



NWT Water Stewardship Strategy **Action Plan 2021-2025**

Plan d'action de 2021 à 2025 **de la Stratégie sur la gestion des eaux**



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English

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French

Kīspin ki nitawih̄tīn ē nīhīyawihk ōma ācimōwin, tipwāsīnān.

Cree

Tłı̄chq̄ yatı k'èè. Dı wegodı newq̄ dè, gots' o gonede.

Tłı̄chq̄

?erih̄t'ís Dēne Sų́líné yatı t'a huts'elkēr xa beyáyatı theᓐᓐ ᓐat'e, nuwe ts'ēn yółtı.

Chipewyan

Edı gondı dehgáh got'je zhatıé k'éé edat'éh enahddhę nıde naxets'é edahfı.

South Slavey

K'áhshó got'jne xadā k'é hederı ᓐdjhtl'é yerıniwę níde dúle.

North Slavey

Jii gwandak izhii ginjik vat'atr'ijāhch'uu zhit yinothtan jı', diits'at ginohkhii.

Gwich'in

Uvanittuaq ilitchurisukupku Inuvialuktun, ququaqłuta.

Inuvialuktun

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Inuktitut

Hapkua titiqqat pijumagupkit Inuinnaqtun, uvaptinnut hivajarłutit.

Inuinnaqtun

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Executive Summary

Northerners want to make sure that the waters of the Northwest Territories (NWT) are clean, abundant and productive for all time. Water partners shared ideas on how, and why, we should look after water in the NWT and, in 2010, produced *Northern Voices, Northern Waters: NWT Water Stewardship Strategy* (Water Strategy).

The goals of the Water Strategy are to ensure:

- Waters that flow into, within or through the NWT are substantially unaltered in quality, quantity and rates of flow;
- Residents have access to safe, clean and plentiful drinking water at all times;
- Aquatic ecosystems are healthy and diverse;
- Residents can rely on their water to sustain their communities and economies;
- Residents are involved in and knowledgeable about water stewardship; and
- All those making water stewardship decisions work together to communicate and share information.

The 2021-2025 NWT Water Stewardship Strategy Action Plan (Action Plan) is the third in a series of five-year action plans that guide the implementation of the Water Strategy and support the achievement of the Water Strategy's goals. The Action Plan was developed collaboratively, ensuring multiple opportunities for water partners to provide input. The Water Stewardship Strategy (WSS) Indigenous Steering Committee (ISC) (formerly the Aboriginal Steering Committee) and a multi-stakeholder water partner committee guided the development process. Water partners participated in an online survey, virtual focus groups, virtual panel discussions at the annual Water Strategy Implementation workshop, interviews, and document review. Public input was also gathered through an online survey. The inclusive engagement process sought to incorporate the views of the public and all water partners.

The Action Plan identifies lead and supporting water partners, Keys to Success, with associated Action Items and deliverable dates, and performance indicators to track the effectiveness of implementation. The 2021-2025 Action Plan also identifies outputs, which are tangible results of water partners' efforts. The Action Plan is subject to ongoing review and evaluation to ensure its implementation continues to advance the intent of the Water Strategy. Annual status updates will be published to track and report on progress.

Sommaire

Les Ténois souhaitent que l'eau des Territoires du Nord-Ouest (TNO) demeure potable, salubre et abondante pour toujours. En 2010, les partenaires dans le domaine de l'eau se sont réunis pour échanger des idées sur les façons dont ils pouvaient procéder pour protéger les eaux ténoises, et de là est née la *Stratégie sur la gestion des eaux des TNO 2010 : La voix du Nord, les eaux du Nord*.

Les objectifs de la Stratégie consistent à s'assurer que :

- les eaux qui se déversent aux TNO, qui circulent à l'intérieur des TNO ou qui les traversent sont essentiellement inchangées sur le plan de la qualité, de la quantité et du débit;
- les Ténois ont accès en tout temps à de l'eau potable en quantité suffisante;
- les écosystèmes aquatiques sont en santé et présentent une grande biodiversité;
- les Ténois peuvent compter sur les ressources en eau pour soutenir leurs collectivités et leur économie;
- les Ténois s'impliquent dans la gestion des eaux et ont des connaissances dans ce domaine;
- tous ceux qui prennent des décisions relatives à la gestion des eaux collaborent pour transmettre de l'information.

Le plan d'action de 2021 à 2025 de la Stratégie sur la gestion des eaux est le troisième plan d'action quinquennal visant à orienter la mise en œuvre de la stratégie sur l'eau et à soutenir la réalisation de ses objectifs. Ce plan d'action a été élaboré conjointement, donnant ainsi aux partenaires plusieurs occasions de s'exprimer. Le Comité directeur autochtone (CDA) de la Stratégie sur la gestion des eaux et un comité multilatéral composé de partenaires dans le domaine de l'eau ont orienté le processus d'élaboration du plan. Les partenaires ont pris part à un sondage en ligne, à un groupe de discussion virtuel, à une table ronde virtuelle (durant l'atelier de mise en œuvre de la Stratégie sur la gestion des eaux des TNO), à des entrevues et à l'examen du plan d'action. Le public a également eu l'occasion de formuler des commentaires sur le plan d'action par l'entremise d'un sondage en ligne. Ce processus inclusif a permis d'intégrer le point de vue du public et de tous les partenaires dans le domaine de l'eau.

Le plan d'action définit les partenaires responsables et les partenaires de soutien dans le domaine de l'eau, les facteurs de réussite et les mesures à prendre et échéances connexes, ainsi que les indicateurs permettant de mesurer l'avancement des initiatives.

Le plan d'action de 2021-2025 établit également les résultats attendus qui permettent de rendre concrets les efforts des partenaires. Le plan d'action est constamment réévalué pour que sa mise en œuvre s'inscrive toujours dans les visées de la Stratégie. Des mises à jour annuelles seront publiées pour suivre les progrès et en rendre compte.



Introduction

The 2021-2025 NWT Water Stewardship Strategy Action Plan (Action Plan) is the third of a series of five-year action plans that implement the NWT Water Stewardship Strategy (Water Strategy) and support the achievement of the Water Strategy's goals.

The Action Plan includes a broad range of activities that are led by organizations across all regions of the NWT. The Action Plan was developed by water partners and describes their ongoing commitment to a collaborative partnership-based approach to support and promote water stewardship in the NWT.

The Action Plan is a tool that water partners can use to guide their respective planning and priority setting processes to strengthen alignment with other programs and initiatives over the next few years. The Action Plan is meant to support water stewardship in the NWT by coordinating activities and programs, enhancing collaboration, and enabling the development of partnerships, thereby leading to a more efficient use of resources for all involved.

Similar to previous Action Plans, this document identifies lead and supporting water partners, Keys to Success, with associated Action Items and deliverable dates, and performance indicators to track the effectiveness of implementation. The 2021-2025 Action Plan also identifies outputs – tangible results of water partners' efforts. The Action Plan is subject to ongoing review and evaluation to ensure its implementation continues to advance the intent of the Water Strategy. Regular status updates will be published to track and report on progress.

Background

Beginning in 2008, the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) and the Government of Canada worked with representatives from Indigenous governments and organizations, NWT communities, regulatory boards, non-governmental organizations, industry, academic institutions, and the general public to develop a Water Strategy for the NWT. Collectively these organizations are referred to as the 'water partners'. The Water Strategy was released in 2010.

The vision of the Water Strategy states that “the waters of the Northwest Territories will remain clean, abundant and productive for all time.” The goals of the Water Strategy are to ensure that:

- Waters that flow into, within or through the NWT are substantially unaltered in quality, quantity and rates of flow;
- Residents have access to safe, clean and plentiful drinking water at all times;
- Aquatic ecosystems are healthy and diverse;
- Residents can rely on their water to sustain their communities and economies;
- Residents are involved in and knowledgeable about water stewardship; and
- All those making water stewardship decisions work together to communicate and share information.



The Water Strategy does not alter existing water management responsibilities. It does not affect or infringe upon existing or asserted Aboriginal rights, treaty rights or land, resource and self-government agreements. In the case of any inconsistency between the Water Strategy and existing or future treaties or land, resource and self-government agreements, the provisions of the treaties and agreements shall prevail.

The Action Plan was developed in collaboration with water partners and included multiple opportunities for involvement between December 2020 and July 2021. The process was guided by the Water Stewardship Strategy (WSS) Indigenous Steering Committee (ISC) and a multi-stakeholder water partner committee. Water partners participated in an online survey, virtual focus groups, virtual panel discussions at the annual Water Strategy Implementation workshop, interviews, and document review. Public input was sought through an online survey. The inclusive engagement process sought to incorporate the views of the public and all water partners.

The Indigenous Steering Committee (ISC) (formerly the Aboriginal Steering Committee) has guided Water Strategy activities since its development and the Committee's continued involvement ensured that Indigenous knowledge, perspectives and values were central to the development of the 2021-2025 Action Plan. The ISC has representatives from up to 12 Indigenous governments in the NWT including Acho Dene Koe First Nation, Dehcho First Nations, Gwich'in Tribal Council, Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, Kátł'odeeche First Nation, Nahanni Butte Dene Band, North Slave Métis Alliance, Northwest Territory Métis Nation, Sahtù Secretariat Incorporated, Salt River First Nation, Tłı̨chǫ Government, and Akaitcho Dene First Nation (observer).



Photo: Deanna Ehalt-Zawyrucha

Water partners include anyone that has a role in water stewardship. They may also be referred to as water stewards. This includes, but is not limited to, federal, territorial, municipal and Indigenous governments and organizations, regulatory boards, non-governmental organizations, communities, academia, and industry.

Action Plan Overview

The 2021-2025 Action Plan describes 'Keys to Success' and 'Action Items' to advance the Water Strategy's vision and goals for water stewardship in the NWT over the next five years. The 'Keys to Success' are intermediate steps towards fulfilling the long-term Water Strategy goals. The Keys to Success fall within four components of water stewardship: Work Together; Know and Plan; Use Responsibly; and Check Our Progress.

CHECK OUR PROGRESS

Actions ensure progress is made in achieving the Water Strategy vision. This includes measuring and reporting on progress. Reporting results of, and responses to, evaluations and reviews must be transparent.

WORK TOGETHER

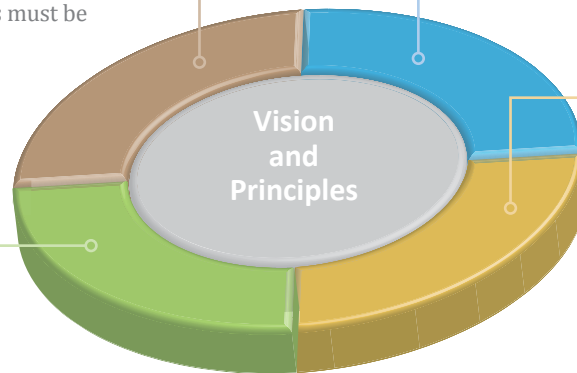
Actions ensure a cooperative environment to support water managers and water partners in sharing information, building capacity and working together.

KNOW AND PLAN

Actions ensure the implementation of multi-disciplinary aquatic monitoring and research programs. These programs consider Indigenous, local and western scientific knowledge and use of this information in the planning and implementation of water stewardship activities.

USE RESPONSIBLY

Actions ensure water managers have the information necessary to make well-reasoned decisions.



Principles for strengthening Indigenous knowledge, perspectives and values in water stewardship

The critical role of Indigenous knowledge in water stewardship is a cross-cutting theme that is relevant across many components and key activities of this Action Plan. Strong partnerships that bring together Indigenous knowledge systems, as well as local and western scientific knowledge systems are needed. Ensuring that Indigenous ways of knowing and being are valued and respected is becoming even more relevant as governments and other organizations are increasingly committing to uphold the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*¹ (UNDRIP).

The principles identified below reflect key themes and ideas heard during engagement for this Action Plan and should inform water stewardship in the NWT on an ongoing basis.

1. In the context of the Water Strategy, Indigenous governments and organizations and communities are equal partners, playing an essential role in the implementation of this Action Plan.
2. Activities related to water stewardship should be planned and co-designed with Indigenous partners and with full recognition of Aboriginal rights, knowledge and values, and be implemented in collaboration with Indigenous governments and organizations and communities.
3. Early engagement of Indigenous governments and organizations and communities is essential and critical to success.
4. Knowledge resides in the people, community and land. Indigenous knowledge should be gathered from the whole community including information from local land users, not only from Elders and subject-matter “experts”.
5. Relationships are as important as measurements. To the extent possible, the same people should be engaged with communities over the life cycle of a project to allow the relationships to be built and nurtured.
6. Projects’ timelines need to allow time for relationship building. Respect is central to sharing Indigenous and local knowledge. Researchers need to build trust before expecting knowledge to be shared.
7. Water partners need to support approaches, protocols and processes used by Indigenous peoples to share and protect their knowledge.
8. A key aspect of Indigenous knowledge is its reliance on oral stories. Water monitoring protocols should recognize non-written information as an important component of water information used to inform decisions and actions.
9. Place names and the history of places matter and should be factored into water information gathering. Indigenous knowledge holders know what a place name means and how communities have been using that place in history.

¹ For more information please see:

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples.html>.

Accountability

All water partners share responsibility for implementing the Action Plan. Each Key to Success includes performance indicators to measure and track progress. Most actions are collaborative in nature requiring both a lead, or co-leads, and supporting water partners. A lead water partner(s) is identified for each Action Item. Supporting and lead water partners are listed as Partners in Delivery under each component of the Action Plan. Some Action Items are best practices to which multiple water partners commit. They include plain language communication, and the use of Indigenous place names in research and monitoring programs, for example. These Action Items list all water partners as the lead because the responsibility cuts across numerous organizations.

Water partners commit to ongoing efforts and sharing of success stories through annual reporting and information sharing at the annual Implementation Workshop. The multi-stakeholder Water Stewardship Strategy (WSS) Working Group will play an active role in tracking and communicating progress and encouraging collaboration on specific priority areas.



Linkages to Other Strategies

Organizations at the national, regional and local levels have strategic initiatives that link to the 2021-2025 Water Stewardship Strategy Action Plan and support the goals of the Water Strategy. For example, the GNWT has a number of strategies and action plans that are strongly interconnected with this Action Plan including the *GNWT Knowledge Agenda: Action Plan 2019-2024*, the *Northwest Territories Cumulative Impacts Monitoring Program Action Plan* (NWT CIMP AP), the *Northwest Territories Waste Resource Management Strategy and Implementation Plan* (WRMS), the *2030 NWT Climate Change Strategic Framework* (CCSF) and *2030 NWT Climate Change Strategic Framework 2019-2023 Action Plan* (CCSF AP), the *Sustainable Livelihood Action Plan* and *Healthy Lands, Healthy People*.

Linkages to GNWT strategies are identified to the left of the Action Items to assist water partners to better understand how actions are aligned with efforts relevant to water stewardship.



NWT Cumulative Impacts Monitoring Program Action Plan



Waste Resource Management Strategy and Implementation Plan (WRMS)



Climate Change Strategic Framework (CCSF)



Sustainable Livelihood Action Plan

Collaboration with Guardians

Across all NWT regions, Indigenous governments and organizations and communities are establishing and growing Indigenous-led Guardian programs, many of which are connected to the national Indigenous Guardians Network. Guardians are known as the “eyes and ears” of their territories. Guardians play a vital role in water stewardship, sharing Indigenous knowledge, perspectives and values and a growing capacity to participate in, and lead, water monitoring and research. All water partners benefit from supporting and engaging in opportunities for collaboration with Guardians as they engage in water stewardship activities. This cross-cutting theme is reflected in the Action Plan with further opportunities for collaboration anticipated as Guardian programs develop and strengthen.

1.0

Work Together

Through this component of the Action Plan, water partners seek to build and strengthen relationships to collaboratively achieve the vision and goals of the Water Strategy and to effectively integrate their efforts with other resource planning and management processes in the NWT. Co-design and co-management of water-related activities and programs with Indigenous partners are foundational to the NWT's approach to water stewardship to ensure that Indigenous and local knowledge and ways of knowing and being are valued and respected. Engaging youth and the learning community is also key to this component.

Work together includes four areas:

- Partnerships
- Communication and Engagement
- Capacity Building, Leadership Training and Education
- Transboundary Discussions, Agreements and Obligations

Partners in Delivery

- Academic partners
- All water partners
- Arctic Research Foundation
- Aurora College / Aurora Research Institute (ARI)
- DataStream Initiative (DataStream)
- Ecology North
- Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC)
- Government of the Northwest Territories – Education, Culture and Employment (ECE)
- Government of the Northwest Territories – Environment and Natural Resources (ENR)
- Government of the Northwest Territories – Lands
- Government of the Northwest Territories – NWT Centre for Geomatics
- Indigenous Steering Committee (ISC)
- Mackenzie River Basin Board
- Makeway
- Northern Youth Leadership
- NWT protected areas co-management boards
- Regional and local Indigenous governments and organizations
- Regional land use planning boards
- Renewable resource management boards
- The Gordon Foundation

1.1

Partnerships

Partnerships are essential for water stewardship in the NWT. These arrangements help water partners to leverage efforts and find efficiencies as they work together on activities that contribute to shared Water Strategy objectives. Strategic actions over the next five years will build on successes and lessons learned and ensure Indigenous governments and organizations and communities are meaningful partners. The ISC provides an important mechanism through which Indigenous knowledge, values and perspectives guide the planning, design and implementation of Water Strategy Action Items.

Key to Success 1.1 A: Indigenous knowledge, perspectives and values guide Water Strategy activities through strategic oversight provided by an engaged Indigenous Steering Committee.

Performance Indicators:

- The ISC meets on a regular basis (# of meetings held per year).
- The ISC provides guidance on implementation of the Action Plan (# of projects where guidance was provided).

	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)
1	ISC members actively liaise between their respective Indigenous governments or organizations and the Water Strategy.	Shared plain language and visual reporting tools	Ongoing	ISC
2	ISC members provide advice to water partners on how to effectively engage Indigenous governments or organizations, Indigenous knowledge holders and Indigenous communities in implementing activities and sharing information.	ISC meeting notes and annual Implementation Workshop	Ongoing	ISC
3	ISC members report on relevant regional initiatives at ISC meetings.	ISC meeting notes	Ongoing	ISC

Key to Success 1.1 B: Water partners strengthen strategic areas for cooperation through leveraging related initiatives.

Performance Indicators:

- The Water Strategy has linkages with other frameworks, strategies and plans (# of documents referencing the Water Strategy, desktop review).
- Water partners feel a sense of shared ownership in the implementation of the Water Strategy (low-medium-high, water partner survey).

	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)
1	Establish a multi-stakeholder working group to further support collaborative implementation of the Water Strategy Action Plan and priority Actions Items, such as an Awareness Building Strategy, and to track progress.	WSS Working Group (ToR)	2022 and ongoing	ENR
2	Identify opportunities for water partners to support Water Strategy initiatives through collaborative partnerships and available funding opportunities.	Listing of ongoing water programs and initiatives	2022 and ongoing	ENR All water partners
3	Coordinate and share information with water partners on the emerging Canada Water Agency and its relevance to NWT Water Stewardship Objectives.	Updates to water partners at the annual Implementation Workshop	2022 and ongoing	ECCC
4	Promote Water Strategy objectives in regional land use plans, protected areas management plans, and Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area (IPCA) management plans as they are renewed and developed.	Land use planning documents Protected areas management plans Conservation Network Plan (<i>Healthy Lands Healthy People</i>)	2022 and ongoing	Regional land use planning boards Renewable resource boards NWT protected areas co-management boards ENR

Key to Success 1.1 C: Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing and being and local knowledge are valued and respected in water stewardship initiatives.

Performance Indicators:

- Community-based monitoring programs are successfully implemented (# of programs; # of communities involved, desktop survey).
- Communities are leading water stewardship projects (# of communities, water partner survey).
- Water partners use Indigenous knowledge to inform decision making (% of water partners, water partner survey).






	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)
1 	Support community and Indigenous governments and organizations' involvement in co-designing research and monitoring initiatives whose research questions respond to community prioritized questions.	Forums for co-developing research projects; community and regional research strategies NWT CIMP funded projects	Ongoing	ENR All water partners
2 	Continue to support community-based monitoring programs to enhance shared learning, knowledge, skills and consistent data collection, analysis, and results communication to communities and decision-makers.	Results reports NWT CIMP funded projects	Ongoing	ENR Academic partners Aurora College/ ARI
3 	Promote information sharing including local and Indigenous stories to better understand and document the significance of the land and water and its history. Use visual aids (e.g. maps, photos, etc.) and modern tools (e.g. field tablets, videos, etc.) where possible to document and promote knowledge transfer among Elders and youth.	Communications through written reports, oral recordings, illustrations, videos alongside collected data and scientific information	Ongoing	ENR All water partners

Photo: GNWT

	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)
4 	Support the development and implementation of Indigenous knowledge protocols.	Best practices session at annual Implementation Workshop	2022 and ongoing	ISC
5 	Promote the use of plain language and Indigenous language audio video formats to help facilitate understanding within Indigenous communities.	NWT Water Stewardship Website Online platforms NWT CIMP website	Ongoing	All water partners
6	Promote the use of Indigenous place names associated with important water features in research and monitoring programs and model best Indigenization practices, such as producing multilingual maps, publications and websites.	Research reports Communication products	2022 and ongoing	All water partners

1.2

Communication and Engagement

Ongoing communications and engagement are necessary for building effective relationships among water partners and the public. Effective and targeted communications will continue to improve public awareness, enable water partners to respond to local priorities and support public and community engagement in NWT water priorities.



Key to Success 1.2: Water partners and the public are aware of water stewardship issues and activities.

Performance Indicators:

- Behaviour changes within the public and community (NWT Water Strategy website traffic, social media activity).

	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)
1	Implement updated awareness-building and communications strategy to raise awareness of the goals of the Water Strategy, including engagement with and input from a broad range of interested parties (Elders, youth, land users, Guardians).	Awareness-building and communications strategy	2022 ongoing	ENR ISC Ecology North WSS Working Group
2	Provide clear, concise and current Water Strategy information and data to the public in easy-to-access formats, at the community, regional and watershed level.	ENR Publications NWT Water Stewardship Website Communications products on monitoring results in scientific and plain language publications Water/sediment quality data on Mackenzie DataStream	2021 ongoing	ENR
3	Develop and coordinate activities that raise awareness of the importance of water stewardship, such as the #loveNWTwater campaign and celebration of Canada Water Week.	Public outreach activities Publications	Ongoing	Ecology North

1.3

Capacity Building, Leadership Training and Education


Capacity development through education and training is crucial to the successful achievement of the Water Strategy goals. This includes knowledge of water stewardship, technical skills, and the capacity to interpret and act on water-related information and data. Supporting connections between and within Indigenous governments and organizations and communities, intergenerational knowledge transfer and actively engaging with youth are central to this sub-component.



Key to Success 1.3 A: Community knowledge and capacity in water management, aquatic research and monitoring increase over time.

Performance Indicators:

- On-the-land capacity-building opportunities are provided by water partners (# of programs and availability, water partner survey).
- Networks of community monitors with similar needs are created and maintained (# of networks, water partner survey).

	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)
1  	Explore strategic opportunities to coordinate training across the NWT for community-based monitors, including Guardians.	Workshop recommendations report	Ongoing	Dehcho AAROM ENR
2	Support and promote local and distance learning opportunities for community-based water monitors, Guardians and future water leaders.	Peer-to-peer learning opportunities Guardian gatherings	Ongoing	ENR Makeway Aurora College/ARI DataStream
3 	Promote and facilitate intergenerational on-the-land education/leadership camps.	On-the-land camps	Ongoing	Makeway ENR
4	Identify opportunities for water partners to support each other's educational initiatives, including sharing of electronic and physical resources.	Information sharing at annual Implementation Workshop Website postings	Ongoing	ENR

Key to Success 1.3 B: NWT youth are engaged in water stewardship learning and leadership opportunities and understand Indigenous and local water-related knowledge.

Performance Indicators:

- Online groups/forum being used by youth (# of users, desktop review).
- Youth-focused water stewardship activities are provided by water partners (# of activities, water partner survey).

	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)
1	Create resources that support and are aligned with the units of study found in the NWT science curriculum related to the theme of water to help students make connections between the curriculum, the NWT context, and the relevant teachings of the Dene Kede and Inuuqatigiit curricula.	NWT tailored learning activities that tie northern water topics into the curriculum	2022 onwards	Ecology North
2	Participate in school outreach to promote water stewardship and educate about aquatic ecosystems and their protection.	Science fairs Career fair School visits	2022 onwards	Ecology North ENR
3	Create an NWT-wide water stewardship youth group to provide a forum for collaborating and learning about water stewardship.	Online forum for youth Youth gathering	2022 onwards	Ecology North
4	Facilitate youth engagement in Water Strategy activities through ongoing annual programs such as the Youth Multimedia Contest and the NWT Youth Water Stewardship and Mentorship Grant Program.	Programs delivered, evaluated, renewed annually	2022 ongoing	ENR

1.4

Transboundary Discussions, Agreements and Obligations

Successful transboundary discussions, agreements, and obligations with neighbouring jurisdictions help ensure the waters of the NWT remain clean, abundant and productive for all time. Renewed communication efforts with water partners and the public about negotiation and implementation of agreements will support understanding of, and confidence in, the effective management of shared water.

Key to Success 1.4 A: Bilateral transboundary water management agreements are in place with neighbouring jurisdictions to protect NWT waters.

Performance Indicators:

- Agreements are completed or updated (# of completed or updated agreements).
- Provide opportunities for input from the Indigenous Steering Committee to members of the Bilateral Management Committees (BMC) and Mackenzie River Basin Board (MRBB) (# of opportunities to provide input to Indigenous members of BMCs and the MRBB).
- Provide opportunities for input from the public, where appropriate, in different plain language formats (e.g. website).

	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)
1	Advance negotiations and sign bilateral transboundary water management agreements with the remaining jurisdictions.	Yukon-NWT Bilateral Transboundary Agreements (2) Saskatchewan-NWT Bilateral Transboundary Agreement NWT-Nunavut Bilateral Transboundary Agreement	2022 and ongoing	ENR
2	Continue to consult and engage Indigenous governments and organizations and engage the public during negotiation processes.	What we heard report	Ongoing	ENR

Key to Success 1.4 B: Bilateral transboundary water management agreements are successfully implemented through Bilateral Management Committees and NWT residents are kept informed of transboundary water management agreement activities.

Performance Indicators:

- Progress on activities in the implementation work plan for each agreement has been made within established timelines (# of activities where progress has been made and # of activities completed).
- Regular reports on the implementation of each agreement are completed (# of reports completed).

	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)
1	Establish a Bilateral Management Committee (BMC) for each remaining agreement under negotiation, and develop work plans.	Yukon-NWT BMC Saskatchewan-NWT BMC NWT-Nunavut BMC	2022 and ongoing	ENR
2	Monitor and learn through Indigenous and western science about aquatic ecosystems, including surface and groundwater quality and quantity, and biology in the transboundary watersheds with consideration of climate change impacts.	Learning Plans (if required) Annual Reports	Ongoing	ENR
3	Implement an updated transboundary water management agreement communication strategy to ensure that water partners and the public are kept informed of negotiation and implementation activities.	Transboundary Water Management Agreement Communication Strategy Communication tactics and tools	2022 and ongoing	ENR

2.0 Know and Plan

Know and Plan includes two areas:

- Building Knowledge
- Applying Knowledge for the Long Term

Through this component of the Action Plan, water partners collaboratively develop and implement research and monitoring programs, manage information, and use the knowledge gained to inform decisions. Activities that are part of the Know and Plan component also contribute to the collaborative development of protocols, methods and tools for efficient data gathering and information sharing, and contribute to broad knowledge dissemination. Consideration and inclusion of Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing, local knowledge, early community engagement, partnerships, information sharing, and knowledge building are critical to the success of research and monitoring programs and the Water Strategy.

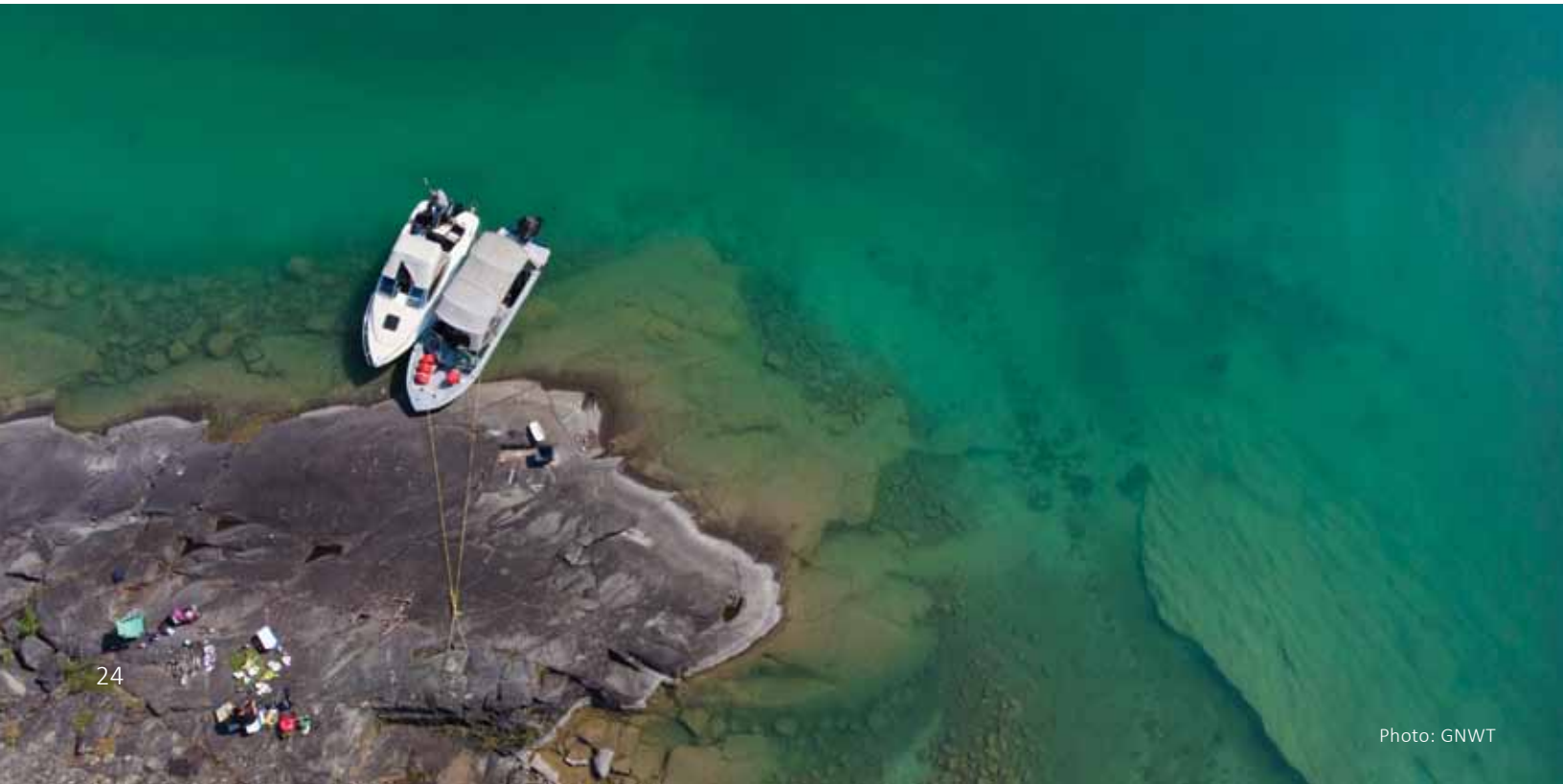
Partners in Delivery

- Academic partners
- Arctic Research Foundation
- C-CORE
- DataStream Initiative (DataStream)
- Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC)
- Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC)
- Government of the Northwest Territories – Environment and Natural Resources (ENR)
- Government of the Northwest Territories – Health and Social Services (HSS)
- Government of the Northwest Territories – Infrastructure (INF)
- Government of the Northwest Territories – Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA)
- Government of the Northwest Territories – Northwest Territories Centre for Geomatics
- Government of the Northwest Territories – Northwest Territories Geologic Survey (NTGS)
- Indigenous governments and organizations (IGOs)
- Industry partners
- Inuvialuit Water Board (IWB)
- Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Boards (LWB)
- NASA Earth Sciences
- NWT protected areas co-management boards
- Regional and local Indigenous governments and organizations
- Regional land use planning boards
- The Gordon Foundation

2.1

Building Knowledge


Water partners and community members work together to build knowledge over time and deepen understanding of natural processes. Building knowledge about the aquatic ecosystems of the NWT requires ongoing monitoring, analyses, reporting and communications. Indigenous knowledge, local knowledge and western science are needed to understand the aquatic environment.







Key to Success 2.1 A: Understanding is improved of NWT's aquatic ecosystems, including water quality, water quantity, wetlands and biological components and the human dimensions of water management.

Performance Indicators:

- Water partners are satisfied with aquatic ecosystem data collection and efforts to make the data available (low-medium-high; water partner survey).
- Use of biological monitoring has increased and protocols refined for NWT as appropriate (# monitoring projects using biological indicators; desktop survey).
- A wetland inventory is in place and available for reference by all water partners (# of regions with a wetland inventory, desktop survey).
- The long-term monitoring network, which includes transboundary monitoring sites, is maintained to assess trends or change that may be the result of climate change (Y/N, desktop survey).

	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)
1 	<p>Develop a research and monitoring program for Great Slave Lake to address information gaps related to physical, chemical, and biological indicators of lake water quality over varying temporal and spatial scales.</p> <p>Conduct a vulnerability assessment for Great Slave Lake.</p> <p>Pilot innovative water quality monitoring approaches on Great Slave Lake and apply these where appropriate in other locations and programs across the NWT.</p> <p>Share research data publicly, where appropriate.</p>	<p>Great Slave Lake research and monitoring plan</p> <p>Great Slave Lake vulnerability assessment, with consideration of climate change</p> <p>Research reports with comment on potential for broader application of lake monitoring protocols</p> <p>Water quality data available on Mackenzie DataStream</p>	2025	ENR

	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)
2  	Increase biological monitoring across the NWT (e.g. benthic invertebrates, fish) and use biological indicators, where possible, as part of ongoing aquatic monitoring to provide early warnings of change in the aquatic ecosystem.	Assessment of benthic and fish monitoring initiatives on Hay and Slave rivers Continued use of CABIN ² protocols for benthic invertebrates in NWT rivers	2025 Ongoing	ENR ECCC
3 	Complete fish studies to assess fish health and change, distribution, contaminants and populations.	Pilot fish studies (e.g. Hay, Slave, and Mackenzie rivers), a report documenting practices and results, with recommendations for future use of fish as biological indicators NWT CIMP funded project	2025 Ongoing	ENR ECCC DFO
4 	Complete regional wetland inventories, using remote sensing imagery as a tool for data collection. Inventories are made available to each Partnered Indigenous Government region in alliance with DUC for use in land use planning and land/water management practices.	Documentation of approach Tłjchq and Gwich'in region wetland inventories	2025	DUC

² The Canadian Aquatic Biomonitoring Network (CABIN) is an aquatic biomonitoring program for assessing the health of fresh water ecosystems: <https://data.ec.gc.ca/data/substances/monitor/cabin-canadian-aquatic-biomonitoring-network/?lang=en>

	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)
5	<p>Collect Snow Water Equivalent (SWE) information to assess spring water outlook and provide baseline SWE information.</p> <p>Data are archived and disseminated, including historic data to support assessments of change.</p>	<p>Annual spring water outlook</p> <p>Accessible SWE data for spring water outlook</p>	<p>2025</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	ENR
6	<p>Assess impacts of increasing air temperature on different components of the hydrological cycle.</p> <p>Develop and test a localized hydrologic model for NWT.</p>	<p>Data assessments</p> <p>Historical trend detection</p> <p>Preliminary hydrologic model</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>2023</p> <p>2025</p>	ENR



Key to Success 2.1 B: Groundwater is better understood as part of the structure and function of aquatic ecosystems in the NWT.

Performance Indicators:


- GNWT collaboration among departments with a role in groundwater monitoring/sampling (# of meetings).
- An assessment of priority aquifers and monitoring sites is documented for the NWT (completion of assessment; desktop survey).

	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)
1	Create a groundwater interdepartmental working group.	Interdepartmental working group established, and objectives defined	2022	ENR
2	Establish a groundwater monitoring well database (drawing on existing federal activities and protocols of the Groundwater Information Network).	Database design developed, including data management and public accessibility aspects Database populated with available well records	2023	ENR
3	Identify priority NWT regions for aquifers and groundwater assessments, including in transboundary areas.	List of priority aquifers List of existing monitoring sites	2023 2022	Inter-departmental working group
4	Undertake an information assessment for each priority aquifer in the NWT.	Assessment report on one or more of the priority aquifers	Ongoing	ENR NTGS Academic partners
5	Add groundwater data as a data type that can be shared on Mackenzie DataStream.	Users can upload and access groundwater quality data on DataStream	2023	DataStream
6	Explore how Indigenous and local knowledge can inform the state of the knowledge of NWT groundwater resources and monitoring priorities.	Liard Basin local knowledge of groundwater informs reporting on groundwater	2025	ENR

Key to Success 2.1 C: Remote sensing imagery and geomatics tools assist in understanding water quality and quantity in the NWT.

Performance Indicators:

- Remote sensing tools are in use to assist in filling data gaps, especially in remote regions (# research projects using remote technologies; desktop survey).





	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)
1 	Share information about existing water-related geomatics and/or remote sensing uses to interested water partners.	Annual Implementation Workshop Publicly available reports Communications products on geomatics and remote sensing tools	Ongoing	ENR NWT Centre for Geomatics
2	Monitoring programs include geomatics and remote sensing tools, where appropriate.	Communications products developed for the public	Ongoing	ENR



Key to Success 2.1 D: Impacts and cumulative impacts of human activities and climate change on NWT waters are mitigated.

Performance Indicators:

- NWT CIMP data and information are used in decision-making (# of NWT CIMP water project results that are provided to decision-makers, # of decision-maker-specific deliverables generated by NWT CIMP water projects and available; desktop survey).
- ENR’s Cumulative Impact Framework (GNWT) is publicly available (document available; desktop survey).
- Cumulative impact questions inform monitoring program design and activities (# monitoring program plans identifying cumulative impacts key questions; desktop survey).

	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)
 1	Work with key decision-makers and the NWT CIMP Steering Committee to develop detailed cumulative impact monitoring priorities for 2021-2025, for water and fish. Identify opportunities to include Indigenous and local knowledge relevant to cumulative impact monitoring.	Multi-partner meetings NWT CIMP Blueprints	2022 and ongoing	ENR
 2	Continue to fund water partners to undertake cumulative impact monitoring and research projects, with a requirement to report on results.	Cumulative Impact monitoring and research projects	Ongoing	ENR
3	Regulatory boards consider and assess methods and approaches to assess cumulative effects.	Cumulative Effects Guidelines	2023	MVEIRB LWB/IWB
 4	Develop a GNWT-ENR Cumulative Impacts Framework (CIF). The Framework will outline the steps to monitor and predict cumulative impacts.	ENR Cumulative Impact Framework	2023	ENR
 5	Assess opportunities to establish protocols for regional analysis to detect cumulative impacts.	Report on the “monitoring cumulative effects to water quality” project, and regional meta-analysis of water quality	2025	ENR

2.2

Applying Knowledge for the Long Term



Applying the knowledge gained through monitoring, data management, and other activities is critical for the protection of the aquatic environment. A rapidly changing environment requires adaptive decision-making responses. Data management and sharing are important to ensure decision-making is based on the best available information. The work of the present will be available for researchers to use in the future. This sub-component identifies some key elements related to planning and managing aquatic ecosystem data collection, storage and research plans.



Key to Success 2.2 A: All data with a potential for long-term trend analysis are collected and stored in a consistent manner and are accessible to water partners.

Performance Indicators:

- Data collected under water licences are compatible with data collected by water partners (long-term goal achieved through an information strategy, desktop survey).
- Datasets are available to the public on Mackenzie DataStream (# water/sediment quality datasets on Mackenzie DataStream; desktop survey).

	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)
1	An information management working group is established to undertake a systematic assessment of data management practices, including quality assurance and quality control to ensure long-term monitoring data collected by water partners is accessible, comparable and can contribute to synthesized dataset analyses and reporting.	Information management working group established (ToR) Summary report on the compatibility of available long-term monitoring data	2025	ENR
2 	The information management working group assesses data storing and sharing platforms and makes suggestions to align efforts with the policies and practices of the wider GNWT Open Government Policy.	Open water data set suggestions Water/sediment quality datasets for open sharing are published on Mackenzie DataStream	2025	ENR LWB/IWB ENR/ DataStream
3 	An ENR working group coordinates climate monitoring needs within the GNWT (supplementary to those filled by ECCC), and develops a robust system to guide the collection, reporting, management, archiving and dissemination of GNWT weather data.	Working group established (ToR)	2025	ENR

Key to Success 2.2 B: Water monitoring networks are proactively and collaboratively managed through partnerships and agreements to maintain and improve long-term water quality and quantity knowledge, address gaps, and meet changing needs.

Performance Indicators:





- Water partner level of satisfaction with the monitoring networks (i.e., through ongoing and collaborative partnerships and agreements, both formal and informal) (low-medium-high, water partner survey).
- Water partners agree there are appropriate monitoring networks in the NWT (% of agreement, water partner survey).

	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)
1	Identify knowledge gaps across monitoring programs and networks (including transboundary water systems and NWT-wide water systems), prioritize long-term data collection, establish research priorities to address the priority gaps, and identify monitoring sites to fill gaps in accordance with available resources.	<p>Prioritization, needs assessment, and gap-analysis of long-term monitoring network sites</p> <p>Research and monitoring plans that respond to identified monitoring priorities</p> <p>Five-year status and water quality trend reporting by ECCC</p> <p>State of the Environment Report</p>	Ongoing	<p>ENR</p> <p>ECCC</p> <p>Academic partners</p> <p>IGOs</p>
2	Water partners meet to discuss approaches and emerging science/ tools, including Indigenous and local knowledge.	Annual Implementation Workshop	Annually	All water partners
3	Existing water quality and quantity monitoring programs are maintained and optimized, where possible, through collaboration with water partners.	<p>Monitoring program review</p> <p>Monitoring partnership agreements</p>	Ongoing	All water partners

Key to Success 2.2 C: Results of monitoring and research activities by researchers and water partners are provided to water partners in an understandable way.

Performance Indicators:

- Monitoring results are easily available to a broad audience (# of public presentations; # of plain language summaries, water partner survey).
- Indigenous governments and organizations’ degree of satisfaction with involvement in setting priorities for research in their region (Low-medium-high, water partner survey).
- Community members feel they understand research results (% of community members who agree they understand; water partner survey).

	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)
 1	Researchers working in the NWT ensure that they understand and have adopted community research protocols.	Research plans include engagement and community research protocols	Ongoing	ENR Aurora College/ARI
 2	Water partners work collaboratively with community representatives to establish research study goals that build on past and ongoing work in communities and community capacity.	Researchers engage with local communities prior to launching local research programs Annual Implementation Workshop session(s)	Ongoing	All water partners
 3	Ensure community-based monitoring data are relevant to local decision-making and help to address community concerns.	Monitoring and research plans and projects document community engagement and input to monitoring programs	Ongoing	ENR Academic researchers Research funding agents
 4	Technical experts and researchers communicate with communities during projects and present monitoring and research findings tailored to communities (in the appropriate context and in plain language) upon completion of a project.	Researchers produce results, reports, databases, presentations, websites, social media messaging, or other products as appropriate on their research, using plain language Research data made openly available to the public (e.g. on the NWT Discovery Portal and/or Mackenzie DataStream) Project summaries and updates	Ongoing	Aurora College/ARI ENR Academic partners Research funding agents DataStream

3.0

Use Responsibly

Actions that are part of the Use Responsibly component of the Water Strategy support sound water stewardship through the development and implementation of programs, practices and guidance for environmental assessment and regulatory and post-regulatory processes (monitoring, compliance, enforcement, and adaptive management of environmental assessment measures).

Use Responsibly includes two areas:

- Municipal Water Use
- Industrial Water Use

Partners in Delivery

- Academic partners
- Aurora College/Aurora Research Institute (ARI)
- Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC)
- Community governments
- Ecology North
- Government of the Northwest Territories – Department of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR)
- Government of the Northwest Territories – Department of Health and Social Services (HSS)
- Government of the Northwest Territories – Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment (ITI)
- Government of the Northwest Territories – Department of Infrastructure (INF)
- Government of the Northwest Territories – Department of Lands (Lands)
- Government of the Northwest Territories – Department of Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA)
- Indigenous governments
- Indigenous Steering Committee (ISC)
- Industry partners
- Inuvialuit Water Board (IWB)
- Land and Water Boards of the Mackenzie Valley (LWBs)
- Local Government Administrators of the Northwest Territories (LGANT)
- Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board (MVEIRB)

3.1

Municipal Water Use

Community governments are responsible for managing their use of land and water, including water withdrawals and deposits of waste, in ways that protect the surrounding environment. Communities are supported in this work by the GNWT and the Land and Water Boards of the Mackenzie Valley or the Inuvialuit Water Board. At the community level, elected leadership, senior municipal staff, and public works operators all have roles in managing municipal activities to ensure the continued protection of the aquatic environment. Community water licences and land use permits, which outline standards to guide operations and monitor water purification plants, solid waste and wastewater facilities and fuel storage areas, are important tools that support this community water stewardship.

Strategic actions over the next five years will support the maintenance of water treatment facilities, build community awareness about the quality of community drinking water, strengthen support for community water stewardship, and clarify management practices to ensure communities have confidence in their drinking water, waste and wastewater systems. Efforts in this Action Plan can strengthen management of solid waste and wastewater facilities.

Key to Success 3.1 A: Increased transparency, accessibility and knowledge sharing about water stewardship and drinking water quality generates improved resident confidence in NWT drinking water quality.

Performance Indicators:

- The public is able to access drinking water quality information on the GNWT’s website and WaterTrax database (# of users, desktop review).
- The public is confident in community drinking water quality (low-medium-high, public survey).

	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)
1	Launch the revamped drinking water quality website, featuring the WaterTrax database, and maintain it as an accessible and up-to-date resource.	Website	2022 ongoing	MACA Interdepartmental Drinking Water Management Committee
2	Develop and implement a plan among water partners to educate, encourage, incentivize and support residents to clean home water tanks annually.	Plan to support home water tank cleaning	2023 ongoing	Interdepartmental Drinking Water Management Committee



Key to Success 3.1B: Municipal public works operators (water, wastewater, solid waste, and fuel storage facilities), senior municipal staff, and community leadership are increasingly skilled, knowledgeable and confident about how to manage community infrastructure for the protection of the aquatic environment and drinking water quality.

Performance Indicators:


- % municipal solid waste facilities with leachate management strategies (% , desktop survey).
- % municipal solid waste facilities with groundwater monitoring (% , desktop survey).

	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)
1	Identify and tailor learning options (e.g. peer-to-peer learning, job aids, mentoring, coaching, field visits, courses, microlearning) that encourage the use of best practices in municipal public works operations.	Learning interventions that are timely and tailored to support the operations within wastewater and solid waste management	Ongoing evaluation of interventions	MACA
2	Develop operational and governance guidance materials, including standard operating procedures (SOPs), templates, and checklists to strengthen community wastewater and solid waste management practices.	SOPs, checklists, and templates (e.g. Operations and Management Manual, By-Law)	Ongoing	MACA

Key to Success 3.1 C: Drinking water in communities is protected through a multi-barrier approach to source water protection.

Performance Indicators:





- Communities have water licences and conduct Surveillance Network Program (SNP) Monitoring (# of communities with water licences % of communities submitting SNP reports, desktop survey).
- Communities are aware of source water protection planning tools available to support their community (Y/N, water partner survey).

	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)
1	Support communities to develop source water protection plans where necessary and if requested.	Community source water protection plan	Ongoing	ENR
2	Review and update NWT drinking water sampling and testing requirements as per the Water Supply System Regulations Schedule under the <i>Public Health Act</i> .	Updated Schedule for the Water Supply System Regulations	2023	HSS Interdepartmental Drinking Water Management Committee
3	 Develop a rating system to assess risk of NWT landfills to water contamination, as guidance for prioritizing investments to those with a higher risk to the environment and public health.	Risk rating system for NWT landfills	2022	MACA Waste Technical Committee
4	Seek to better understand the prevalence and effects of non-household wastes on municipal wastewater systems, such as landfill leachate, compost facility runoff, and water purification plant by-products.	Study results	Ongoing	ENR LWBs/IWB
5	Review and update guidelines for the discharge of non-sewage waste into the municipal wastewater infrastructure (e.g. lagoons or sewers).	Updated guidelines for industrial waste	2025	ENR

Key to Success 3.1 D: Consistency, standardization and guidance for managing community public works facilities are improved.

Performance Indicators:

- Guidance development indicators (satisfaction of lead partners with guidance development progress, water partner survey).

	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)
1 	Start the development of guidelines or standards to prevent ground or surface water contamination from waste management activities.	Guidelines and standards	2025	ENR LWB/IWB MACA
2 	Identify, prioritize and implement waste diversion programs.	Waste diversion programs (developed and implemented)	Ongoing	ENR
3 	Continue to seek and dedicate financial resources to eliminate hazardous waste stockpiles and transition to temporary collection and storage of hazardous waste.	Removal of hazardous waste (stockpiles)	Ongoing	MACA ENR
4 	Examine the feasibility of a territory-wide backhaul program to ship some waste streams, including hazardous waste, to appropriate receiving facilities to lower logistical, financial and technical challenges faced in the north.	Feasibility study for removal of hazardous waste and other identified waste streams	2023	MACA ENR

3.2

Industrial Water Use

Industrial water users are important partners in water stewardship and the protection of the aquatic environment. The GNWT, the Land and Water Boards of the Mackenzie Valley or the Inuvialuit Water Board, the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board and Canada each have a role to ensure that policy, legislation, regulation, and guidelines are in place and are clearly communicated to support aquatic environment protection. All water partners value meaningful community involvement through all stages of a project to ensure communities are aware of, and appropriately involved in, the industrial activities taking place in their watersheds.

Strategic actions over the next five years will prioritize and advance water-related guidelines, policy and regulations. Water partners have also identified actions to deepen understanding of the relationship of Indigenous people to the land and water through coordinated communications and engagement efforts, and guideline development.



Key to Success 3.2 A: Strengthen opportunities and clarify expectations for community involvement in environmental assessment, regulatory and post-regulatory processes, to improve understanding of the relationship of Indigenous people to the land and water and the importance of this relationship to community wellbeing.

Performance Indicators:

- Indigenous governments and organizations and communities participate in water licence application and review processes (low-medium-high, water partner survey).
- Increased applicant’s awareness of Indigenous peoples’ relationship to the land and water (low-medium-high, survey of water partners).

	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)
1	Provide information to Indigenous governments and organizations and communities on how to participate in regulatory and environmental impact assessment processes.	Annual Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act Co-management workshop and report, social media, participant funding communication materials	Ongoing	CIRNAC LWB/IWB MVEIRB ENR Lands
2	Produce decision statements, policies, and guidelines using plain language to communicate how Indigenous knowledge has been or will be considered in water licences and environmental assessments.	Environmental Assessment Initiation Guidelines Reports of Environmental Assessment and Water Licence Reasons for Decision	2021 Ongoing	MVEIRB LWB/IWB

	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)
3	Update or develop guidelines to encourage the use of community monitors, such as local Guardians, in baseline data collection.	Environmental Assessment Initiation Guidelines Guidelines for Developing Baseline Water Quality Monitoring Programs in the NWT Editorial update to Guidelines for Aquatic Effects Monitoring Programs	2022 2023 2024	MVEIRB LWBs/IWB
4	Pilot a coordinated community meeting, bringing together representatives from industry, land and water boards, environmental assessment boards, and water licence inspectors, to support information sharing about industrial activities taking place in community watersheds. Assess and consider broader applicability of other workshops.	Coordinated community meeting	2023	MVEIRB LWB/IWB ENR Lands ITI



Key to Success 3.2B: Management processes for water stewardship continuously improve in efficiency and effectiveness.

Performance Indicators:

- Regulatory guidelines are reviewed periodically and updated and, where necessary, policy is adopted or revised (# reviewed and #updated, adopted or revised).
- Environmental assessments, and post regulatory compliance, enforcement and adaptive management processes are periodically reviewed and revised as necessary (# reviewed, # updated).
- Water legislation and regulation are periodically reviewed and revised as necessary (# reviewed, # updated).

	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)
1	Review <i>Waters Act</i> and Regulations and prepare for amendment processes to modernize and improve.	Amended <i>Waters Act</i> Amended Waters Regulations	2025	ENR
2	Review existing regulatory guidelines and policies relevant to water management and revise or develop new guidelines as necessary.	Guidelines for Developing Baseline Water Quality Monitoring Programs in the NWT Groundwater Guidelines Water Compensation Guidelines Security Framework Document	2023 2023 2024 2025	ENR LWB/IWB LWB/IWB Lands
3	Develop guidelines for assessing impacts of development on people to inform water partners on how the relationship between healthy water and healthy people is considered in environmental assessment processes and decisions.	Guidelines for Assessing Impacts on People	2022	MVEIRB
4	Develop process guidance to assess and incorporate cumulative effects and regional change in regulatory and environmental assessment processes and proceedings.	Cumulative Effects Guidelines	2024	MVEIRB

4.0 Check Our Progress

Check Our Progress includes two areas:

- Routine Checks
- Independent Evaluations

Through this component of the Action Plan, water partners seek to ensure that the actions taken are effectively resulting in progress towards Water Strategy goals.

The ISC and the WSS Working Group play a lead role for both areas of Check Our Progress. All water partners are supporting Partners in Delivery for the Keys to Success and associated Actions Items.



4.1

Check Our Progress – Routine Checks

The ISC and the WSS Working Group oversee activities that support completion of Action Items and progress on Keys to Success. The annual Implementation Workshop is a key mechanism to identify challenges and collaborative solutions.

Key to Success 4.1: Water partners maintain steady progress on Action Plan implementation.

Performance Indicators:

- Progress is assessed (# of keys to Success and # of progress reports).
- Outstanding challenges are identified and addressed as necessary (low-medium-high, water partner survey).

	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)
1	Hold an annual Implementation Workshop to report on successes, improvements and remaining challenges.	Workshop reports	Annually	ENR
2	Survey appropriate water partners to assess progress on Keys to Success using performance indicators, and to identify challenges and solutions.	Water partners survey WSS Annual Progress reports	2022 and annually	ENR ISC WSS Working Group
3	Routinely update water partners on implementation activities by providing information using plain language and using appropriate tactics.	WSS Annual Progress reports Website posts	Annually and ongoing	ENR ISC WSS Working Group
4	Update water partners’ roles and responsibilities for the WSS and the Action Plan using plain language.	Water Partners Roles and Responsibilities document	2022	ENR

4.2

Check Our Progress – Independent Evaluation

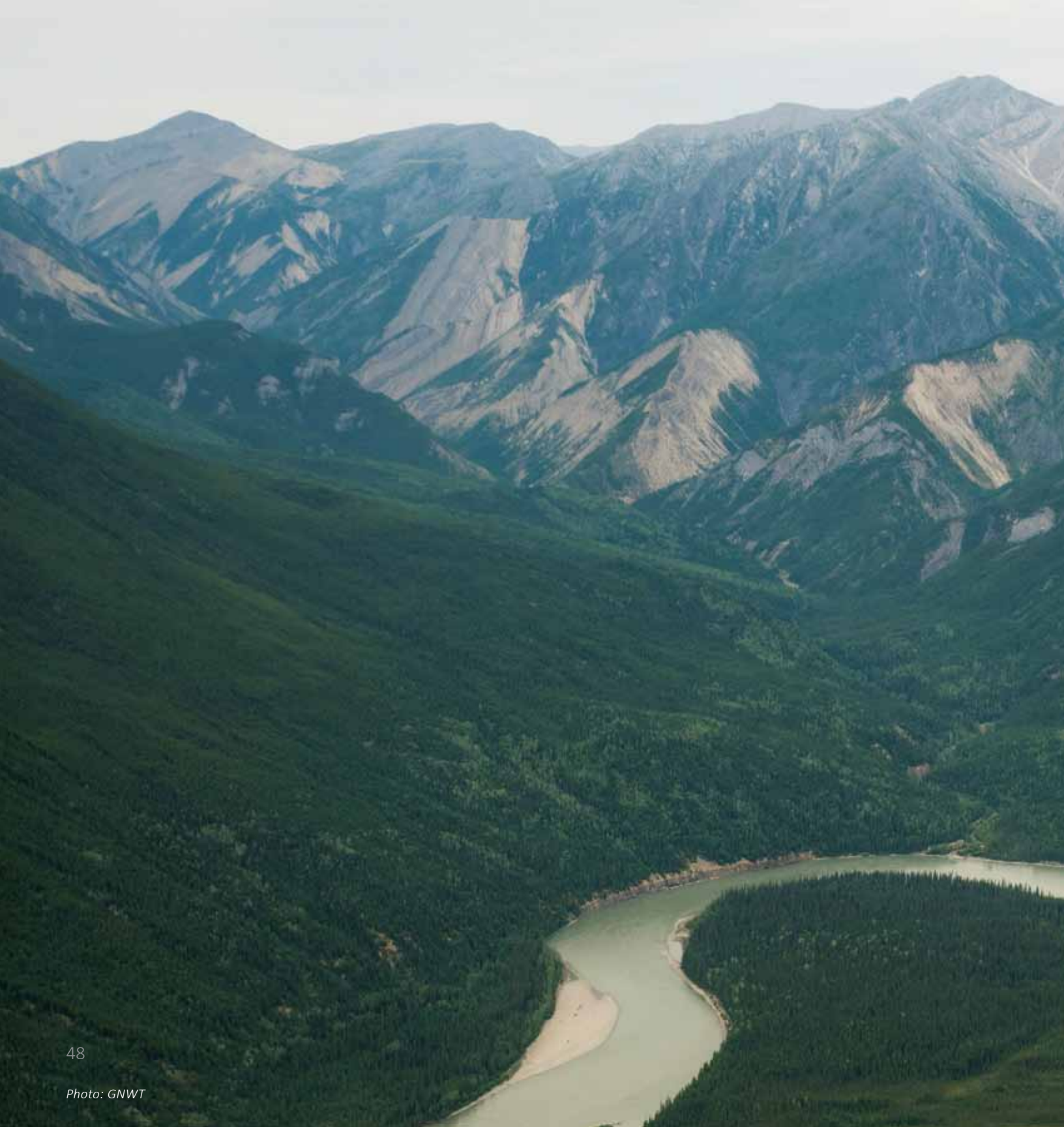
The ISC and WSS Working Group oversee an independent evaluation of the Water Strategy Action Plan to support continued improvement of water stewardship activities and continued progress towards Water Strategy goals.

Key to Success 4.2: Water partners benefit from an independent evaluation to enable the incorporation of lessons learned into the next Action Planning cycle.

Performance Indicators:

- Water partners review evaluation (# of water partners participating in the evaluation).
- The Keys to Success under Check Our Progress inform and improve implementation of the Action Plan (# and type of recommendations in progress reports, annual workshop reports and the independent evaluation).

	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)
1	Establish an evaluation plan.	Evaluation plan	2024	ENR ISC WSS Working Group
2	Conduct independent evaluation.	Independent evaluation	2025	ENR ISC WSS Working Group
3	Publish evaluation results and distribute findings.	Website postings Presentations	2025	ENR ISC WSS Working Group



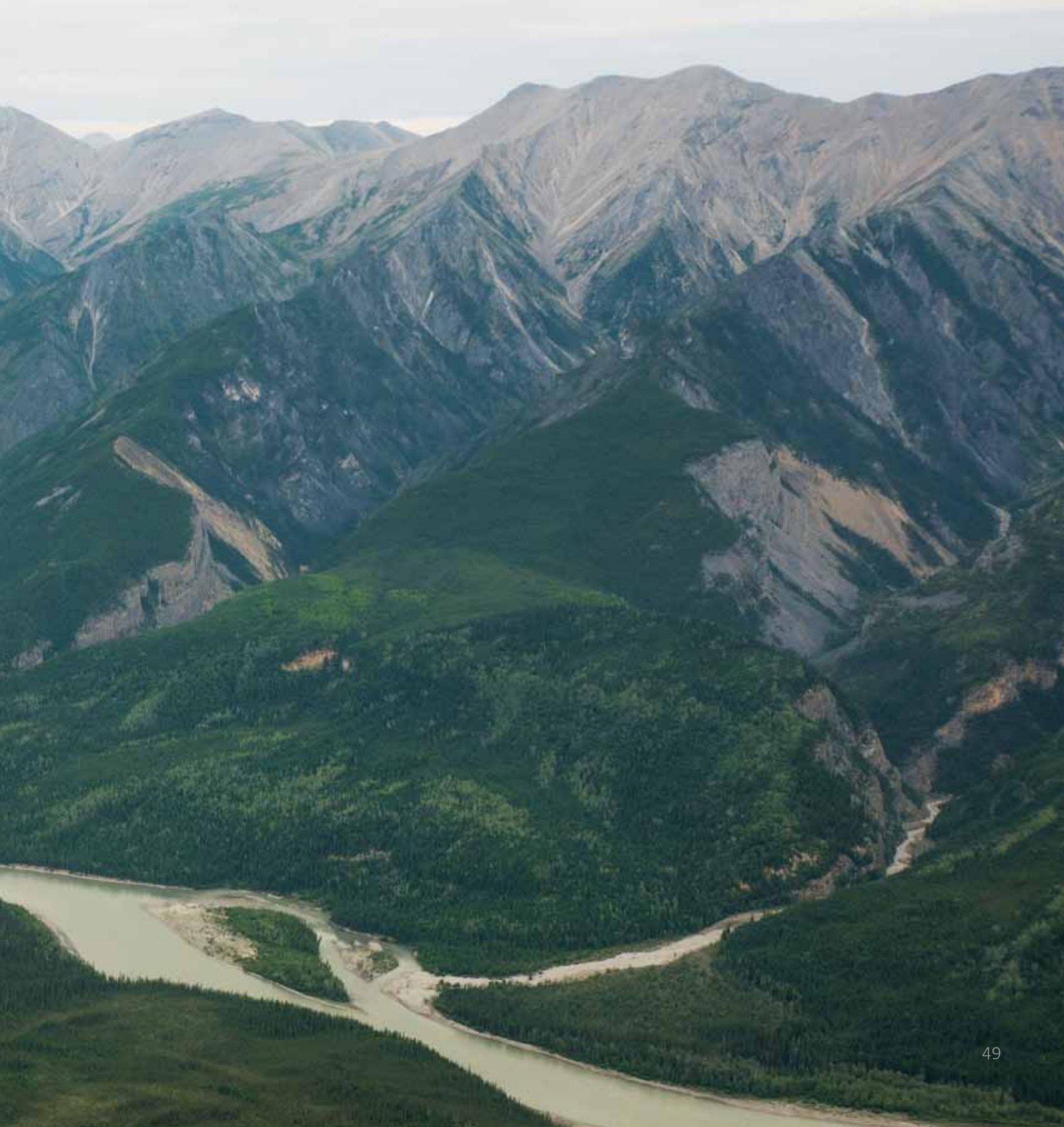




Photo: GNWT

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