

# **ARCTIC POLICY FRAMEWORK**

## **Reflecting NWT Priorities in the Development of the NWT Chapter**

### **Engagement Session With Indigenous Governments**

January 18, 2018, Yellowknife

**DRAFT**

## ***'What We Heard'* Session Summary Report**

February 1, 2018



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## 1.0 BACKGROUND AND SESSION PURPOSE

### 1.1 Background

On December 20, 2016 the federal government announced the development of an Arctic Policy Framework (APF) to replace both Canada's *Northern Strategy* (2009) and the *Statement on Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy* (2010). The objective of the APF is to provide overarching direction to the Government of Canada's priorities, activities and investments in the Arctic, until 2030.

The objective as set out by the Government of Canada is to develop a '*new Arctic Policy Framework resulting in a more coordinated effort by all levels of government, Indigenous groups, industry and other stakeholders to identify issues and possible solutions to meet the challenges and harness emerging opportunities in the Arctic*'.

The federal department of Crown and Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs (CIRNA) is leading the development of the APF and has committed to work with Indigenous, territorial and provincial partners. While the APF will be a federal policy, each of the territories has been allocated a chapter in the final document to address specific territorial priorities.

### 1.2 Session Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of the GNWT's engagement session with Indigenous governments was to have an open dialogue and gather input for the NWT chapter to ensure that our goals and priorities are identified and accurately reflected.

The session was organized around a number of agenda items (See Appendix A) to support focussed and effective dialogue regarding the development of the NWT chapter with an initial focus on three interrelated potential themes: Theme 1: Healthy People, Health Communities; Theme 2: Economic Prosperity; and, Theme 3: Infrastructure.

The session with Indigenous governments included a total of twelve (12) participants representing the NWT Indigenous governments and interests:

- Arctic Athabaskan Council
- Dehcho First Nation
- Dene Nation
- Gwich'in Tribal Council
- Kát'odeeche First Nation
- Łutselk'e Dene First Nation
- Northwest Territory Metis Nation
- Sahtu Secretariat Inc.
- Tłı̨chǫ Government

The Inuvialuit Regional Corporation was not able to attend but contributed to the dialogue through a pre-session discussion.



### 1.3 Report Purpose and Structure

The 'What We Heard' Session Summary Report is comprised of two sections: Session background, and purpose; Development of the NWT Chapter; and, an appendix with Pre and Post Session Reference Materials Submissions. The structure of the report is summarized below.

Section	Contents
Section 1.0	The session background, purpose and objectives are contained in this section.
Section 2.0	Section 2 contains a synthesis of the key points from presentations and discussion organized by specific agenda items.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Agenda Item #2: Development of the NWT Chapter <i>Theme 1: Healthy People, Health Communities</i> <i>Theme 2: Economic Prosperity</i> <i>Theme 3: Infrastructure</i></li><li>• Participant observations on the additional preliminary APF themes identified by the federal government</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Agenda Item #3: Next Steps: Process for Developing the NWT Chapter</li></ul>



## 2.0 AGENDA ITEMS DISCUSSION KEY POINTS

### 2.1 Agenda Item #2: Development of the NWT Chapter

Participants made a number of observations and statements throughout the session that are important, but may not necessarily fall under a specific theme. This section summarizes what can be termed as '*partnership, governance and APF process*' key messages.

#### PARTNERSHIP, GOVERNANCE AND APF PROCESS: KEY MESSAGES

***Indigenous governments leadership:*** Indigenous governments need to take strong leadership of and ownership in the future of their people. We need to be clear on what is needed going forward and how to work together (more effectively). This includes recognition of the fact that moving forward involves money but it is more than just about money – it is based on achieving self-determination. One example of this is the work by the Tłı̨chǫ Government on its *Strategic Intentions Document* (currently being revised for the 2017-21 period). Indigenous governments and the NWT chapter need to build on existing documents and initiatives to bring together a wider body of knowledge to build a way forward.

***Collaboration through the Intergovernmental Council:*** Continue working through the NWT *Intergovernmental Council* (IGC) on amending and drafting effective legislation and regulations. The IGC Outcomes Decision Document needs to be a reference point.

***Principles and shared values to work together:*** The challenges facing all the governments and organizations can be better managed by embracing shared values of collaboration, respect, openness to diversity, patience and reciprocity. This reflects the Dene law of '*being happy*', the approach of the *Dehcho Process*, and learning from the process of making moccasins (with love, commitment and patience).

***Recognition and equal treatment of all Indigenous peoples:*** Equal treatment of all Indigenous people – as Indigenous (including recognition as Métis), as NWT residents and as Canadian citizens.

***Decolonization and reconciliation:*** Continue the processes of decolonization and reconciliation through an understanding and acknowledgment of the impact of 'cultural genocide' through historical actions by non-indigenous governments and organizations. Reconciliation needs to be understood more as a '*marriage*' with commitment, reciprocity, and trust and not as a '*divorce*'. Our collective words have to mean something in order to move forward.

***Operationalizing the co-development model:*** The federal government language of 'co-development' is a '*new animal*' for Indigenous governments (and also the GNWT) and needs discussion to ensure there is a common understanding of what it is and what it is not. This is a change in course for the federal government, indeed an opportunity to bring together the ideas of co-development, co-management and self-determination. Set out the 'real next steps' through dialogue set out *how* (the processes and mechanisms) the various levels of government (Indigenous, territorial, community and federal) will work together to address the critical questions, in a changing world and environment, and develop options and implement solutions. The



Arctic Policy Framework 'co-development' process may be a model to build on (if it actually proves successful).

**Ongoing policy discussion and development process:** Indigenous governments expressed the need to set out a clear and on-going process for discussion and development of policy as part of the implementation of the Arctic Policy Framework, including the NWT chapter and Indigenous chapters. This is in the spirit of 'nation to nation' dialogue and relationship. An example of a successful process model for consideration was the federal fiscal policy for funding self-governments.

**Strengthening engagement and consultation processes:** There is a general recognition that the current federal and GNWT engagement and consultation approach is not working effectively. The 'duty to consult' is more than just a legal requirement. It is a human rights commitment and duty. There is a need for stronger, coordinated, more effective (meaningful) and sustained direct engagement with individual communities (versus a regional approach). One area where this is evident is in the Nutrition North Program where the subsidies are not appropriately targeted for nutritious food versus 'cheap' food which is not in fact healthy and contributes to poor nutrition and health

**Tools to govern and decide:** There is a need to clearly establish what are the 'rules', including the applicable laws, and who makes them in order to be able to do this for ourselves (as Indigenous people and governments). There is a hierarchy of tools: Treaties and land claim agreements; legislation and regulations; and the policies.

**Indigenous governments role in drafting the NWT Chapter:** Participants expressed their desire to contribute to and participate in the 'co-drafting' of the NWT Chapter, and referred to a discussion at a recent meeting of the Intergovernmental Council. At that meeting, the GNWT committed to working collaboratively with Indigenous governments to develop a northern approach to the Arctic Policy Framework, including the NWT chapter.

**Devolution goals and the NWT Chapter:** The NWT chapter needs to reflect (potentially in a separate section of the chapter) the goals of devolution of lands, resources and environment. There is a need to manage the resources responsibly, collectively and in partnership for the benefit of all NWT constituents.

**Finalize all outstanding land claim agreements prior to completing the APF:** There was recognition of the need for and value of completing the outstanding land claim agreements prior to finalizing the APF. This will more fully inform the respective rights and obligations of all parties with regard to land ownership and access to 'traditional territories and resources'.

**Dedicated Indigenous governments session and extension of APF schedule:** There is a need for a separate session of the Indigenous governments to discuss the APF and the NWT chapter. This includes the need to also focus on the needs of individual communities, and particularly to engage youth and to hear their voices on the future.

**Federal legislation review process:** The current process by the federal government to complete a broad scope review of legislation (and regulations), including devolution, needs to be discussed from the perspective of potential implications on the NWT and Indigenous governments.



**Capacity building, skills development and resourcing:** Indigenous governments and communities are constrained by limited resources and capacity to participate in and benefit from resource and economic development, public programs and services, as well as initiatives such as the APF by not being able to fully sustain follow through on commitments and opportunities.

**Integrated approach to the APF themes:** Participants clearly expressed that while the APF's six (6) themes and the three (3) corresponding GNWT themes are outlined individually in the respective Discussion Guides, for purposes of the engagement and dialogue – the reality is that all the themes are interrelated and need to be addressed through an integrated approach. Consequently, the observations made during the session may be relevant to more than one theme.

*“We are building a moose skin boat – one that needs to create value for all involved.”*

### 2.1.1 Theme 1: Healthy People, Health Communities

*In what areas do NWT communities most need federal engagement and funding to support healthy people and healthy communities?*

#### Essential needs: Early childhood development, education, social resources, food security and cost of living

- There are many shared issues, challenges and gaps that need to be addressed. There needs to be stronger recognition of the fact that NWT communities continue to be below national standards in virtually every aspect (e.g., health, life expectancy, economic, education, employment, housing).
- Take a strong stand on addressing food security and insecurity in communities. This is also linked to concerns over food safety (e.g., contaminants) in country foods harvested, which has reduced consumption of some types of harvested food, and resulted in the need to buy expensive store food.

#### Health and Housing

- The areas where engagement and support are needed are complex and interrelated, which means addressing them in a coordinated way. The areas include: Education; Reviewing the role and impact of the Income Support Program and the approach governed by the NWT *Social Assistance Act*; Improving health status through more equitable access to programs and services, including addressing mental health and addictions needs; Strengthening social well-being and integration and work for a better future; Creating and sustaining economic opportunities that are realistic for the range of community types and circumstances; Investing in infrastructure (especially roads and highways, specifically the need for the Mackenzie Valley Highway which will have significant return on investment); Reducing cost of living in communities; and, more adequate, suitable and 'healthy' housing in communities.
- There is a need for more effective housing programs to address over-crowding through additional investment in new housing and for renovation programs.



- Recognize that access to health and social services may not actually be working as intended. . One example is the challenges of accessing appropriate (clinical and culturally safe) mental health and addictions services. The reality of having a ‘suicide watch’ model versus an intervention program This has significant negative impacts on client/patients, their families and communities. There is a need to more fully address the reliance on and the impact of medical travel on health outcomes, particularly for Indigenous peoples.

### Capacity Building and Skills Development

- Particular focus on improving the education system, including addressing the revision of curriculum standards in order to improve graduation rates. NWT students need to be prepared for the challenges of post secondary programs (in the NWT and in other jurisdictions)
- Indigenous governments need to take over a range of programs and services (including health and social services, education and training).

### Funding Community Programs

- The design and implementation of programs (social, health, education and economic) needs to reflect the difference between passive versus active programming. With active programming, there is a need to ensure that funding is allocated so that 85% is spent on programming that benefits people and no more than 15% is spent on overhead/administration.
- Assess the impact of a shift in government service delivery models – such as the Service Canada approach that has resulted in less specialized staff and expertise in a broad range of programs and services in one location but which has negatively impacted the staff (and also the accessibility and quality of services provided to the public).
- Defining ‘Success’ needs to build on the core principle of success meaning a ‘*capacity to take care of yourself*’. Success needs to be more than economic measures (income, Gross Domestic Product, labour force participation rate etc.)

## 2.1.2 Theme 2: Economic Prosperity

*Where are federal investments, engagement or support most needed to help diversify and expand sustainable development of the NWT economy?*

### Responsible and Sustainable Economic Development

- Indigenous people and governments need to take control over their economies, but within a realistic approach and assessment of the existing circumstances and potential. This includes developing a new ‘fiscal arrangement’ and providing more realistic options (especially for youth) through training and education (college and university, technical trades) and choice





of meaningful occupation (work) – including harvesting. This will give more meaningful meaning and effect to the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights Indigenous People* (UNDRIP) – and particularly to the provisions in Articles 5, 8, 20, 23 and 32.

- The federal and territorial governments need to assist and be committed partners with Indigenous governments and communities in the development of a *'real economy'* in the NWT. The mandates and responsibilities of the federal and territorial government in economic development and reduction of inequality of opportunity need to be more fully discussed and understood. Monitoring and accountability for addressing existing gaps is needed.
- Address and respond to the concerns by industry and resource developers regarding the challenges of 'access' and certainty of tenure to lands and resources for their investment decisions.
- Greater support for, encouragement of, investment in traditional economies based on proven success – such as fur harvesting and high-quality branding of NWT products.
- Continue to take real (and sustained) steps to diversify the NWT, regional and community economies through expansion of tourism (including 'Aboriginal Tourism') and commercial fisheries. This needs to reflect a commitment to finding a balance between Indigenous cultures and ways of making a living and having a 'gainful occupation'.
- Promoting sustainable and low impact development through a collaborative approach that benefits the NWT and region rather than just the closest communities. This needs to include looking at alternatives to the existing 'free entry system' in the NWT. This needs to reflect the principle held by Indigenous people that the true and sustained 'value' is our land.
- Review the impact of non-compliance with impact benefit agreements terms and conditions. There are limited consequences for developers for not living up to the negotiated requirements while communities experience lost opportunities.

### Capacity Building and Skills Development

- The areas where engagement and support are needed are complex and interrelated, which means addressing them in a coordinated way. The areas include: Education; Review the role and impact of the Income Support Program and the disrespectful approach governed by the NWT *Social Assistance Act*; Improve health status through more equitable access to programs and services, including addressing mental health and addictions needs; Strengthen social well-being and integration and work for a better future; Create and sustain economic opportunities that are realistic for the range of community types and circumstances; Investing in infrastructure (e.g., roads and highways, specifically the need for the Mackenzie Valley Highway which will have significant return on investment); Reducing cost of living in communities; and, more adequate, suitable and 'healthy' housing in communities.
- Increase investment through funding and mentoring in higher technology jobs. There are examples of the opportunities in areas such as data, satellite imagery, geo-spatial and real-



time data processing/analysis. This is linked to the opportunities through the fibre optic cable project. This is linked to advancing education and technological skills development.

### Supporting, Attracting and Developing Northern Businesses

- Expand entrepreneurship programs and small business supports. In many communities there are no jobs so support people to create their own job and have economic opportunities for themselves through '*gainful occupations*'.

### Program Priorities, Funding and Criteria

- Review the processes of '*who and how*' program funding criteria and priorities are determined at the federal, territorial and community level. There needs to be more coordination and alignment through appropriate engagement and consultation. A stronger and sustained effort is needed to leverage funding options from all sources (including the most recent program funding announcements by the federal government) in order to maximize positive impacts for NWT people and communities.
- Broader and more sustained engagement and consultation at senior levels with a wider range of federal and territorial departments to identify and explore potential economic opportunities. One example is the role of Industry, Tourism and Investment, GNWT, and the approach to classification of communities and funding allocation. There is an opportunity to address equality of opportunities to accessing funding.
- The design and implementation of programs (social, health, education and economic development) needs to reflect the difference between passive versus active programming. With active programming, there is a need to ensure that funding is allocated so that 85% is spent on programming that benefits people and no more than 15% is spent on overhead/administration.

### 2.1.3 Theme 3: Infrastructure

*How should federal infrastructure investments be prioritized to maximize benefits to the most communities, reduce the cost of living in the NWT and grow the economy?*

### Comprehensive Planning and Capacity Building

- Demand and supply projections and evidence based decision-making. There is a need to commit to and undertake longer term projections meaning looking beyond our current 5 to 10-year horizons (i.e., thinking in '*7 generations*' horizons), to assess demand and opportunities.
- Investing in (more) community planners to do this work, which will inform responsible investment decisions in everything from day care facilities, to long-term care facilities and other '*critical infrastructure*' to ensure that our public needs are met and that they are sustainable from initial feasibility and life-cycle costing, to capital investment through



operations and maintenance funding. This provides a solid foundation for building on an ability to see 'value' everywhere and innovate to create tangible benefits for individuals, communities and the NWT overall.

### Strategic and Ongoing Investment

- Promote increased understanding of what is meant by 'infrastructure' to inform responsible decision-making and priority setting. A post workshop task by the facilitator was to include reference to the term '*critical infrastructure*'. The scope and meaning of critical infrastructure set out by Public Safety Canada states: "*Critical infrastructure refers to processes, systems, facilities, technologies, networks, assets and services essential to the health, safety, security or economic well-being of Canadians and the effective functioning of government. Critical infrastructure can be stand-alone or interconnected and interdependent within and across provinces, territories and national borders. Disruptions of critical infrastructure could result in catastrophic loss of life, adverse economic effects, and significant harm to public confidence.*"
- Assess and address the impacts of legacy infrastructure – such as the impacts (economic, environmental and social) of the Bennett Dam on the NWT.

### Transportation

- Investment decisions in selecting what infrastructure projects to support should include criteria regarding achieving maximum benefit for the NWT versus adjacent jurisdictions. Participants described the proposed Mackenzie Valley Highway project as a higher priority for the NWT than the Grays Bay Road and Port project in Nunavut. The Grays Bay project is intended to connect the rich mineral resources of Canada's Slave Geological Province, which straddles Nunavut and the Northwest Territories, to arctic shipping routes.

## Arctic Policy Framework Supplementary Themes

### 2.1.4 Theme 4: Arctic science and Indigenous Knowledge

#### Arctic science and Indigenous Knowledge

- Examine the potential (economic, environmental and, northern technology and knowledge) of undertaking site reclamation of past/current projects – such as Norman Wells oil field (including the artificial islands on the river). The Sahtu is involved in assessing the feasibility of an '*Arctic Reclamation Institute*' in partnership with university research capacity.

#### Setting the Research Agenda and Priorities

- There is a need to connect NWT research priorities in the health and social sciences to meet local needs and not just the academic community. There is a requirement to access and make on-going use of a range of valid data on health determinants (such as the data sets



from Statistics Canada and the NWT Bureau of Statistics) the value of which was demonstrated in the *Inuvialuit Social, Cultural and Economic Overview* (February 10, 2017).

### 2.1.5 Theme 5: Protecting the Environment and Preserving Arctic Biodiversity

#### Climate Change

- A serious public discussion is needed on the impacts of climate change and how governments and other interests can work in true partnership to make responsible decisions on what needs to be done to mitigate and adapt to the array of serious impacts which are already evident across the NWT.
- The state of the environment and impact of climate change has resulted in '*animals being under siege*'. This is highlighted in particular by the need to effectively protect caribou herds and their calving ground – a critical subsistence resource for many Indigenous people. Community residents can benefit from potential opportunities in stewardship work enabled by recognition and classification of this type of activity and work. This includes drawing on indigenous and local knowledge in collaboration with 'scientific' knowledge.
- There is an urgent need to address invasive species (e.g., salmon and muskox in the Fort Good Hope area). A plan and resources are needed for mitigation and adaptation to the changes resulting from (or contributed to by) climate change.
- Address the critical concerns regarding loss of biodiversity and protection of critical natural resources – particularly water protection actions by the territorial and federal governments.
- Full and comprehensive assessment of potential environmental impacts of any proposed new infrastructure projects (and remediation or decommissioning of existing and legacy infrastructure and abandoned sites).

#### Environmental Issues and Communities

- A clear and demonstrable commitment of how serious we are about protecting the environment and preserving biodiversity by all levels of government, private sector and the public. This needs to involve a real discussion of how to balance between protecting the '*sacred land*' and responsible development (that actually benefits more than just a few interests for a relatively short period of time).
- Research and action is needed to address bio-accumulation and contaminants loading in fish as part of fish harvesting (especially subsistence harvesting). This public concern is resulting in people increasingly eating less fish, which results in the fish staying for longer periods in the lakes and rivers with a longer exposure time to contaminants.
- Invest in and implement a comprehensive 'energy plan' (including renewable and alternative sources) to achieve a full range of human, economic and environmental goals.



## 2.1.6 Theme 6: The Arctic in a Global Context

### Implementing the International Dimension of the Arctic Policy Framework

- Communicate the detailed rationale behind why an Arctic Policy Framework and why now? This needs to also explain why there is not a corresponding 'southern policy framework'.

### Scope of the term 'Arctic'

- *Arctic definition:* There is a need to discuss the geographic boundaries and spatial extent of the 'Arctic'. The historical traditional territories and movement ranges extend far below the 60 parallel (including some groups having ancestral and cultural links to areas into the United States). This also links to the value and use of Arctic science and indigenous knowledge in a wide range of current and future research (including understanding the impacts of climate change and what is currently defined as Arctic and Sub-Arctic. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights Indigenous People* (UNDRIP) is beginning to redefine regional geographies and boundaries, including the Arctic. There needs to be additional consideration of (a) the implications of national and political 'borders', and (b) the legacy impacts of relocation of Indigenous people from the land into settlements.

### Connecting Northern and Indigenous Peoples to the International Arena

- Identify and act on all feasible opportunities and other circumpolar fora (e.g., the Arctic Council three 'Ps') to enable the NWT vision and processes to engage and align with initiatives.
- The NWT in a global context is complicated and requires a separate and dedicated session to discuss and develop an historical narrative that includes: Canol Trail, Uranium (and the psychological impact on the community of Deline), Norma Wells, DEW Line, the significant NWT role in supporting the United States during the war period, and importantly the living histories of the diverse Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures in the NWT. This shapes our story of what defines the NWT and its many deep layers of our living history.

## 2.2 Agenda Item #3: Next Steps: Process for Developing the NWT Chapter

The GNWT will be posting the Discussion Guide and *What We Heard* reports on the GNWT website, and will be giving people an opportunity to provide written submissions. Participants will receive an e-mail with the web link once the site is available. Additionally, the following resource information and web links are available.

### Additional Engagement Resources and Web Links

Crown and Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs (CIRNA) web links:

- <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1503687877293/1503687975269> (English)
- <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/fra/1503687877293/1503687975269> (French)

Pan-Territorial Vision for Sustainable Development:

<http://anorthernvision.ca/documents/17-191%20Pan%20Territorial%20Vision.pdf>

