtl'é yerıniwę nıde dúle.

North Slavey

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Jii gwandak izhii ginjik vat'atr'ijahch'uu zhit yinohthan jı', diits'at ginohkhii.

Gwich'in

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Uvanittuaq ilitchurisukupku Inuvialuktun, ququaqłuta.

Inuvialuktun

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Ĉ<sup>b</sup>ĴĀ ĤĤ<sup>sb</sup>Δ<sup>c</sup> Λ<sup>r</sup>LĴΔ<sup>r</sup> Δ<sup>sb</sup>ĤĴĈ<sup>sb</sup>γ<sup>sb</sup>L<sup>sb</sup>Ĥ<sup>b</sup>, Δ<sup>sb</sup>Ĉ<sup>sb</sup>Δ<sup>c</sup> Δ<sup>sb</sup>Ĉ<sup>sb</sup>Δ<sup>c</sup> Δ<sup>sb</sup>Ĉ<sup>sb</sup>Δ<sup>c</sup>.

Inuktitut

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Hapkua titiqqat pijumagupkit Inuinnaqtun, uvaptinnut hivajarlutit.

Inuinnaqtun

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Indigenous Languages:

French:

867-767-9348

866-561-1664 Toll Free

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# INTRODUCTION

The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) serves a population of over 44,000 people, nearly half of whom are Indigenous – Dene (First Nations), Inuit, and Métis. This population is spread over 33 communities. Many NWT-based Indigenous peoples exercise self-government and other governance powers, grounded in their inherent rights and in Aboriginal and treaty rights, land claim and self-government agreements, and treaty land entitlements. Some Indigenous Governments are working towards modern agreements at the negotiation table. In this context, the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP), together with the Aboriginal and treaty rights recognized and affirmed in section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, provides an important framework for reconciliation and for shaping how Indigenous and public governments in the Northwest Territories work together. It is a unique Indigenous governance space within Canada. Indigenous governments, organizations and institutions across the Northwest Territories will bring their own perspectives and priorities to this work, and the GNWT is committed to collaborating with them to co-develop approaches to implementing UNDRIP.

The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Implementation Act (the Act)* was passed by the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly on October 6, 2023. The Northwest Territories (NWT) is the third legislative jurisdiction in Canada to adopt the UN Declaration after British Columbia and the federal government. The *Act* is the result of several years of work between the Government of the Northwest Territories, Indigenous Governments and Organizations<sup>1</sup> of the NWT. The legislation is based on innovations in other legislation in Canada, including British Columbia and the Government of Canada. However, the NWT legislation was uniquely drafted cooperatively between Indigenous Governments and Organizations, members of the Legislative Assembly, and the GNWT.

The *Act* moves the GNWT forward along the path of reconciliation by recognizing the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) as the minimum standards required to protect the rights of Indigenous peoples of the NWT. The UN Declaration also provides recognition that Indigenous peoples of the NWT have the right to self-determination, culture, language and traditional lands.

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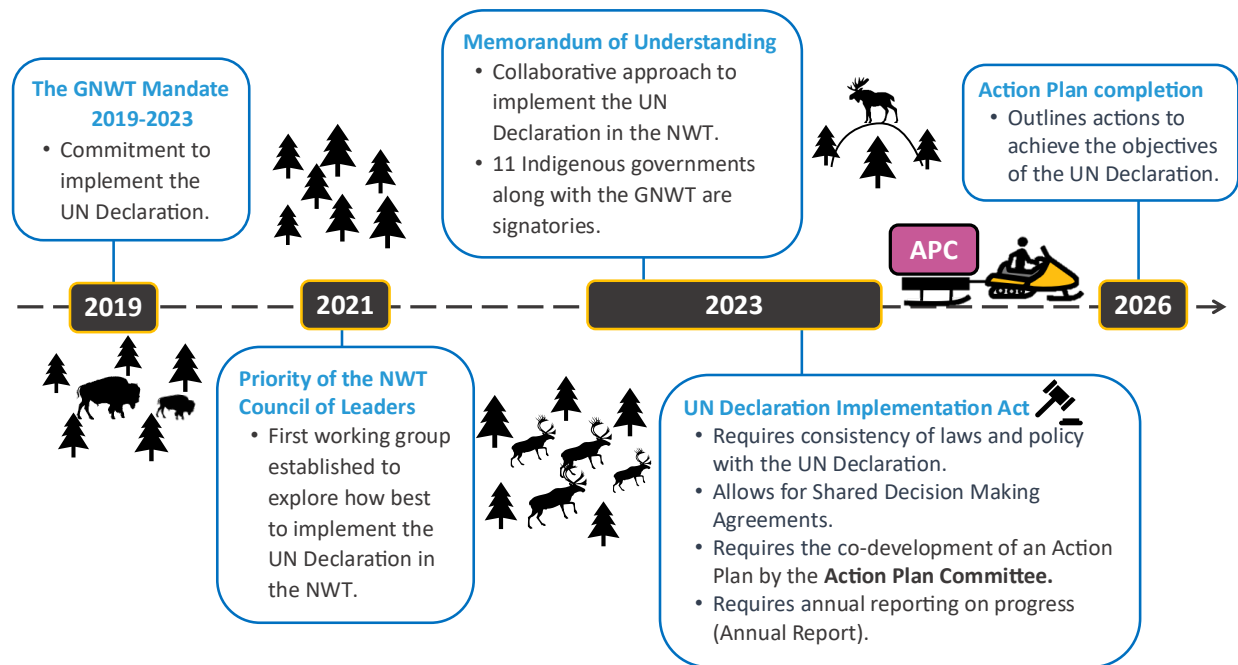
<sup>1</sup> Under the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Implementation Act*, An Indigenous government or organization is an entity that is authorized to act on behalf of Indigenous peoples that hold rights recognized and affirmed by section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982* and chosen by those Indigenous peoples in accordance with their own procedures and decision-making institutions to represent them and to act on their behalf.

The action plan, as a requirement of the legislation, sets the direction for ongoing collaboration between the GNWT and the Indigenous Governments and Organizations of the NWT to advance shared key actions towards the implementation of the UN Declaration.

## MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES COUNCIL OF LEADERS

The Act was developed using a consensus process supported by the NWT Council of Leaders (NWTCOL). The NWTCOL was established in 2021, and a forum open to all Indigenous Governments and Organizations of the NWT to discuss territory-wide social, environmental, and economic issues, and to collaborate on solutions.

In its inaugural meeting, the NWTCOL tasked a working group, comprised of officials from Indigenous Governments and Organizations and the GNWT, with making recommendations to advance the implementation of the UN Declaration in the NWT (Figure 1). Key recommendations from the working group included the development of a law unique to the NWT, and formalizing the relationship between the GNWT and Indigenous Governments and Organizations through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).



**Figure 1.** Action plan timeline to implement the UN Declaration in the NWT.

Endorsed by the NWTCOL, the MOU was developed through consensus and intended to support the continued collaborative approach to advancing the implementation of the UN Declaration in

the NWT, and reinforces the GNWT's commitment to work in collaboration and cooperation with Indigenous Governments and Organizations.

## IMPLEMENTATION LEGISLATION

On March 29, 2023, the GNWT introduced the proposed *The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Implementation Act (the Act)* in the Legislative Assembly. This legislation was developed by consensus, in partnership with the NWTCOL working group. The *Act* formalizes the mechanisms that the GNWT uses to implement the UN Declaration and to ensure that future laws, regulations, and policies are consistent with the rights outlined in the UN Declaration. The *Act* received assent on October 6, 2023 (Figure 1).

One purpose of the *Act* is to provide a framework for the implementation of the UN Declaration by the GNWT, in collaboration and cooperation with Indigenous Governments or Organizations. This action plan is a key mechanism within that framework, setting out immediate steps for implementation.

While the framework and action plan to implement the UN Declaration is robust and collaborative, it will also require the GNWT to work through a whole-of-government approach and address issues not identified in this action plan, including issues related to future court decisions and bilateral relationships with specific Indigenous Governments and Organizations.

# INTRODUCTION

La *Loi de mise en œuvre de la Déclaration des Nations Unies sur les droits des peuples autochtones* (la Loi) a été adoptée par la 19<sup>e</sup> Assemblée législative le 6 octobre 2023. Les Territoires du Nord-Ouest (TNO) sont la troisième compétence législative au Canada à adopter la Déclaration des Nations Unies sur les droits des peuples autochtones (Déclaration des Nations Unies), après la Colombie-Britannique et le gouvernement fédéral. La Loi est le résultat de plusieurs années de travail entre le gouvernement des Territoires du Nord-Ouest (GTNO) et les organisations et gouvernements autochtones aux TNO. Elle s'appuie sur diverses innovations qui se trouvent dans d'autres lois du Canada, toutefois, celle des TNO est unique puisqu'elle a été rédigée dans le cadre d'une coopération entre les gouvernements et organisations autochtones, les membres de l'Assemblée législative, et le GTNO.

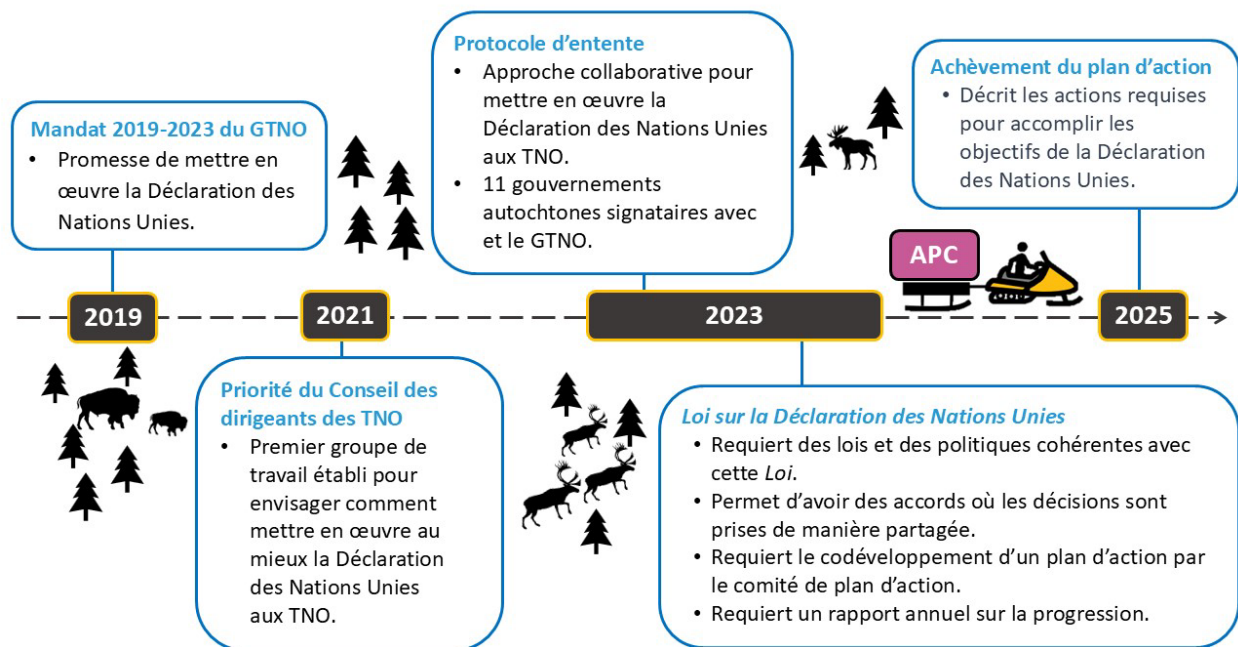
La Loi fait avancer le GTNO sur le chemin de la réconciliation en reconnaissant la Déclaration des Nations Unies en tant que norme minimale requise pour protéger les droits des peuples autochtones aux TNO. La Déclaration des Nations Unies prévoit aussi la reconnaissance que les peuples autochtones aux TNO ont droit à l'autodétermination, à leur culture, à leur langue et aux territoires traditionnels.

Le plan d'action requis par la Loi encadre la collaboration installée entre le GTNO et les organisations et gouvernements autochtones aux TNO pour faire avancer les mesures communes pour la mise en œuvre de la Déclaration des Nations Unies.

## PROTOCOLE D'ENTENTE AVEC LE CONSEIL DES DIRIGEANTS DES TNO

L'élaboration de la Loi s'est faite par consensus, dans un processus piloté par le Conseil des dirigeants des TNO. La tribune ainsi créée en 2021 est ouverte à tous les gouvernements et organisations autochtones aux TNO pour discuter des enjeux sociaux, environnementaux et économiques à l'échelle du territoire, et trouver des solutions ensemble.

Peu après sa création, le Conseil des dirigeants des TNO a formé un groupe de travail réunissant des représentants de gouvernements et d'organisations autochtones et du GTNO afin de formuler des recommandations sur la mise en œuvre de la Déclaration de Nations Unies aux TNO (figure 1). L'une des recommandations clés du groupe de travail était de préparer une loi spécifiquement pour les TNO. Sur recommandation du GTNO et des gouvernements et organisations autochtones, le groupe de travail a formalisé sa relation en rédigeant un Protocole d'entente pour encadrer son travail.



**Figure 1.** Calendrier d'élaboration du plan d'action pour la mise en œuvre aux TNO de la Déclaration des Nations Unies.

Le Protocole d'entente a été élaboré par consensus. Conçu pour soutenir l'approche collaborative de mise en œuvre de la Déclaration des Nations Unies aux TNO, il réitère l'engagement du GTNO à travailler en collaboration et en coopération avec les gouvernements et les organisations autochtones.

## MISE EN ŒUVRE DE LA LOI

Le 29 mars 2023, le GTNO a présenté sa proposition de *Loi de mise en œuvre de la Déclaration des Nations Unies sur les droits des peuples autochtones* à l'Assemblée législative. Cette loi a été élaborée par consensus, en partenariat avec les gouvernements et organisations autochtones aux TNO, grâce à un groupe de travail constitué de représentants et créé par le Conseil des dirigeants. La Loi formalise les mécanismes que le GTNO utilise pour mettre en œuvre la Déclaration des Nations Unies et veille à ce que les lois, règlements et politiques à venir soient cohérents avec les droits décrits dans la Déclaration. La Loi a reçu la sanction le 6 octobre 2023 (figure 1).

L'un des objectifs de la Loi est de fournir un cadre de travail pour que le GTNO puisse mettre en œuvre la Déclaration des Nations Unies en collaboration et en coopération avec les gouvernements et organisations autochtones. Le plan d'action, qui présente des mesures immédiates pour la mise en œuvre, est un élément clé de ce cadre de travail.

Même s'ils ont été bien construits et de façon concertée, le cadre de travail pour mettre en œuvre la Déclaration des Nations Unies créé en vertu de la Loi tout comme le présent plan d'action pourraient ne pas contenir tout ce que le GTNO devra faire pour mettre en œuvre entièrement la Déclaration. Une mise en œuvre complète exigera un travail assidu de l'ensemble du GTNO et celui-ci devra tenir compte d'enjeux qui n'ont pas été relevés dans le présent plan d'action, par exemple sur des décisions juridiques à venir ou les relations bilatérales avec des organisations et des gouvernements autochtones particuliers.

# PROCESS

## ACTION PLAN COMMITTEE

With the passing of the *Act*, the NWTCOL working group transitioned to become the Action Plan Committee (APC), which was established by the legislation. The *Act* gives the APC various responsibilities related to the implementation of the UN Declaration in the NWT, but its primary role is the development and monitoring of the action plan. The participation of Indigenous Governments and Organizations in the APC cannot be understated.

Indigenous Governments and Organizations that did not participate in developing the action plan can join the APC anytime, and active APC members can decide to be less active at their discretion.

## DEVELOPING THE ACTION PLAN

Following the *Act* receiving assent, the APC and GNWT co-developed the action plan between fall 2023 and winter 2026 (Figure 1). As with the *Act*, the action plan is unique in Canada as it was entirely co-developed with Indigenous Governments and Organizations of the NWT through participation on the APC.

The *Act* requires the action plan to be completed within two years of the legislation coming into force. While this timeline has not been met, co-development takes time, and each action item was thoughtfully considered and drafted to ensure the interests of the GNWT and Indigenous Governments and Organizations are being met.

Indigenous Governments and Organizations of the NWT were invited to participate on the APC. In recognition that capacity limitations and competing interests may impact Indigenous Governments and Organizations' ability to fully and consistently participate on the APC, all eligible Indigenous Governments and Organizations remained on the email distribution list as the action plan and action items were developed, and progress reports were provided to NWTCOL.

It is important to acknowledge existing legislative processes with Indigenous Governments in the context of the action plan that are part of the Devolution Agreement, along with the GNWT are members of the Intergovernmental Council (IGC) and have already agreed that any associated legislative, policy or organizational changes that are necessary to further the purpose and objectives related to lands and resources. will be reviewed and developed together. The GNWT has also committed to collaboratively drafting other specific areas. As these approaches

are not inclusive of all Indigenous Governments, the language in this document may reference the APC as only one aspect of collaboration.

In the spring of 2026, the GNWT conducted engagement on the draft action plan, as required by its public engagement policy. Concurrently, APC members conducted internal engagement with their membership and communities. The feedback received was carefully reviewed and considered by the APC and GNWT. Several of the comments are addressed below:

- **Anonymous commenters expressed concerns that the plan was not specific enough in its timeframes or measurables, and questions about the sincerity of the work.** As the first Action Plan, a number of the action items require a phased approach to confirm further plans. The GNWT and the APC will endeavour to refine targets in future action plans. The sincerity of the work will be shown in the quality of reporting stemming from this action plan, which is legislated and will be required annually.
- **A number of NWT Indigenous Governments were mentioned as not having been part of the Action Planning Committee.** The GNWT will reach out to these governments directly to confirm their ability to participate, and will engage directly on future plans.
- **Concerns were expressed about the Rights of Métis.** Ensuring all Indigenous populations are reflected in this work is important to the GNWT. While there was Métis representation in the drafting of the initial plan, we will reflect on ensuring that Métis, Dene/First Nations and Inuit interests are reflected in future versions.

The action plan was approved by the leadership of APC member governments and the GNWT Executive Council.

While the action plan has been formalized into a single document, the intention is that the action plan will be a living document that can be reviewed and amended as circumstances and interests evolve and as implementation of the UN Declaration advances.

# ACTION ITEMS

Action items included in the action plan are SMART:

- Specific:** Action items are specific to the themes where they are categorized.
- Measurable:** The progress of action item is measured in annual reports.
- Achievable:** Action items are realistic, actionable and within the APC or GNWT's control, not dependent on outside authorities.
- Relevant:** Action items are consistent with the intent of the UN Declaration Act.
- Time-based:** There is a timeframe for the advancement of the action items.

The list of action items in the action plan is the result of a collaborative and consensus-based selection and co-drafting process between the APC and the GNWT. At the request of the APC, the GNWT worked with each department to propose an initial list of action items for APC's review in June 2024. APC members subsequently proposed action items for GNWT consideration. Where there was overlap between proposed action items by the APC and the GNWT, actions were combined. Additionally, consensus was reached on the inclusion and wording of action items proposed by both the APC and the GNWT that did not overlap.

Action items will be reported on in the annual report. The APC will measure the progress of implementing the action plan and will determine whether an action plan item is in alignment with the UN Declaration and considered complete. Any new or unresolved issues will trigger amendments to the action plan by the APC. Action items will remain on the action plan until consistent with the UN Declaration.

To advance action items towards UN Declaration alignment, the APC will receive regular updates on engagement, progress, and development of the proposed reforms, and will have the opportunity to provide input on UN Declaration alignment before the action item is treated as complete.

Due to the whole of government approach, and the purpose/intent of implementing the UN Declaration, various working groups created through NWTCOL and IGCS will be engaged throughout the execution of the action plan to ensure the GNWT meets the established targets laid out in the plan.

Action plan items which require changes to existing laws, or the creation of new legislation, will be reviewed by the APC to ensure alignment with the UN Declaration. Once approved by the APC, proposed legislative changes will be referred to the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly for review through the legislative process.

## SELF-DETERMINATION AND SELF-GOVERNMENT

### EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT REFORM (SHORT-TERM)

GNWT's current emergency planning policies and procedures require reform to ensure alignment with the UN Declaration.

Driven by a commitment to implement the UN Declaration and meet the needs of Indigenous Governments, the GNWT is working with Indigenous Governments and Organizations and communities, including members represented through the APC, to co-develop and establish bilateral emergency and communications protocols before the 2026 wildfire season. The protocols will strengthen timely, coordinated, and culturally informed communication during emergency events and enhance Indigenous Governments' participation in local decision-making processes. These protocols will serve as an immediate step toward broader legislative and policy reform.

In the interim, the GNWT has developed an Emergency Response Event Communication Protocol with Indigenous Governments to ensure clear communication between Indigenous Governments and the GNWT during emergency events.

**Target:** Interim Emergency Response Event Communication protocol to be co-developed with all Indigenous Governments and in effect by Spring 2026.

### COLLABORATIVE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (LONG-TERM)

The GNWT in collaboration and cooperation with Indigenous Governments, through the appropriate intergovernmental forum(s), which may include the APC, NWTCOL working groups, or other tables will co-develop proposed reforms to the GNWT's emergency planning legislation, policies, and procedures, including alignment with the UN Declaration:

1. The GNWT will undertake a comprehensive review of the NWT *Emergency Management Act*, relevant policies, and procedures, and co-develop reforms to ensure that they align with the UN Declaration and Indigenous Governments and Organizations' priorities, including consideration of mechanisms for Indigenous Governments to participate as local authorities in emergency planning and response.
2. The GNWT and Indigenous Governments and Organizations will advocate together for Indigenous Governments of the NWT to be eligible for federal funding support for emergency preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation, even if it needs to be at a community-by-community level similar to the Indigenous Services Canada Emergency

Management and Preparedness program, to build and implement community emergency management plans.

3. If Territorial funding for emergency preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation becomes available in the future, the GNWT and Indigenous Governments and Organizations will negotiate access to such funding where Indigenous Governments and Organizations are responsible for delivering emergency management activities eligible for such funding, even if it needs to be at a community-by-community level; and
4. The GNWT will establish mechanisms for Indigenous Governments to proactively provide situational awareness input to the Local Emergency Management Organization (LEMO) during emergencies, ensuring LEMO response actions reflect on-the-ground realities and local authority knowledge.

**Target:** Terms of reference for the Emergency Management working group finalized by 2026; Legislative review completed by late-2027, with development of legislative proposal by early 2028. The APC will receive updates on engagement, progress, and development of the proposed reforms under this action item, and will have the opportunity to provide input on UN Declaration alignment before the action item is treated as complete.

## DATA SOVEREIGNTY

In recognition of the inherent right of self-government of Indigenous peoples and the GNWT's commitment to reconciliation, the GNWT, in collaboration and cooperation with Indigenous Governments and Organizations, will review all legislation, policies, and procedures with respect to information sharing to ensure clearly articulated pathways that support Indigenous Governments access to, control of and governance over data are relevant to their members and jurisdictions.

The GNWT will, in collaboration and cooperation with Indigenous Governments and Organizations:

1. Achieve co-developed consensus on the definition of Indigenous data sovereignty;
2. Establish cross-departmental data-sharing Indigenous data sovereignty framework, including data-sharing standards rooted in the principles of Indigenous data sovereignty; and
3. Identify existing legal or operational barriers to respectful information exchange and propose collaborative solutions.

This work will be advanced by the GNWT with engagement through the NWTCOL and reported through to the APC to ensure appropriate consent, access, and control mechanisms are in place across GNWT laws and systems.

**Target:** A cross-government data sovereignty framework will be co-developed by the end of 2027. Initial data sharing standard piloted with HSS by the end of 2027/2028.

## SUSTAINED INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT AND FUNDING FOR IGS FOR UN DECLARATION IMPLEMENTATION

### **Recommended in the Inaugural *UN Declaration Implementation Act Annual Report***

The GNWT will work to establish a permanent, sustainable institutional funding framework to support the implementation of the UN Declaration across the NWT, informed by collaboration with Indigenous Governments and Organizations. This recognizes that aligning GNWT laws, policies, and practices with the UN Declaration is a long-term, collaborative process.

The framework will be designed to provide predictable, ongoing, and adequate financial support to Indigenous Governments and Organizations participating in the APC. It will also provide a mechanism for supporting Indigenous-led implementation activities and ensure meaningful participation in line with statutory timelines, workplans, and reporting cycles.

The framework will build on the interim funding arrangements currently in place and evolve into a long-term model that is reflective of shared governance, mutual accountability, and alignment with Article 39 of the UN Declaration.

**Target:** Ongoing funding through a sustainable institutional funding model implemented by late 2026.

## APPOINT DEPARTMENTAL UN DECLARATION OFFICERS

### **Recommended in the Inaugural *UN Declaration Implementation Act Annual Report***

The GNWT will ensure that each GNWT department designates a UN Declaration Officer to lead and coordinate departmental efforts in implementing the UN Declaration.

These Officers will:

1. Serve as internal leads for each department's UN Declaration implementation work and as key UN Declaration Implementation Act liaisons with Indigenous Governments and Organizations, including through the APC where appropriate;
2. Receive feedback from Indigenous Governments and Organizations regarding departmental implementation progress and efforts;
3. Design and deliver department-specific training on the UN Declaration and its application; and
4. Report on progress annually, with performance indicators co-developed by the APC, with the GNWT responsible for tracking implementation across departments.

**Target:** All Officers appointed and training initiated by 2026, with department-wide training delivered by 2027; first annual departmental implementation reports tabled to the APC by 2027.

## REFORM TO THE *INTERPRETATION ACT*

### Recommended in the *Inaugural UN Declaration Implementation Act Annual Report*

The GNWT, in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Governments and Organizations will review and develop amendments to the *Interpretation Act*, RSNWT 1988, to include a non-derogation clause that:

1. Requires that all territorial enactments be interpreted in a manner consistent with section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982* and the minimum standards set out in the UN Declaration;
2. Affirms that no territorial law may be interpreted as abrogating or derogating from Aboriginal and treaty rights; and
3. Provides clear interpretive guidance for courts, GNWT officials, and administrative bodies to ensure the full alignment of territorial laws and policies with the UN Declaration.

**Target:** The Department of Justice will recommend to the 21st Legislative Assembly Executive Council that this amendment be added to the legislative priorities for the 21st Legislative Assembly.

## LANDS, TERRITORIES AND RESOURCES

### HARVESTING CABINS TENURE

The GNWT will, in collaboration with Indigenous Governments and Organizations, through the appropriate intergovernmental forum(s), which may include the APC, NWTCOL working groups or other tables, to develop and implement new approaches to the management and administration of traditional camps and cabins on public land.

**Target:** Work is underway to engage Indigenous Governments on a government-to-government basis to co-design approaches to the management and administration of traditional camps and cabins.

The GNWT will support all interested Indigenous Governments to complete necessary preparatory work, including documenting existing cabin locations, with funding available immediately.

Due to GNWT capacity constraints, government-to-government negotiations to co-design management approaches will advance sequentially with one to two Indigenous governments at a time. Initial engagement with the first Indigenous government partner will commence in 2025-26, with a co-designed approach targeted for completion by October 2027. The APC will receive periodic updates on sequencing, engagement, and progress toward completion of the co-designed approaches.

### CABIN TAX POLICY

The GNWT is currently engaged in internal, cross-departmental work for the application of the *Property Assessment and Taxation Act*. The GNWT anticipates that this review will take some time to complete.

When the review is complete, the GNWT will provide more information to Indigenous Governments and Organizations, and the APC will provide direction for GNWT consideration on alignment with the UN Declaration.

**Target:** Internal work is ongoing and when it is completed more information will be provided, including further engagement with Indigenous Governments and Organizations on next steps.

## PREVENTIVE ACTION TO PROTECT WATER QUALITY

Consistent with the IGC Legislative Development Protocol, the GNWT will address identified priorities of Indigenous Governments and Organizations when reviewing and, where applicable, revising their laws, regulations, and policies related to land and natural resources.

**Target:** Work is underway through IGC Secretariat with legislative review priorities and timelines confirmed through the IGC annual report. The APC will receive updates on this work and may provide input on water-quality-related priorities relevant to Action Plan implementation.

## MUNICIPAL PLANNING REFORM

The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA) will work with community governments to strengthen engagement with Indigenous Governments when developing community plans. MACA will continue to undertake section 35 consultation throughout the community planning process to ensure Indigenous Governments have input into the process.

To strengthen this collaboration, a Community Development Framework and associated guides have been developed and will continue to be enhanced to support and guide community land-use planning. These guides are intended to provide clarity and direction for what should be considered and integrated when a community land use plan is developed, including Indigenous Government engagement and consultation. MACA will continue to update and add guides that promote best practices in land management and administration activities are inclusive of all community stakeholders, and in alignment with UN Declaration.

To support integrated land-use planning and respect for Indigenous rights and interests in community development, the GNWT will reform legislation, policies and procedures with municipalities to ensure there is collaboration and coordination with Indigenous Governments. This will include building realistic resource forecasts in municipal planning, including assessments for solid waste, sewerage, and power generation.

**Target:** The Community Planning Framework and associated guides were released in 2025. MACA intends to complete two more guides in 2026: (1) Land Development and Capital Planning and (2) Planning in Flood Risk Areas. All guides will be updated as needed to ensure the Framework continues to incorporate best planning practices.

## REFORM WATER REGULATIONS

The GNWT will cooperatively develop, with Indigenous Governments and Organizations, through the Intergovernmental Agreement protocol, a legislative initiative to improve the regulation of waters in the NWT to ensure the water management regime is clear, accessible, and aligned with UNDRIP and consistent with modern treaties.

**Target:** Work is underway through IGCS, with targeted amendments following the Intergovernmental Development protocol to the water regulations by 2027.

The APC will receive updates on engagement, progress, and development of the proposed reforms under this action item, and will have the opportunity to provide input on UN Declaration alignment before the action item is considered complete.

## BRING THE *PUBLIC LAND ACT* INTO FORCE

The GNWT, in collaboration and cooperation with Indigenous Governments and Organizations, through the Intergovernmental Agreement Protocol, will facilitate the completion of regulations and policies, co-developed under the Intergovernmental Agreement Protocol, required to bring the *Public Land Act* into force.

**Target:** Work to finalize the *Public Land Act* Regulations to bring the *Public Land Act* into force is being conducted through the IGCS under the Intergovernmental Council Legislative Development Protocol. While timelines are dependent on that process, the work is expected to be completed by the end of the 20th Legislative Assembly.

The APC will receive updates on engagement, progress, and development of the proposed reforms under this action item, and will have the opportunity to provide input on UN Declaration alignment before the action item is considered complete.

## BUILDING ON THE CO-DEVELOPED *FOREST ACT*

The GNWT, in collaboration and cooperation with Indigenous Governments and Organizations, through the Intergovernmental Agreement protocol, will initiate the co-development of regulations and policies required to bring the *Forest Act* into force, consistent with the Intergovernmental Council Legislative Development Protocol. This initiative will ensure government-to-government processes are applied in the development of regional forest management plans.

**Target:** Intergovernmental Council has committed to working on the regulations. Work is underway through IGCS, and timelines are dependent on that process, and is planned to be advanced within the life of the 20<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly.

The APC will receive updates on engagement, progress, and development of the proposed reforms under this action item and will have the opportunity to provide input on UN Declaration alignment before the action item is considered complete.

### REFORM THE *DISPOSAL OF IMPROVED REAL PROPERTY POLICY* TO RECOGNIZE INDIGENOUS GOVERNMENTS AND ORGANIZATIONS AS A PRIORITY INTEREST GROUP

The GNWT, in collaboration and cooperation with Indigenous Governments and Organizations, including through the APC or other intergovernmental forums as appropriate, will review and modernize the *Disposal of Improved Real Property Policy* (DIRPP) to designate Indigenous Governments and Organizations as a priority interest group when disposing of surplus real property. The review and modernization of the policy includes:

1. Engagement with Indigenous Governments and Organizations in spring 2026 to seek feedback on proposed/additional revisions to the DIRPP;
2. Sharing a summary of all feedback received from engagement participants prior to finalizing the policy and seeking Cabinet approval; and
3. Designating Indigenous Governments and Organizations as a priority interest group in the GNWT's revised DIRPP, allowing for the inclusion in the disposal process prior to seeking proposals from non-profits and the general public.

**Target:** Review and modernize DIRPP by September 2026.

## WELL-BEING, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL EQUITY

### HEALTH CARE REFORM

#### CULTURAL SAFETY

The GNWT will strengthen culturally safe healthcare delivery across all service areas. This will include advancing approaches to primary healthcare service delivery in culturally safe ways that uphold personal dignity, promote safety and help ensure equity of access for Indigenous patients.

**Target:** The GNWT, working in collaboration with the Indigenous Advisory Body, will review the Cultural Safety Action Plan and determine actions going forward. Also, the Indigenous Advisory Body will oversee the implementation of the *Honouring the Voices of Indigenous Peoples, Actions for Change in the Northwest Territories Health Care System*. The GNWT will monitor implementation and report annually, including to the APC, on outcomes to ensure continued progress toward culturally safe care and alignment with UN Declaration, with an aspirational completion timeline of 2030.

#### POLICY REVIEW AND CO-DEVELOPMENT

The GNWT, in collaboration and cooperation with Indigenous Governments, through the appropriate intergovernmental forum(s) which may include the APC, NWTCOL working groups, or other tables, will review and co-develop policies, such as addiction treatment options, to align with values defined by Indigenous Governments and expand Indigenous-oriented treatment options, especially for youth and facility-based counseling.

**Target:** The GNWT and NWTCOL will co-develop phased objectives to reform health policy and set targets together to achieve policy review and reform.

The APC will receive updates on engagement, progress, and development of the proposed reforms under this action item and will have the opportunity to provide input on UN Declaration alignment before the action item is considered complete.

#### LEGISLATIVE REFORM AND ALIGNMENT

The GNWT, in collaboration and cooperation with Indigenous Governments, through the appropriate intergovernmental forum(s) which may include the APC, NWTCOL working groups, or other tables, will conduct a comprehensive review of all relevant health-related territorial legislation (including the *Public Health Act*, *Health Information Act*, and *Hospital Insurance and*

*Health and Social Services Administration Act*) and associated policies to ensure alignment with the rights, values, and jurisdictional aspirations affirmed in the UN Declaration.

**Target:** The GNWT and NWT COL will co-develop phased objectives to reform health policy and legislation, with initial review milestones identified by GNWT and NWT COL.

The APC will receive updates on engagement, progress, and development of the proposed reforms under this action item and will have the opportunity to provide input on UN Declaration alignment before the action item is treated as complete.

#### INDIGENOUS HEALTH PROFESSIONAL RECRUITMENT

The GNWT will co-develop, implement, and monitor, with Indigenous Governments and Organizations, a strategy to increase the recruitment, retention and advancement of Indigenous doctors, nurses, and healthcare staff.

**Target:** Indigenous Health Workforce Strategy completion by August 2029. Within the Primary Health Care Reform Framework, there is a strategy for recruitment of Indigenous health professionals. The co-development of the Primary Health Care Reform Framework is being led by the NWT COL HSS working group. Co-drafting of the framework will take place early in 2026, with implementation beginning in 2026-2027 and ongoing.

#### INDIGENOUS MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS AND REFORM

The GNWT will co-develop an NWT Indigenous Strategy for Mental Health and Addictions in collaboration and cooperation with Indigenous Governments, through the appropriate intergovernmental forum(s), which may include the APC, NWT COL working groups or other tables.

**Target:** Indigenous Mental Health and Addictions Strategy in place by the end of 2028.

#### HEALTH AND WELLNESS PROGRAMS

The GNWT, in collaboration and cooperation with Indigenous Governments, through the appropriate intergovernmental forum(s) which may include the APC, NWT COL working groups, or other tables, will support Indigenous-led health and wellness programming that delivers culturally relevant, community-based programs and services.

**Target:** The GNWT and NWTCOL will co-develop phased objectives to support Indigenous-led health and wellness programming, with initial review of milestones identified by GNWT and NWTCOL.

The APC will receive updates on engagement, progress, and development of the proposed reforms under this action item and will have the opportunity to provide input on UN Declaration alignment before the action item is treated as complete.

The GNWT will maintain and seek to expand flexibility in funding and partnership approaches to support Indigenous Governments in planning, designing, and delivering their own traditional health and wellness programs and services that promote reconnection to culture, language, and the land.

**Target:** Partnership approaches with Indigenous Governments to plan, design and deliver health and wellness programs are co-developed on a community-by-community basis and are implemented through the Community Wellness Plans. These plans are renewed every 5 years.

## HOUSING FOR TEACHERS

The GNWT is responsible for teacher recruitment and retention, as well as improved educational access and outcomes in small and remote Indigenous communities. The GNWT will continue to work in partnership with Indigenous Governments and Organizations and housing developers to support an increase in market housing options in communities, including developing a policy framework to ensure adequate, culturally appropriate housing for teachers in remote and Indigenous communities. There are also other NWT organizations supporting this work including Prosper NWT. Housing NWT will also collaboratively explore programs of mutual interest, including the Housing NWT Community Housing Support Initiative and federal programs, to identify locally tailored solutions for teacher housing.

**Target:** Collaborative work on housing for teachers through working groups between Housing NWT and Indigenous Governments was initiated in 2025 and is ongoing. New policy guidance for the Community Housing Support Initiative will be released by mid-2027.

## HOUSING REFORM

### LEGISLATION AND POLICY REFORM

The GNWT, in collaboration and cooperation with Indigenous Governments and Organizations, through the appropriate intergovernmental forum(s) which may include the APC, NWTCOL working groups or other tables, will reform Housing NWT policies and programs to ensure Housing NWT policies are flexible, culturally appropriate and address the unique needs of each Indigenous community.

This reform will include aligning housing governance and service delivery with the GNWT's commitment to implementing the UN Declaration.

**Target:** Policy reforms began in 2022 and continue through the NWT Housing Forum.

### CORE HOUSING NEEDS

The GNWT, in collaboration and cooperation with Indigenous Governments, through the appropriate intergovernmental forum(s) which may include the APC, NWTCOL working groups, or other tables, will take targeted action to help reduce core housing needs in Indigenous communities. This work will:

1. Provide reliable and timely funding directly to local Indigenous communities with a Community Housing Services Agreement; and
2. Assess core housing needs of Indigenous communities through the Territorial Housing Needs Assessment, and support Indigenous governments that choose to lead strategic Community Housing Plans.

By identifying current gaps and future needs, the Territorial Housing Needs Assessment will guide investment priorities and inform strategies to address housing challenges throughout the territory.

Housing NWT will continue to deliver the Community Housing Planning Initiative, which supports Indigenous Governments and communities in creating customized housing plans that reflect local needs, cultural values, and priorities. These plans will guide future investments and policy directions in housing.

**Target:** The Territorial Housing Needs Assessment was completed with all participating Indigenous communities in September 2025, with the final report released in March 2026. At the request of individual Indigenous governments, the GNWT will advance customized housing plans with one or two Indigenous governments at a time beginning in 2026/2027. The plans will include a co-designed approach that reflects the Indigenous government's unique needs.

#### PREVENT AND REDUCE HOMELESSNESS

The GNWT, in collaboration and cooperation with Indigenous Governments and organizations, through the appropriate intergovernmental forum(s) which may include the APC, NWTCOL working groups or other tables, will collaborate across departments and with partners to support vulnerable Indigenous residents through trauma-informed and culturally-safe approaches to prevent and reduce homelessness and encourage self-sufficiency. This will include establishing measurable targets to reduce core housing needs, beginning with communities with the highest levels of need, and ensuring that all housing planning and delivery reflect local governance priorities.

**Target:** Establish a whole-of-government approach to addressing homelessness by 2027 through integrated service delivery teams, with measurable community-level targets developed in partnership with Indigenous governments.

#### EDUCATION REFORM

##### EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE SOLUTIONS

The GNWT will continue to work with Indigenous Governments and Organizations to find solutions to address existing and systemic inequities in early learning and childcare, including by reviewing infrastructure and regulatory challenges, and by considering family and lands-based approaches to program delivery models when identified by Indigenous Governments and Organizations.

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) will undertake a review of the recent implementation of its new Early Learning Childcare regulations, which will include seeking feedback from those in the sector.

**Target:** An engagement plan for this review will be developed by the end of 2026, with engagement anticipated for summer 2026. ECE will engage Indigenous Governments and Organizations in the review.

## EDUCATION ACT MODERNIZATION

As part of the GNWT's overarching goal of improving student outcomes in the NWT, the ECE has initiated work to amend the *Education Act* in collaboration with key partners, including Indigenous Governments, NWTCOL and education bodies.

Initial engagement as part of the *Education Act* Modernization (EAM) identified the need to ensure that clear guidelines are in place to support students facing educational challenges and to ensure that parents are informed and involved throughout the process.

The GNWT and the NWTCOL have committed to continuing their partnership to address the essential task of renewing the *Education Act*, with special emphasis on the structure and governance of the education system, to ensure it aligns with the aspirations and cultural values of the NWT and advances the GNWT's implementation of the UN Declaration.

The GNWT and Indigenous governments with rights-based agreements (Modern Treaties and Self-Government Agreements) commit to meeting to ensure that the EAM takes into account the constitutionally protected jurisdictions and authorities in their agreements related to education.

The GNWT will continue to review and adjust the School Funding Framework and related policies, and make adjustments as appropriate, to support equitable resourcing for all communities, including small and remote Indigenous communities. This includes ongoing monitoring of funding approaches in light of recent reviews, such as the Inclusive Schooling review, and consideration of external factors, such as federal changes to Jordan's Principle and Inuit Child First Initiative funding. Continued work on EAM will also provide opportunities to examine funding approaches for education bodies to ensure alignment with legislative changes and priorities.

**Target:** Although timelines are contingent upon the progress of the working group, ECE is tentatively targeting the completion of a legislative proposal by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Assembly, with work on a Bill to continue in the next government.

## ADVANCING INDIGENOUS STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

The GNWT, in collaboration and cooperation with Indigenous Governments and Organizations including through the appropriate forum(s), which may include the APC, NWTCOL working groups or other tables, will advance equitable education outcomes for Indigenous students by:

1. Delivering and promoting the Northern Distance Learning (NDL) program to all students in small communities, helping ensure equitable learning experiences, including through live synchronous online delivery, facilitating direct entry into post-secondary programs;
2. Addressing the unique needs of students through the Career and Education Advisors (CEA) program, which provides practical, efficient and modern resources to students, youth, their families and educators to help identify skills, strengths and possibilities for the future; and
3. Phasing in new, NWT-adapted curriculum that reflects northern Indigenous cultures, languages and histories to better ensure education is relevant to NWT communities and people.

**Target:** ECE is currently undertaking a review of NDL, to be completed in fiscal 2025-26; target for CEAs, as identified in the 2024-2028 ECE Business Plan, are to increase—until 2025-2026 and then maintain—the number of students and youth who access CEA services from 830 students and youth, and 2250 encounters, in the 2023 school year; new curriculum and assessment tools will be fully implemented by the 2027-2028 school year.

## SUPPORT FOR INDIGENOUS ENTREPRENEURSHIP

To promote the growth and success of Indigenous businesses and Indigenous job opportunities in the North, with the support of Indigenous Governments and Organizations, the GNWT will:

1. Encourage Indigenous businesses to access existing GNWT programs; and
2. Improve and expand training opportunities across all industries.

**Target:** Expanded outreach and opportunities within existing programs in at least one region by 2026; evaluation and broader rollout by 2027.

## REFORM SELF-IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM OF RACE AND ETHNICITY IN HEALTH CARE

The GNWT will phase out the use of the alpha-character prefix to the unique numeric identifier for individuals registered in the NWT Health Care Plan and implement a voluntary system for self-identification of race and ethnicity.

**Target:** Work is underway and will be completed over several years, aligning with Health Care Card renewal cycles by 2032.

## FUND INDIGENOUS-LED PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

The GNWT will provide continuous and predictable funding to support communities and organizations that prioritize Indigenous culture and traditional practices in promoting physical activity, recreation, and sport for residents of all ages in the Northwest Territories.

**Target:** Funding Criteria will be developed by March 31, 2027. Funding Applications will open by April 1, 2027.

## IMPLEMENT TRC CALLS TO ACTION AND MMIWG2SLGBTQQIA+ PEOPLE CALLS FOR JUSTICE

The GNWT, in collaboration and cooperation with Indigenous Governments and Organizations and other advisory group partners, will implement all Calls for Justice from *Reclaiming Power and Place: Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*, as part of the *Final Action Plan in Response to the Calls for Justice on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People*.

**Target:** The GNWT will report annually on progress toward the TRC Calls to Action and the MMIWG Calls to Justice. The responses provided in the annual reports will represent part of the ongoing journey towards the broader process of reconciliation.

## EXPAND AND SUPPORT FIRST NATION AND INUIT POLICING PROGRAM

Currently, the GNWT, in collaboration and cooperation with Indigenous Governments and Organizations, is actively seeking funding from the federal government to expand the First Nations and Inuit Policing Program in the NWT, including funding for recruitment, training, and jurisdiction.

**Target:** GNWT will engage with Indigenous Governments to negotiate Letters of Collaboration to establish community-specific policing priorities.

## CO-DEVELOP RESTORATIVE JUSTICE ALTERNATIVES FOR MINOR OFFENCES

The GNWT, in partnership with the federal government and in collaboration and cooperation with Indigenous Governments and Organizations, currently provides programming across the NWT to divert minor offenses from the criminal justice system. Communities are able to choose to offer programming that is rooted in Indigenous culture and tradition. Building on this foundation, the GNWT will work with Indigenous partners to strengthen and expand culturally grounded, community-led restorative justice options, ensuring programs reflect Indigenous laws, values, and traditions.

There are a number of active Community Justice Committees and program agreements in place. They will continue to be supported and adapted as part of this ongoing collaboration and support for community-led alternatives to justice.

**Target:** GNWT will engage with Indigenous Governments to update the NWT Diversion Protocol by March 2027.

## CO-DEVELOP AND FUND COMMUNITY-LED INITIATIVES FOR MEN'S HEALING

Currently, the GNWT funds programs for men's healing led by Indigenous Governments and Organizations. These programs may include—but are not limited to—trauma recovery, violence prevention, mental health support, and addictions programming. All funded initiatives are to be designed and led by Indigenous communities and/or Indigenous Governments and Organizations, and tailored to local priorities, including the option to incorporate land-based, language-based, and intergenerational models.

**Target:** Funding Criteria are developed and publicly available online at [Gender Equity Grant | Government of Northwest Territories](#), with ongoing review to occur annually to ensure alignment with community-identified priorities.

## ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO COMMUNITY SAFETY

The GNWT has been funding the Community Safety Officer pilot program since 2021, in partnership with the federal government and the Hamlet of Fort Liard. The Community Safety Officer program is designed to provide a non-enforcement, proactive, and holistic approach to community safety and bridge the gap between community safety needs and the RCMP. The program will be evaluated and the findings from the evaluation will inform planning for Community Safety Officer programming in other NWT communities.

**Target:** The GNWT will engage with Indigenous Governments to share the outcomes of the program evaluation from the pilot scheduled for 2026.

## CO-DEVELOP ALTERNATIVE HEALING AND REHABILITATION PROGRAMS FOR PRISONERS

Corrections Services is evolving toward a greater emphasis on the rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders. In collaboration with Indigenous Governments and Organizations, the GNWT has developed the Therapeutic Community model of culturally responsive rehabilitation programs for NWT offenders. A Traditional Counsellor and Liaison Officers at the South Mackenzie Corrections Centre in Hay River deliver a traditional pre-treatment healing program to help Indigenous offenders with the transition to structured programs. Elders are also a significant part of the facility's programming.

These programs are intended to promote culturally grounded healing, accountability, and reintegration, and to be delivered in ways that reflect Indigenous knowledge and community values. An evaluation of the program outcomes will be conducted and will help determine whether the program should be expanded, adapted, or revised to better meet the needs of participants.

The GNWT will engage with Indigenous Governments and share the outcomes of the program evaluation.

**Target:** Program evaluation is scheduled for 2027.

## HIRE AND RETAIN INDIGENOUS PERSONS IN PUBLIC SERVICE LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Through the *Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Action Plan*, the GNWT will improve Indigenous leadership opportunities in the public service and co-develop programs to increase Indigenous representation at all levels in the public service, in collaboration and cooperation with Indigenous Governments and Organizations.

**Target:** Departmental Indigenous Employment Plans are completed annually. These plans include short-, medium- and long-term targets on a multitude of deliverables to increase Indigenous representation and leadership in the public service.

## CO-DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT MANDATORY CULTURAL AWARENESS TRAINING FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

The GNWT developed a mandatory Indigenous Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity Training program for the public service, in consultation with Indigenous Governments and Organizations.

The GNWT will ensure that all public service workers have successfully completed the training and, in collaboration and cooperation with Indigenous partners, periodically review and update the program to ensure continued cultural relevance and effectiveness.

The program is:

1. Trauma-informed and grounded in local Indigenous histories and governance systems;
2. Inclusive of regionally specific modules; and
3. Designed to require refresher certification every 5 years.

**Target:** Completion of mandatory training across the public service, with the first co-developed program review completed by 2030.

## REFORM THE *VITAL STATISTICS ACT*

The GNWT will amend the NWT *Vital Statistics Act* and regulations to include provisions for registering home births, informed by engagement with Indigenous Governments and Organizations.

**Target:** A bill to propose amendments to the Vital Statistics Act was tabled in the Winter 2026 sitting of the Legislative Assembly.

## REFORM SERVICE ACCESSIBILITY

The GNWT will collaborate with Indigenous Governments and Organizations to undertake a comprehensive reform that will:

1. Identify access barriers for Indigenous peoples across key GNWT programs (e.g., income assistance, child and family services, housing supports, mental health services); and
2. Establish interdepartmental service integration teams across the NWT to collaboratively identify and address systemic barriers, fostering a more coordinated and person-centered approach to service delivery.

**Target:** Interdepartmental service integration teams established by Spring 2026.

## IMPLEMENT ANTI-RACISM AND TRAUMA-INFORMED POLICY REFORMS

In collaboration and cooperation with Indigenous Governments and Organizations, the GNWT will conduct a phased review of territorial legislation, regulations, and operational policies across key service areas (e.g., health, justice, education, employment) to ensure alignment with trauma-informed, anti-racist, and culturally safe practices.

**Target:** Work was initiated in the health system but will expand across government, with updates provided by 2028.

## CULTURAL RIGHTS, LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY

### REFORMING INDIGENOUS GOVERNMENTS' ROLE IN CHILD, YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES

To align with the *Federal Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Metis children, youth and families*, and the UN Declaration, the GNWT is in the process of amending the *Child and Family Services Act*, having engaged with Indigenous Governments and Organizations, and reviewing related laws and policies to:

- Support keeping Indigenous children within their communities and recognize and respect the inherent right of Indigenous governments to self-govern;
- Incorporate more trauma-informed, inclusive language and reduce the stigma associated with receiving child and family services;
- Ensure greater flexibility of voluntary support services to better meet the needs of children, youth, families, young persons, and expectant parents;
- Encourage participation and collaboration of families, communities, Indigenous Governments and Organizations, and other cultural and community organizations in planning for children and youth;
- Preserve family relations and maintain cultural connections;
- Enshrine the right of a child and youth to be heard under the Act;
- Continue moving towards a GNWT-wide system that supports the best interests of children, youth, and families in collaboration with multiple GNWT departments;
- Reduce barriers to information sharing, while also ensuring protection of sensitive child and family services information; and
- Support the exercise of jurisdiction and implementation of Indigenous child and family services laws.

**Target:** Proposed amendments to the NWT *Child and Family Services Act* are expected to be tabled in 2026.

## INCLUSIVE (VS EXCLUSIVE) INVITATIONS FOR ENGAGEMENT

The GNWT will develop or amend internal policies for all departments to ensure it is standard practice to include all potential representatives when there is any uncertainty about who to contact within an Indigenous Government or Organization, in collaboration with those organizations. GNWT will ensure these policy updates are meaningfully implemented across all departments.

**Target:** GNWT will share an update by end of 2027.

## RECOGNIZE TRADITIONAL NAMES FOR GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES

The GNWT engaged with Indigenous Governments and Organizations in the Fall of 2025 to amend the *Geographical and Community Place Names Policy* to better align with the UN Declaration. The GNWT will continue to meaningfully involve Indigenous Governments and Organizations in the geographical and community place naming process. The revised policy will better promote the official recognition of traditional names and geographic features, to contribute to cultural continuity for the people of the NWT, reflecting Indigenous languages, histories and relationships to place, and capture the existing consultation requirements and processes undertaken by the GNWT with Indigenous Governments and Organizations.

**Target:** Engagement with Indigenous Governments and Organizations occurred in Fall 2025. Target for Cabinet approval of amended policy is Spring 2026.

## RECOGNIZE TREATY CELEBRATIONS AS STATUTORY HOLIDAYS

The GNWT recognizes the cultural and historical importance of Treaty and community Indigenous celebrations and will continue to collaborate with Indigenous Governments and Organizations to advance their recognition in alignment with the UN Declaration.

As of October 2024, Indigenous employees are eligible for up to four paid cultural leave days per fiscal year to participate in ceremonial, cultural, or spiritual activities, including community Indigenous celebrations.

For employees who are members of a treaty signatory group, the cultural leave entitlement is separate from any treaty-specific leave they may have under their treaty to attend their nation's treaty days. Those treaty entitlements remain distinct and do not reduce or replace the four cultural leave days. Indigenous employees who are not part of a treaty signatory group do not receive treaty-specific leave; however, they may still use their cultural leave to attend treaty day celebrations if they choose, and may request unpaid leave once the four paid days are used.

**Target:** Policy implemented and communicated across departments, with review and engagement to occur, assessing implementation and informed by Indigenous governments.

# IMPLEMENTATION

Under section 11 of the *UN Declaration Implementation Act (the Act)*, certain processes must be in place to facilitate effective collaboration and implementation of this action plan.

## TRANSPARENT PROCESS FOR CONSENSUAL DECISION-MAKING

*11. (2) (a) a transparent process for how the activities under the action plan are to be carried out that incorporates consensual decision-making among the GNWT and Indigenous Governments or Organizations, as equal partners.*

The action items in this plan were selected through a consensus-based process. Additionally, the process to amend the action plan is by consensus. Where consensus is not reached, the APC will work together to determine the steps forward that best reflect the Indigenous Government and Organizations interests, traditions, and values.

The annual reporting on progress under the action plan is also done collaboratively.

## TIMELINES, TRACKING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

*11. (2) (b) clear time-lines and objectives to track and ensure accountability.*

The GNWT is accountable for implementing the action plan. However, the implementation of action items will be a collaborative process where the GNWT and Indigenous Governments and Organizations will work as equal partners with active roles to advance action items and drive change together. Each action plan item identifies an anticipated completion timeline with one or more departments accountable for its implementation. A whole-of-government approach will be used to ensure coordination between departments.

Under *the Act*, the GNWT and the APC will co-develop an annual report that summarizes the progress made for each action item over the previous year. Annual reports are approved by the leadership of each APC member's government and the GNWT Executive Council. Once approved, annual reports are published on the GNWT website where they are publicly available.

## PROCESS TO REVIEW LAWS AND POLICIES

While the APC has an important role in the implementation, monitoring and review of the action plan, the GNWT will use a range of mechanisms to ensure its laws and policies align with the UN Declaration. The mechanisms include: the Statement of Consistency process under s.8 of the UN Declaration Act; work advanced through the APC; reforms undertaken at NWT COL and other intergovernmental forums; assessments and reporting by departmental UN Declaration

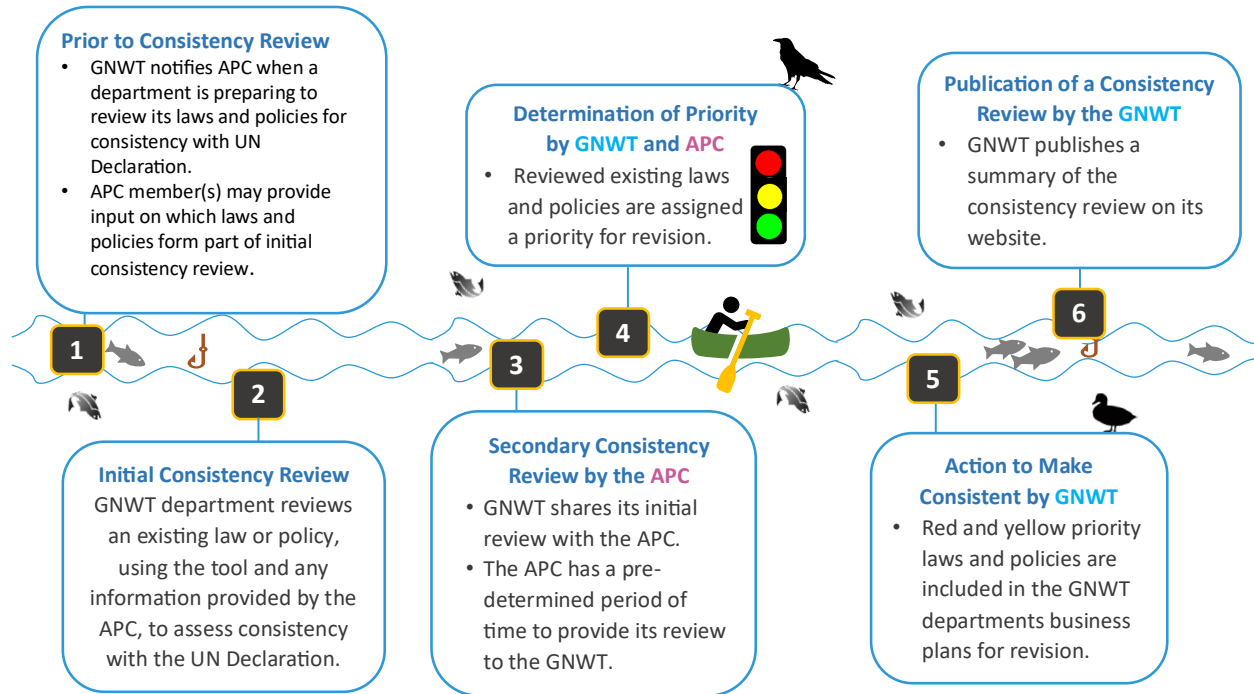
Officers; and engagement with Indigenous governments through bilateral and sector-specific processes.

*11. (2) (c) a process or measures to review, revise or replace existing Government of the Northwest Territories laws or policies, where necessary, including the introduction of new laws or policies, to create consistency with the Declaration;*

A process to review, revise or replace existing and future GNWT laws and policies has been collaboratively developed by the APC and the GNWT with the purpose of ensuring alignment with the UN Declaration. The process requires a phased, comprehensive, ongoing, and systematic review of all existing GNWT laws and policies, prioritizing those where alignment with the UN Declaration is relevant to the exercise or protection of the rights it affirms. This obligation extends to every new bill introduced by the GNWT or by a member of the Legislative Assembly, which must undergo a Statement of Consistency review before proceeding, as per Section 8 of *the Act*.

The GNWT and APC will collaboratively identify priorities for review, informed by the departmental UN Declaration Officer assessments, engagement at other intergovernmental forums, and APC input. The APC will monitor and report on implementation of the review process, including through annual reporting, and will have the opportunity to review and provide feedback on departmental assessments.

Accordingly, the GNWT and the APC, in collaboration with departmental UN Declaration Officers and drawing on other intergovernmental processes where relevant, are co-developing a standardized tool—guided by the principles and rights enshrined in the UN Declaration itself—which GNWT departments will use to assess its legislation and policies for consistency with the UN Declaration. APC members may review and provide feedback, including independent reviews to departmental assessments, particularly where the laws or policies in question directly impact their governance, jurisdiction, or rights. The APC will monitor and report overall progress through the annual report. Outcomes from this process may be recorded in annual reports, as laid out in Section 12, alongside a description of steps taken or to be taken to address any issues. This collaborative approach reflects the equal partnership envisioned in Section 11(2)(a) of *the Act* and ensures that implementation is both dynamic and responsive to evolving realities. While the review process will be completed in phases due to the volume of work involved, it must remain holistic, methodical, and transparent. Progress on the assessments will be published on the GNWT website to ensure accountability and tracking.



## REVIEWING AND AMENDING THE ACTION PLAN

### *11. (2) (d) provisions to require the review and development of amendments to the action plan.*

The APC will review the action plan on an ongoing basis. The APC as a whole, or any individual member of the APC, can propose amendments to the action plan at any time. A “living tree” approach will be used to review and make amendments to the action plan. This approach ensures that the plan remains dynamic and adaptable, allowing it to evolve alongside shifting priorities, emerging challenges, and new opportunities for implementation. It also enables ongoing engagement, reflection, and course correction to support meaningful, effective, and responsive UN Declaration implementation.

The APC will consider proposed amendments to the action plan through internal processes, which may include reviews by each member’s respective leadership. The proposed amendment process should consider each party’s internal decision-making process and allow for internal review timelines. Any process established by the APC for consensual decision-making may be used in the event of disagreements to proposed amendments.

Completed reviews and agreed upon amendments to the action plan will be shared on the online portal hosting the action plan.

## OVERSIGHT

*11. (2) (e) a mechanism for oversight of the implementation of the action plan.*

The APC and the GNWT oversee the implementation of the action plan. The annual report is collaboratively co-developed by the GNWT and the APC, providing an opportunity for the APC to monitor and report on the progress made on each action item every year. In addition to being published on the GNWT website for transparency and accountability, approved annual reports are tabled before the Legislative Assembly.

## ONGOING COOPERATION

Following the release of the action plan, focus will shift to the implementation of the action plan measures, including the development of mechanisms to collaboratively track progress and shared monitoring and reporting.

The implementation of the UN Declaration in the NWT is a long-term, iterative process. For effective implementation, all aspects of this work must be done collaboratively and through consensus, reflecting the spirit and intent of the UN Declaration itself.