

Discussion Guide

NWT Chapter—Arctic Policy Framework

Introduction

The federal government is developing an Arctic Policy Framework to provide overarching direction to its priorities, activities and investments in the Arctic, from now until 2030. The federal document proposes to focus on the following:

- Comprehensive Infrastructure
- Strong Arctic People and Communities
- Sustainable Arctic Economy
- Arctic Science and Indigenous Knowledge
- Protecting the Environment and Conserving Arctic Biodiversity
- Arctic in the Global Context
 - Economy and Trade
 - Defence, Safety and Security
 - Environmental and Scientific Cooperation
 - Social and Cultural Cooperation

There will be an NWT chapter in the federal Arctic Policy Framework. This Discussion Guide is about seeking your guidance and advice to ensure this chapter is reflective of the priorities of the people of the NWT.

The GNWT is hopeful that once completed, the federal Arctic Policy Framework will result in more coordinated efforts by all levels of government, to advance common priorities and increase the quality of life for people who live in the Arctic.

For the purposes of this work, we have considered all of the Northwest Territories in our definition of the arctic.

To start the conversation, the GNWT has developed some questions around shared priorities that will hopefully help us identify a common vision for the future of the Northwest Territories and guide federal investment and decision making through to 2030.



Healthy People, Healthy Communities

The strength of the Northwest Territories comes from people and communities – community life is what makes the North the North, reflecting local cultural values and aspirations. The GNWT seeks to support and strengthen Northern communities.

Quick facts:

- The Northwest Territories Community Price Survey which has been conducted since 1982 enables comparison of prices across communities. This comparison takes the form of an index showing average prices compared to Yellowknife. For example, it would cost \$185 in Paulatuk, where there is only air or barge access, to buy what would cost \$100 in Yellowknife. The same items would cost \$196 in Colville Lake, where there is only access by air.
- There are unique housing needs in the north with a higher incidence of crowding and poor dwelling conditions, in addition to issues around affordability. Housing core need in the NWT is now 20% compared to the national level of 12.5%.
 - The GNWT has engaged with NWT Indigenous governments, non-government organizations, businesses and residents to develop a number of key strategies that address issues around healthy communities. These include: the Territorial Anti-Poverty Action Plan, which describes the commitments of the GNWT and other partners to address the needs of those most vulnerable and those at-risk of falling into poverty, while promoting the prosperity necessary for the Northwest Territories (NWT) to grow.
 - GNWT Early Childhood Development Action Plan, which has a mission of providing equitable access to a continuum of inclusive, culturally relevant early childhood development programs, services, and resources for children, parents, families, and communities.
 - GNWT Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan, which has the goal to ensure that people with mental health and addictions issues have access to the full range of programs and services they need. The plan is based on a “population health approach”, a holistic method that includes physical, social, spiritual and cultural health.

Discussion question:

- In what program areas do NWT communities most need federal engagement and funding to support healthy people and healthy communities? Housing? Food security? Mental health? Others?



Economic Prosperity

Responsible, sustainable development and diversification of territorial economies is an important part of enhancing prosperity and wellness in NWT communities by creating opportunities for territorial residents.

Traditional economies grounded in cultural practices and abundant natural resources also remain widespread and vital in the Northwest Territories.

It is the vision of the GNWT that each region and community in the territory has the capacity, tools and opportunity to develop and participate in local, regional, national and international markets as they determine appropriate.

Quick facts:

- The mining and oil and gas extraction sector makes the greatest contribution to the NWT's economy, accounting for almost a quarter of the NWT's gross domestic product (GDP); the construction sector makes the second greatest contribution, accounting for about 10 per cent of the GDP. In 2016 -17 visitors to the NWT spent \$201.4 million. This is up from \$167.1 million in 2015-16.
- Particularly in small, remote communities, residents offset the high cost of living with hunting and trapping. In 2013, over 80% of residents hunted or fished in Uluhaktok, and Sambaa K'e. In some communities such as Nahanni Butte and Colville Lake, 100% of residents ate meat and fish from hunting or fishing as part of their diet.
- The Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur (GMVF) Program provides NWT Trappers with "one window" access to the international fur auction market for fur harvested in the NWT. In addition, the Program actively markets and promotes fur at international venues through partnerships with other harvesting jurisdictions and the private sector.
- The NWT Economic Opportunities Strategy offers a plan to connect businesses and communities to economic opportunities in the NWT by nurturing a climate for growth, building on success in key sectors, investing in regional diversification and promoting opportunity readiness in our Territory's most important resource – its people.
- Employment rates are lower outside of Yellowknife. The employment rate in Yellowknife in 2014 was 75% versus 42% in Wrigley, Tuktoyaktuk, or Gamèti.

Discussion question:

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



mining, oil and gas sectors? Hunting and fishing to support families and communities? Traditional economic activities, such as trapping? Others?

Infrastructure

The NWT lacks much of the basic infrastructure that most Canadians take for granted. Developing strategic infrastructure will improve residents' access to job and economic opportunities, and a range of essential goods and services such as affordable, healthy food, health care, education and skills training, and reduce the cost of living. Infrastructure investment must also address our immediate and ongoing need to adapt to climate change.

Quick facts:

- The NWT, which is 1.4 million km² in size, has 2,200 kilometres of all-season highway, and 1,625 kilometres of public winter road. By comparison, Ontario, which is approximately 1.1 million km² in size, has 16,600 kilometres of highway, and 3,160 kilometers of public winter roads.
- There are 18 communities in the Northwest Territories with all-weather road access and another 15 with seasonal road or air access only.
- Twenty-five of 33 NWT communities rely primarily on diesel for power generation.
- A significant subsidy is required to maintain electricity rates at current levels while integrating renewables. At current diesel prices this subsidy is estimated to be of \$92 million.
- The NWT has an estimated 11,000 megawatts of undeveloped hydro potential. Expansion of the NWT's hydro resources and transmission will reduce communities' reliance on diesel power and reduce the cost of living and doing business in the territory. .
- An initial 60 megawatt expansion of the existing Taltson facility could lead to the development of an additional 140 megawatts on the Taltson system, which could lead to the development of other hydro projects in the NWT.

Discussion question:

- How should federal infrastructure investments be prioritized, including what type of criteria for setting priorities could be considered, to maximize benefits to the most communities, reduce the cost of living in the NWT and grow the economy?

