



# 2030 NWT CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2019-2023 Action Plan

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What We Heard: Summary of public review



The 2030 NWT Climate Change Strategic Framework (the Framework), released in May of 2018, establishes key goals for how the territory plans to respond to challenges and opportunities associated with a changing climate, moving towards an economy that is less dependent on fossil fuels, and doing its part to contribute to national and international efforts to address climate change. The 2030 NWT Climate Change Strategic Framework 2019-2023 Action Plan (the Action Plan) is the key implementation piece of the Framework, intended to present a broad summary of all significant climate change actions underway and areas for future collaboration in the Northwest Territories (NWT). It is the first of what will be two sequential five-year action plans.

Development of the Action Plan was led by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) in 2018, in collaboration with Departments of the Government of the NWT (GNWT). Input on the Action Plan was solicited through engagement with Indigenous governments and organizations (IGOs), community governments, the federal government, non-government organizations (NGOs), industry and co-management boards. The resulting draft Action Plan was released for a four-week public review period from October 31, 2018 to November 30, 2018. An internal GNWT review took place concurrently with the public review period.

A total of 21 written submissions, amounting to over 250 comments, were received from IGOs, community governments, federal departments, industry, NGOs, co-management boards, academia and the general public. Comments were wide-ranging, and all were assessed by ENR along with other GNWT departments and partners as appropriate, and carefully considered for incorporation into the final Action Plan. Many changes to the Action Plan resulted from this process, which served to clarify wording, clarify or modify actions, and to provide clearer context on various sections of the document.

This What We Heard document presents a summary of the key feedback emerging from the written submissions of the public review period, and the manner in which it has been addressed by ENR. The What We Heard document is organized under the following nine themes:

1. Coordination of the Action Plan with the 2030 Energy Strategy and Energy Action Plan 2018-2021
2. Role of the NWT Carbon Tax in the Action Plan
3. The Office of the Auditor General of Canada's October 2017 Report on Climate Change in the Northwest Territories
4. Leadership of ENR and the GNWT on climate change
5. Role of Indigenous governments and other partners
6. Need for financial and human resources to fulfill the Action Plan
7. Capacity-building
8. Action item gaps
9. Performance Measurement of the Action Plan

#### ***1. Coordination of the Action Plan with the 2030 Energy Strategy and Energy Action Plan 2018-2021***

##### **What we heard**

A common concern raised during the public review period was the lack of coordination and collaboration between GNWT departments to comprehensively act on climate change mitigation and adaptation. One respondent felt the GNWT should not divide its approach to addressing climate change mitigation between the Framework and the 2030 Energy Strategy (Energy Strategy). Others generally acknowledged that ENR is the lead on adaptation and the Department of Infrastructure (INF) is the lead on mitigation. However, it was also felt that the Energy Action Plan 2018-2021 (the Energy Action Plan) did not fully respond to mitigation and that the ENR-led draft Action Plan was lacking a focus on mitigation, which reflected a lack of coordination within the GNWT. Overall, some respondents felt clearer linkages were required on how the implementation of the Framework and Energy Strategy will align to achieve their respective goals in order to fully address climate change.

Comments relating specifically to the Energy Strategy suggested that electricity is a small part of greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) overall, and that more resources should be put towards transportation, biomass heat, energy efficiency and moving to a greener built environment. Several comments pertaining specifically to actions in the Energy Action Plan expressed concern about the development of the Taltson hydroelectric system and the use of liquefied natural gas as an approach to replacing diesel, while supporting the expansion of renewable energy sources such

as solar and wind to reduce GHGs. It was also noted other actions to reduce GHGs, such as composting initiatives, were lacking in the draft Action Plan.

### **ENR Response**

The implementation of the Climate Change Action Plan and Energy Action Plan are GNWT priorities, and both support the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change and contribute to Canada's commitment as a signatory to the Paris Agreement. ENR agrees that coordination with INF in implementing the Action Plan and Energy Action Plan is imperative to ensure the GNWT is working towards meeting its climate change goals.

Based on the comments received, revisions were made to the introduction and the Energy Action Plan description under Part 1, Goal #1: Transition to a Lower Carbon Economy, to highlight the interconnectedness of the Framework and Energy Strategy. Additional text was added to clarify that the implementation of the Energy Strategy, as well as the NWT approach to carbon pricing, contribute significantly to meeting Goal #1 through mitigation of GHGs. A comprehensive list of potential partners was added to Action Item 1.1A, to support the implementation of the Energy Action Plan. Furthermore, text was added to Part 1, Goal #1 to highlight that mitigation approaches not captured in the Energy Strategy, such as composting of organic waste, are outlined in Part 1 and 2 of the Action Plan.

All comments focused on the implementation of the Energy Strategy and specific actions in the Energy Action Plan were shared and discussed with INF, which noted that numerous factors and options were taken into consideration in the development of the Energy Strategy, and that energy projects and policies were prioritized based on balancing economics, sustainability benefits and reliability. INF recognizes that resources should also be invested in other areas, as identified in their annual Energy Initiatives Report, which highlights projects and programs undertaken to improve energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including solar and wind. Refer to [https://www.inf.gov.nt.ca/sites/inf/files/resources/2017\\_2018\\_energy\\_initiatives\\_report\\_final\\_web.pdf](https://www.inf.gov.nt.ca/sites/inf/files/resources/2017_2018_energy_initiatives_report_final_web.pdf)

ENR and INF will ensure ongoing coordination on the implementation of both action plans, and ensure any areas of overlap are acted on appropriately. It is important to note that the Action Plan and Energy Action Plan are both living documents that can and will be updated to reflect additional actions and approaches necessary for meeting strategic goals throughout their respective implementation periods.

## **2. Role of the NWT Carbon Tax in the Action Plan**

### **What we heard**

Several comments were submitted on the role of the NWT's upcoming carbon tax in addressing climate change. Some felt that the proposed carbon tax is not accounted for as a tool to help reach the goals of the Action Plan and Energy Action Plan. A notable gap highlighted was the integration of the carbon tax into the approach for mitigation and adaptation planning by the GNWT.

Certain respondents wanted to be more involved in the implementation of the carbon tax in the NWT, and it was noted that the GNWT should consult and engage on the effectiveness of climate change and carbon pricing policies, and update the carbon pricing platform based on such consultation and engagement outcomes. Lastly, a specific comment submitted centered on the application of the carbon tax, and its impact on Aboriginal rights.

### **ENR Response**

As outlined in the Action Plan, a summary of the intended carbon tax is provided. As a signatory to the Pan-Canadian Framework for Clean Growth and Climate Change, the GNWT committed to meeting a federal benchmark for carbon pricing by 2019 and has consequently developed a "made-in-the-North" approach. It balances implementing carbon pricing as a tool to incentivize behaviours that reduce GHGs with investments in initiatives and programs that lead to greater use of renewable and cleaner fuels, while ensuring impacts on the cost of living and doing business in the NWT are minimized.

All comments pertaining to carbon pricing were shared and discussed with the Department of Finance for consideration. Resulting revisions have been made to the Action Plan to indicate that regular processes for review will occur as part of the carbon tax's legislation introduced in the Legislative Assembly in February-March 2019.

### **3. The Office of the Auditor General of Canada's October 2017 Report on Climate Change in the Northwest Territories**

#### **What we heard**

Concern was expressed by several respondents that the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) of Canada's October 2017 Report on Climate Change in the NWT was not clearly referenced or highlighted in the draft Action Plan. Respondents felt that deficiencies documented in the OAG report affecting ENR's leadership on climate change, and the examination of authority, roles and responsibilities and resources required to implement the Framework, had not been addressed in the draft Action Plan.

#### **ENR Response**

ENR acknowledges that the OAG report and recommendations were not specifically referenced in the draft Action Plan, nor were the proposed actions to address those recommendations specifically identified as such in the draft Action Plan.

To address the comments received, a new section has been added to the Action Plan to draw attention to the OAG report and provide a clear link to the Framework, where the OAG report's recommendations are detailed. To highlight where the OAG's recommendations are being captured in the Action Plan, references, in the form of footnotes, have also been added to specific action items throughout.

### **4. Leadership of ENR and the GNWT on Climate Change**

#### **What we heard**

Numerous respondents expected more emphasis be placed in the draft Action Plan on ENR's leadership role on climate change within the GNWT. It was noted, in line with the OAG report, that ENR's authority and roles and responsibilities should be documented to ensure the successful implementation of a comprehensive Action Plan. One comment indicated that no new policies, legislation, or organizational or structural changes were identified in the draft Action Plan to exemplify leadership and emphasize the urgency of action needed to address climate change impacts and adaptation. It was stated that referencing internal GNWT committees was not adequate in demonstrating leadership.

The establishment of a climate change secretariat including representatives from all sectors of the territory, as used in other jurisdictions such as the Yukon and Nunavut, was mentioned by some as an approach for the GNWT to demonstrate political leadership on climate change mitigation and adaptation in the NWT. It was also noted in some comments that the development of a climate change council or advisory body is encouraging, but is not enough to demonstrate GNWT leadership. Several expressed interest in participating in such an advisory body.

### **ENR Response**

Mitigating and adapting to climate change is a key priority of the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly in recognizing the serious and urgent challenges that climate change represents for the NWT. The implementation of the Framework and Energy Strategy by the GNWT reflects this priority.

ENR is the lead department for climate change in the GNWT, and as such, ENR's Minister will oversee the implementation of the Action Plan. It states that ENR will work collaboratively within the GNWT and with external partners to provide overall leadership, coordination and guidance on climate change issues throughout the territory. The new GNWT Director-level Climate Change Working Group, which is chaired by ENR, is highlighted as well as the existing Ministerial Energy and Climate Change, Deputy Ministers Energy and Climate Change, and Assistant Deputy Ministers Climate Change committees, all of which play coordinating roles across departments in seeking funding, establishing partnerships and sharing information on the implementation of NWT climate change priorities.

ENR will continue to engage with Indigenous and community governments, industry, NGOs and other potential partners in the implementation of the Action Plan to seek input on desired approaches for coordinating and guiding the implementation of the Action Plan in the NWT, such as through a climate change council or advisory body (as per action item 4.3A).

ENR's Climate Change Unit, to be housed under the new Environmental Stewardship and Climate Change Division, will hold responsibilities for coordinating cross-GNWT implementation of the Action Plan and reporting on progress towards meeting the goals identified within the Framework.

With ENR at the lead, the GNWT is taking a step-wise approach to transitioning to a lower carbon economy and addressing knowledge gaps in order to inform adaptation and resilience planning and execution. This is the first of two, five-year action plans, and includes over 100 collaborative actions with multiple parties and partners. Resources will continue to be sought both internally and externally to advance this important initiative.



## **5. Role of Indigenous governments and other partners**

### **What we heard**

Certain respondents felt that IGOs were not included as potential partners for action items that are of importance to them. It was expressed that Indigenous people are particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts, and that they could play a critical role in implementing many action items. Some stressed that IGOs should be full and equal partners in acting on and responding to climate change in the territory, and that committed funding for such meaningful partnerships should be made available. It was specifically stated that current monitoring programs listed in the Action Plan could look to IGOs for essential input and guidance. One respondent noted the NWT is well-positioned to demonstrate leadership on the inclusion of traditional knowledge in addressing impacts and adaptation responses, and that this could be more clearly addressed in the Action Plan.

Indigenous governments expressed that they would like sustained communication with the GNWT. Also, a few expressed interest in learning more about the development of adaptation planning and support programs on a regional and local level in order to determine their interest in being active partners on such action items.

Other respondents, such as community governments and organizations, NGOs and industry also expressed the need to play a greater role as partners in implementing the Action Plan.

It was expressed that the draft Action Plan did recognize the shared responsibility of partners and residents in taking action on climate change, and that more opportunities for shared decision-making on climate change priorities will need to be clearly communicated.

### **ENR Response**

Indigenous governments are welcome and encouraged to participate in the actions they are interested in, and are welcome to contribute to and be leads on actions they feel are important to address climate change in the NWT. Action item leads, as identified in the Action Plan, will work with partners to determine what role they are interested and able to commit to playing in the implementation of their respective actions.

IGOs have been added as potential partners on several specific action items as identified in comments received from some Indigenous governments.

For many action items in Part 1, Indigenous government participation is resourced through existing programming such as through protected areas, community-based monitoring programs or specific project partnerships. For Part 2, funding will be pursued to turn areas for future collaboration into actions, and Indigenous government participation will be considered within funding requests and action development.

As discussed in the previous theme, a climate change council or advisory body can play an important role in increasing Indigenous government, as well as other partners', participation in the implementation of the Action Plan through a shared decision-making approach. This will be explored during the implementation phase.

## **6. *Need for financial and human resources to fulfill the Action Plan***

### **What we heard**

Several respondents felt the cost and financial resources available to implement the Action Plan should be included in the Action Plan, as was committed to in the Framework. There was concern that the draft Action Plan only delivered actions already underway and that too much emphasis was placed on being a small, isolated jurisdiction with limited resources.

It was expressed that the financial and human resources needed to fully implement both Part 1: Action Items, and Part 2: Areas for Future Collaboration, of the Action Plan are deficient. Similarly, concern was raised that financial and human resources to enable communities to fully participate in the Action Plan's implementation were also lacking. It was stated that the approach being taken to address limited resourcing, both within the GNWT and ENR as the lead department, and for Indigenous and community governments and other partners, should have been presented in more detail in the draft Action Plan, as these actions require significant additional investment, including federal government investment.

Some respondents felt that future action items under Part 2 should be prioritized, and resources should be pursued according to their priority. It was suggested that a decision-making matrix, including criteria to allow actions and projects to be prioritized, would be essential to support decisions on funding allocation. Partners could provide valuable input into the decision-making matrix to ensure it is an effective tool resulting in funding decisions that are transparent and defensible to make the most of the opportunities created by federal and other climate change funding.

### **ENR response**

The Action Plan specifically identifies where resources have been secured or where they will have to be sought through external funding agencies, as distinguished between Parts 1 and 2. It is important to note that the Action Plan commits to reporting on the resources expended, and as such, this financial information will be made publicly available.

It is clearly acknowledged in the Action Plan that significant federal funding, along with other third party support, will be required to fully implement the Action Plan, specifically the areas for future collaboration outlined in Part 2. As outlined in Part 3 of the Action Plan, the GNWT will continue to actively seek both internal and external resources to support future actions. Several federal funding initiatives are specific to Indigenous and community governments. ENR will work to ensure partners are aware of these opportunities and provide support as appropriate.

The GNWT agrees that a transparent and defensible approach to allocating funds is important, and as such, will explore the use of a decision-making matrix as a means of prioritizing the pursuit of funding for actions in Part 2 (areas for future collaboration).

## ***7. Capacity-building***

### **What we heard**

Comments directly and indirectly related to capacity-building were submitted by several respondents, and focused on the need to support and enable community leadership to determine and act on climate change priorities. It was stressed that funding, as well as associated tools and training, are needed to build human capacity to address climate change in numerous sectors across the NWT, and specifically in communities. It was also noted that more capacity is needed within the GNWT to demonstrate leadership on, and adequately address, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and to provide further human and financial support to Indigenous and community governments and all residents.

### **ENR Response**

Text has been added to the Action Plan to Part 1, Goal 3: Build Resilience and Adapt to a Changing Climate, to emphasize the need to support people, and namely communities, by providing knowledge and options and increasing community capacity to help NWT residents build resilience. Additionally, new text under Part 1, Cross-cutting: Leadership, Communication and Capacity-Building, emphasizes the need for increased capacity to support and sustain the implementation of the Action Plan, both within the GNWT and in conjunction with Indigenous and community governments and other partners. These additions provide clarity to the action items focused specifically on building capacity, and reaching out to and supporting communities and NWT residents, such as those found in 4.4, 4.5, 4.6 and 4.7.

## **8. Action item gaps**

### **What we heard**

It was raised by several respondents that certain essential topics were not addressed as distinct action items in the draft Action Plan, namely ice, agriculture and wildlife vulnerability assessments.

One respondent noted the need to understand the vulnerability of wildlife due to climate change, as per the OAG report, was not reflected in an action item.

Given the growing concern of ice safety for transportation and access to the land expressed by NWT residents during the NWT Association of Communities' NWT Climate Change Forum and Charrette in October 2018, a few respondents felt that ice, and specifically access to ice for traditional and cultural purposes, needed to be addressed in the Action Plan. Others pointed out that studies on the effects of climate change on ice roads, both to communities and remote mines, should be included.

It was expressed in several comments that the Action Plan should reflect that expanding agricultural production is a key opportunity to aid in responding to food security concerns in the NWT, as also highlighted during the aforementioned NWT Climate Change Forum and Charrette. Access to country foods was also mentioned as important in comments related to food security.

### **ENR Response**

Based on the feedback received, new actions have been added to the Action Plan.

A new action item (2.9) will respond to the need for ENR to conduct wildlife climate change vulnerability assessments in partnership with Indigenous governments, resource management boards, the federal government and academia.

With regards to ice, two new action items (3.13 A and B) were added in Part 1, focusing on safe access to land, water and ice, and areas for future collaboration were updated under Part 2, 7.5 and 7.9, with new references to ice. Furthermore, ice roads were added as a key sector in the assessment and adaptation planning action (10.1) in the Cross-Cutting: Economic Impacts and Opportunities section.

A new action item (3.8 C) now outlines the implementation of the NWT Agriculture Strategy (led by the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment in partnership with Indigenous and community governments) to increase local food production. A related area for future collaboration in Part 2 (action 8.7) has been added to pursue food production opportunities that address climate change risk mitigation. Note that the draft Action Plan previously referred to the development of a NWT Country Foods Strategy by ENR; however, this strategy will now form part of the Sustainable Livelihoods Action Plan that will be developed in 2019 following public engagement, thus this action item has been reworded (see action item 3.8B).

## **9. Performance measurement of the Action Plan**

### **What we heard**

Some respondents pointed out that individual performance indicators should be results-driven and not only data-driven. Others noted that indicators should be more focused and specific, so that they are not open to interpretation, and to ensure they are measurable and align well with actions. Several edits were also suggested by respondents to preliminary indicators presented in the draft Action Plan.

### **ENR Response**

ENR agrees that a solid performance measurement framework is required to responsibly implement the Action Plan. The draft Action Plan outlined preliminary work that has been initiated to identify qualitative and quantitative indicators, and committed to developing a comprehensive set of indicators in 2019. Leads for the over 100 action items will be better able to inform the overarching performance measurement planning process.

Work on developing performance indicators will not only be focused on outputs (e.g. completion of an outreach and communications plan), but more specifically on outcomes and results (e.g. improved public understanding of climate change impacts and actions). Text has been added to Part 3, Measuring Progress, to indicate a program logic model will be used to refine preliminary indicators and develop a comprehensive set of indicators after the implementation of the Action Plan is initiated in 2019. Recommended edits to preliminary indicators were also made in the Action Plan.

### ***Looking Forward***

As knowledge gaps are filled throughout the implementation of this Action Plan and greater understanding of impacts are realized, the NWT will be well-positioned to incorporate innovative approaches into adaptation planning and execution. This includes identifying the opportunities associated with adaptation planning, including new industries, economic opportunities and increased northern investment, to name a few. ENR looks forward to working with Indigenous and community governments, federal and territorial government departments, community organizations, industry, NGOs, co-management boards, academia and other partners to undertake actions and develop areas for future collaboration as we implement the Framework.