2025-2029 NWT CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN

WHAT WE HEARD

PLAN D'ACTION SUR LE CHANGEMENTCLIMATIQUE 2025-2029

CE QUE NOUS AVONS ENTENDU

August 2025 – Août 2025

Government of Northwest Territories
Gouvernement des Territoires du Nord-Ouest

K’áhshó got’ı̨ne xədə k’é hederı ɔedı̨htl’é yerınıwę nı dé dúle.
Dene Kədá

ʔerıhtł’ís Dëne Sųłıné yatı t’a huts’elkër xa beyáyatı theɔą ɔat’e, nuwe ts’ën yółtı.
Dëne Sųłıné

Edı gondı dehgáh got’ı̨e zhatıé k’ę́é edatł’éh enahddhę nıde naxets’é edahłí.
Dene Zhatıé

Jii gwandak izhii ginjìk vat’atr’ijąhch’uu zhit yinohthan jì’, diits’àt ginohkhìi.
Dinjii Zhu’ Ginjik

Uvanittuaq ilitchurisukupku Inuvialuktun, ququaqluta.
Inuvialuktun

ᑌᓱᐊ ᑎᑎᖅᑲᐃᑦ ᐱᓕᒍᐅᕆᑦ ᐃᓄᖅᑎᑐᓪᓗᒍᑎᓵᖅ, ᐅᕐᓂᑦᑎᓯᓄᑦ ᐅᖃᓕᓴᕐᓇᖅᑐᑎᑦ.
Inuktitut

Hapkua titiqqat pijumagupkit Inuinnaqtun, uvaptinnut hivajarlutit.
Inuinnaqtun

kīspin ki nitawihtīn ē nīhīyawihk ōma ācimōwin, tipwāsinān.
nēhiyawēwin

Tłı̨chǫ yatı k’ę̀è. Dı wegodı newǫ dè, gots’o gonede.
Tłı̨chǫ

Indigenous Languages
request_Indigenous_languages@gov.nt.ca

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarizes what the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) heard through public and targeted engagement on the draft 2025–2029 NWT Climate Change Action Plan.

Engagement was led by the Department of Environment and Climate Change (ECC) and involved residents, Indigenous governments and organizations, community governments, youth, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), researchers, the public, and other partners. Feedback was received through written submissions, public surveys, and an in-person 2024 Climate Change Advisory Gathering.

Across all regions and engagement methods, participants made it clear that the Northwest Territories is already experiencing the serious impacts of climate change. These impacts—wildfires, floods, permafrost thaw, food insecurity, and threats to cultural continuity—are not future risks. They are present-day realities, and Northerners are adapting in real time.

Several common themes emerged from the feedback:

- **Urgency**: People want faster, more decisive action. They expect the GNWT to treat climate change with the seriousness it deserves.
- **Accountability**: Participants consistently called for clearer roles, responsibilities, and tracking mechanisms—alongside more measurable, time-bound actions.
- **Clarity**: Residents asked for plain language, better communication, and improved alignment between overlapping strategies like the Climate Change Strategic Framework, Energy Strategy, and Action Plan.
- **Coordination**: The strongest calls were for a whole-of-government approach and deeper partnerships with Indigenous governments and communities.

Many participants recognized that meaningful climate action in the NWT cannot be achieved by government alone. Respondents called for better coordination across sectors and support for local innovation, monitoring, and leadership.

This report captures the insights shared and will help inform the GNWT's approach to planning, implementing, and reporting back on the actions it's taking to help address these issues, in partnership with communities. It also provides a foundation for the GNWT's shift toward a more integrated Climate Change and Energy Strategy, which is centred around whole-of-government collaboration to improve the effectiveness of our climate change mitigation, planning, and adaptation efforts.

SOMMAIRE

Ce rapport résume ce que le gouvernement des Territoires du Nord-Ouest (GTNO) a entendu lors des échanges publics et ciblés concernant le projet de Plan d'action 2025-2029 sur le changement climatique des TNO.

Des résidents, des gouvernements et organisations autochtones, des administrations communautaires, des jeunes, des organisations non gouvernementales (ONG), des chercheurs, le grand public et d'autres partenaires ont participé aux échanges dirigés par le ministère de l'Environnement et du Changement climatique (MECC). Les commentaires ont été recueillis par l'entremise de présentations écrites, de sondages auprès du public et d'une rencontre en personne (lors du rassemblement annuel du Comité consultatif sur le changement climatique de 2024).

Tous les participants, indépendamment de leur région et de leur méthode de participation, ont clairement indiqué que les Territoires du Nord-Ouest subissent déjà les répercussions sérieuses du changement climatique. Ces répercussions – feux de forêt, inondations, dégel du pergélisol, insécurité alimentaire et menaces à la continuité culturelle – ne sont pas théoriques, mais bien concrètes, et les Ténois doivent s'y adapter en temps réel.

Les commentaires font ressortir plusieurs thèmes récurrents :

- **Sentiment d'urgence** : Les Ténois veulent que les mesures pour lutter contre le changement climatique soient prises plus rapidement et de manière plus décisive. Ils s'attendent à ce que le GTNO traite le changement climatique avec le sérieux qui s'impose.
- **Responsabilité** : Les participants ont constamment demandé des rôles, des responsabilités et des mécanismes plus clairs accompagnés d'actions plus mesurables assorties de délais précis.
- **Clarté** : Les résidents ont demandé l'utilisation d'un langage clair, une meilleure communication et une plus grande harmonisation entre les stratégies qui se chevauchent, comme le Cadre stratégique sur le changement climatique, la Stratégie énergétique et le Plan d'action.
- **Coordination** : Les demandes les plus pressantes sont la mise en place d'une approche gouvernementale globale et des partenariats approfondis avec les gouvernements et collectivités autochtones.

De nombreux participants ont souligné qu'une action climatique efficace aux Territoires du Nord-Ouest ne peut être portée par le gouvernement à lui seul. Ils ont insisté sur la nécessité d'une meilleure coordination entre les secteurs et sur le soutien à l'innovation locale, au suivi et au leadership.

Ce rapport, qui rassemble les points de vue exprimés, contribuera à guider l'approche du GTNO dans la planification et la mise en œuvre de ses mesures ainsi que dans le suivi des résultats, et ce, pour répondre aux enjeux soulevés en partenariat avec les collectivités. Il fournit également une base à la transition du GTNO vers une stratégie intégrée sur le changement climatique et l'énergie centrée sur la collaboration à l'échelle du gouvernement. Cette transition permettra d'accroître l'efficacité des efforts d'atténuation et de mieux planifier les mesures d'adaptation au changement climatique.

INTRODUCTION TO CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE NWT

Climate change is a serious threat to our territory's economic, environmental, social and cultural sustainability. The NWT is experiencing rapid warming, with some areas warming at up to four times the global rate.

Over the past five years, NWT residents have experienced a series of extreme weather events. Climate change-influenced events led to record-setting flooding in NWT communities in 2021, 2022, and 2023 – immediately followed by extreme drought conditions and low water levels that contributed to a devastating 2023 wildfire season in which roughly two thirds of NWT residents were forced to evacuate their home communities. These events have threatened people's safety, caused significant physical damage to several communities, and highlighted vulnerabilities in critical public infrastructure such as transportation and economic corridors.

Addressing the impacts of a changing climate is not something that any one government or agency can or should plan to solve on its own. Solving these problems will take sustained collaborative efforts from residents, businesses, non-government agencies, and all orders of government.

THE GNWT'S APPROACH TO CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLANNING

The Government of the Northwest Territories Department of Environment and Climate Change (GNWT ECC) is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the **2030 NWT Climate Change Strategic Framework** (CCSF). This Framework was released in 2018 with the goal of providing a long-term roadmap for a comprehensive and coordinated response to climate change in the Northwest Territories.

To implement the CCSF, the GNWT developed and implemented the **2019-2023 CCSF Action Plan**.

This Framework and action plan are intrinsically linked with the implementation of the **2030 Energy Strategy** and its action plans, as well as the GNWT's approach to carbon pricing, through a shared goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the NWT. The 2030 Energy Strategy and 2030 Climate Change Strategic Framework were developed concurrently through extensive public engagement that included regional workshops with residents, communities, businesses, Indigenous Governments and other interested and affected parties across the NWT. Both strategies were released in 2018.

DRAFTING OF THE 2025-2029 NWT CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN

The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) developed the draft 2025-2029 NWT Climate Change Action Plan (Action Plan) to facilitate open discussion and to support the implementation of the 2030 NWT Climate Change Strategic Framework (Framework). The draft Action Plan is linked to the Mandate Priorities of the 20th Legislative Assembly, including:

- Sustainable housing resilient to climate change.
- A resilient economy and strong economic foundation.

- Supporting community health and wellness.
- Enhancing emergency management.

The Vision, Guiding Principles, and Goals of the 2030 NWT Climate Change Strategic Framework guided the development of the draft Action Plan. The Vision, Principles and Goals were also reviewed as a part of the engagement on this draft Action Plan.

Vision: By 2030, the NWT will enjoy a strong, healthy economy that is less dependent on fossil fuels (compared to 2005) and will have developed the knowledge, tools, and measures needed to increase resilience and adapt to the changing northern climate.

An initial **draft 2025-2029 NWT Climate Change Action Plan** was released in the Fall of 2024, ahead of **targeted and public engagement** activities. Actions in the draft plan were grouped into the seven themes listed below:

1. Transition to a Lower Carbon Economy
2. Ecosystems (Land, Water, Wildlife)
3. Connection to the Land and Culture
4. Health and Well-being
5. Infrastructure and Access to Essential Services
6. Business and Economy
7. Cross-Cutting Vulnerabilities

The themes and actions in the draft Action Plan were informed through the following initiatives:

- Feedback received in 2023 during a joint engagement on a five-year review of the 2030 Energy Strategy, and Climate Change Strategic Framework including a focus on emission reduction targets. For more information on that engagement, please **see** **Our Energy and Climate Future in a Changing World: What We Heard** (published in March 2024).
- Recommendations from an **Independent Evaluation of the Climate Change Strategic Framework and the previous 2019-2023 Action Plan**, informed by interviews with numerous NWT partners. This third-party evaluation was prepared by DPRA Canada Ltd. and assessed the progress made towards the vision and goals of the Strategic Framework and previous Action Plan.
- The results of the first **NWT Climate Change Risks and Opportunities Assessment** identified the most pressing climate change risks that NWT residents and communities will face in the next decade. The 2024 NWT Climate Change Risks and Opportunities Assessment was informed by a two-year engagement process.
- An inventory of actions being used in the NWT and other similar jurisdictions to address the key risks identified in the Risk and Opportunities Assessment.
- A two-day NWT Climate Change Council workshop in February 2024 to prioritize actions, with further input from the NWT Climate Change Youth Council.
- Work with GNWT program areas and departments to identify GNWT actions to address NWT priority actions.

OVERVIEW

ABOUT THE ENGAGEMENT

In 2024-2025, the GNWT sought input on the *2030 NWT Climate Change Strategic Framework*, as captured in a *draft 2025-2029 NWT Climate Change Action Plan*. Feedback was received from the public, Indigenous governments, other community governments, non-government organizations, partners, and other interested parties through engagement activities between October 2024 and January 2025.

This report summarizes what the GNWT heard in response to these engagements on the contents of the draft Action Plan through both public engagement and targeted engagement activities in the Fall and Winter of 2024/2025.

GOALS OF THE ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

The GNWT recognizes the importance of engaging the public on a wide range of public policy issues and values the role of external input in supporting well-informed government decisions. Effective engagement supports informed decision-making practices, transparency, and enables collaboration.

Following the development of the draft 2025-2029 NWT Climate Change Action Plan, ECC engaged with Indigenous governments and Indigenous organizations, other partner organizations, and the public, as well as further engagement with the NWT Climate Change Council and NWT Climate Change Youth Council.

Guided by the 2030 Climate Change Strategic Framework Guiding Principles, goals of this engagement process include:

- Informing NWT Priority Actions and collaborative implementation with partners.
- Informing GNWT actions and priorities.
- Potentially informing revised NWT greenhouse gas emission targets.

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

A number of activities supported this engagement, including:

"HAVE YOUR SAY" PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

All members of the NWT public were invited to provide feedback on the draft Action Plan between October 16 and November 27, 2024, either through an online survey or by submitting written comments. The survey had 29 questions on different topics in the Action Plan. Each of the seven main themes of the NWT Priority Action were included. People were asked to share their ideas for better government and community actions on climate change in the NWT.

Through this website, the GNWT received responses from:

- **44 NWT residents.** (36 survey responses, five long-form submissions through the website, and three letters emailed directly to climatechange@gov.nt.ca).
- **6 Non-Government Organizations** highlighting perspectives from communities, youth, seniors and researchers.
- **2 NWT Indigenous Governments** and **one** other **community government**.

Independent of the GNWT, Ecology North staff undertook two types of engagement activities in Yellowknife, and provided the GNWT with written summaries of what they heard from youth and seniors, as well as copies of written materials from their engagement events.

Roundtable discussions: On Nov. 21, 2024, Ecology North partnered with Seniors for Climate Change to hold a **Youth-Seniors Potluck and Climate Action Plan Review**. Seniors and youth participated in a roundtable discussion. The event attracted over **35 participants** and included Green Teams from both Yellowknife's Sir John Franklin and St. Patrick's high schools.

Discussions at schools: Ecology North staff facilitated discussions with a total of **190 Yellowknife students** in three Yellowknife schools: Sir John Franklin High School, St. Patrick's High School, and William MacDonald School.

INDIGENOUS GOVERNMENTS AND INDIGENOUS ORGANIZATIONS

The Minister of ECC sent written invitations to all NWT Indigenous Governments and Indigenous Organizations in the Fall of 2024, inviting them to provide feedback to the GNWT on the draft Action Plan, along with an opportunity to hold a bilateral meeting with the GNWT. In addition to Indigenous perspectives shared through the NWT Climate Change Council and through participants at the Climate Change Advisory Group Gathering, the GNWT received written feedback from **two NWT Indigenous Governments** and **one municipal government** through this engagement

2024 NWT CLIMATE CHANGE ADVISORY GATHERING

A three-day Climate Change Advisory Group (CCAG) gathering took place in Yellowknife from October 16 to 18, 2024, that included a cross-section of NWT climate partners including members of the NWT Climate Change Council, NWT Climate Change Youth Council, researchers, land users, private industry, NGOs and government partners. The focus was to collect feedback on the draft Action Plan and discuss collaborative implementation of climate adaptation actions in the NWT. The event was attended by **95 in-person** representatives and **24 virtual participants.**

An opening event in Dettah began the CCAG gathering with conversations about Indigenous perspectives on climate change. Elders, land users, and representatives from Indigenous Governments and organizations highlighted the importance of respectful collaboration in addressing the many interconnected issues that are being directly and indirectly impacted by our changing climate.

Days 2 and 3 of this gathering emphasized small, in-depth group discussions organized by the seven action themes listed within the draft Action Plan. A summary of key points raised at these discussion tables can be found in **Appendix A – 2024 NWT Climate Change Advisory Gathering Synopsis**.

Feedback received through this workshop is also included throughout this report.

WHAT WE HEARD

This section summarizes feedback received through all forms of engagement on the draft 2025-2029 NWT Climate Change Action Plan, including the in-person 2024 NWT Climate Change Advisory Group Gathering, public engagement, and input from partner organizations.

OVERARCHING MESSAGES

This section summarizes the key overarching themes on which the GNWT heard strong feedback during the engagement and provides important considerations as the GNWT works to improve climate change strategic planning and actions.

WHAT WERE THE KEY THEMES?

Throughout the engagement process, many comments focused on specific proposed actions in the draft 2025–2029 NWT Climate Change Action Plan. However, there were several themes that repeatedly surfaced across workshops, public surveys, written submissions, and youth engagement. These themes reflect broader, systemic concerns and opportunities for improving the GNWT's approach to climate change planning, communication, and implementation.

URGENCY

Engagement participants voiced deep concern over the urgency of the climate crisis in the NWT. From widespread wildfires and drought to permafrost thawing, unreliable winter roads, and flooding events, many shared first-hand accounts of how the impacts of climate change are already disrupting lives, livelihoods, and infrastructure.

Public and stakeholder feedback called for the GNWT to communicate the scale and speed of climate risks more clearly, and to act more decisively in its response. Participants said the time for incrementalism is over, and that the GNWT must treat climate action with the same urgency as other emergency and public safety priorities.

While many engagement participants emphasized the urgency of action, approximately 20% of the 36 respondents to the public survey expressed skepticism about climate change impacts or opposition to climate action, often citing insufficient research or their view that there are other, higher priorities.

COORDINATED APPROACH

Addressing the impacts of a changing climate is not something any one government, department, or agency can solve on its own. Engagement participants consistently emphasized that climate adaptation and mitigation must be collective efforts – led in partnership with Indigenous governments, community governments, residents, businesses, and non-governmental organizations.

These efforts must be sustained over time and coordinated across all orders of government and sectors of society.

This was reinforced by feedback from Indigenous governments who said they were not always included in climate strategy discussions, and from NGOs and regional organizations who called for more consistency and transparency in how the GNWT sets climate policy direction.

Numerous respondents emphasized the need for the GNWT to better coordinate its efforts across departments and align its multiple climate-related strategies.

Some respondents were unsure how their community, business, or organization could participate in the actions listed in the draft Action Plan, while many youth expressed frustration that they were being asked to provide feedback but not given clear pathways to influence or lead future solutions.

Some respondents also called for the GNWT to advocate more effectively at the federal level and to coordinate with other jurisdictions on shared interests—for example, in caribou migration, inter-regional energy systems, and supply chain resilience.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Across all sections of engagement, the desire for greater accountability in how climate actions are implemented and tracked was seen. Multiple public survey and CCAG participants called for the GNWT to assign clear responsibility for overseeing climate work, including identifying a lead department or Minister for each action. Participants also asked for mechanisms to publicly track progress and ensure that commitments are met. Many requested that implementation structures be designed with clearer roles, timelines, and lines of accountability.

CLEARER ACTIONS

In addition to clearer language, there was strong demand for actions to be more specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART). Many found the draft actions to be vague, and called for clearer accountability, implementation timelines, and measurable outcomes. This was particularly evident in feedback from community governments and organizations that want to align their own efforts with GNWT priorities.

Many participants said the Action Plan reads more like a collection of tasks. In particular, feedback from NGOs and Indigenous governments stressed the need to move away from a "laundry list" approach and toward one that identifies and builds momentum around strategic priorities.

Respondents want the GNWT to be more focused, with fewer—but more impactful—actions, backed by clear timelines, funding commitments, and accountability mechanisms.

Several respondents – including Members of the Legislative Assembly – expressed confusion about how actions were classified as either “funded” and “unfunded” in the draft Action Plan. For example, some GNWT actions were marked as both “unfunded” and “ongoing.” Most comments suggested more clearly identifying actions that would help achieve the stated priorities, but do not yet have the funding and other necessary resources.

ACCESSIBLE LANGUAGE

The most common feedback across all forms of engagement, by far, was the need to improve the clarity and accessibility of language in the draft Action Plan. Participants – including youth, residents, NGOs, and Indigenous governments – consistently stated the plan used technical language and policy jargon that made it difficult for many to understand how it relates to their lives or how they could contribute.

KEY GAPS IDENTIFIED

Engagement participants across all regions and engagement methods identified several recurring gaps in the draft 2025–2029 NWT Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP).

While many respondents supported the plan's overall direction, there was a strong desire to see improvements in key areas of implementation, integration, and impact. The following themes summarize the most frequently identified gaps:

1. Clearer Roles, Responsibilities, and Implementation Timelines

Respondents called for greater clarity on who is responsible for implementing each action, how progress will be tracked, and when results can be expected. There was a strong desire for SMART actions and clear accountability, particularly among community governments, partner organizations, and Indigenous governments.

2. Integration with Existing Policies and Programs

Many participants said the plan lacked clear alignment with other GNWT policies and strategic documents—including the Energy Strategy, Carbon Tax approach, and core departmental mandates. Others expressed concern about siloed planning and implementation.

3. Youth Representation and Engagement Pathways

Youth participants and those working with young people stressed that youth voices were not reflected in the plan's implementation strategies. They requested credit-bearing education programs, more meaningful roles in planning processes, and greater clarity on how youth will continue to be engaged.

4. Culturally Relevant Education and Communication

The need for climate change education and communication materials that reflect Northern realities, Indigenous knowledge, and local languages was a key theme. Participants also noted a reliance on social media and called for diverse, accessible outreach approaches.

5. Reliable and Accessible Climate Data

Communities consistently identified a lack of baseline data, data-sharing tools, and analytical capacity as a barrier to effective planning. Feedback called for the GNWT to consolidate existing data, improve accessibility, and translate raw data into formats usable by communities and decision-makers.

6. Long-Term Support for Community-Led Monitoring

Indigenous governments and NGOs emphasized the need for stable funding and institutional support for community monitoring programs, such as Guardian initiatives. Many noted that current projects are often at risk of ending when external funding runs out.

7. Integration of Indigenous Knowledge and Livelihoods

Several participants said the plan does not go far enough in incorporating Indigenous knowledge systems or recognizing the economic and cultural value of traditional livelihoods. They called for stronger commitments to co-develop actions with Indigenous partners.

8. Food Security and Health System Resilience

CCAG participants and NGOs said the draft actions on food security and health were underdeveloped and lacked the leadership, coordination, and long-term investment needed to meaningfully reduce risk. Others called for better coordination with the health sector and recognition of food insecurity as a climate impact.

9. Workforce and Skills Development

Participants across sectors noted a lack of technical training opportunities tied to climate adaptation, infrastructure resilience, and renewable energy. This gap was seen as a barrier to building local capacity and supporting economic development.

10. Monitoring Complexity and Fragmentation

Some organizations highlighted that the number of separate GNWT monitoring initiatives is making coordination and participation difficult. They called for a streamlined approach and clear mechanisms for partners to contribute and access data.

"The number of different monitoring plans makes for an unnecessarily complex structure for the GNWT to manage, and for partners to support and access." – NGO

These recurring comments point to an overarching need for better coordination, stronger integration of community voices, and more practical, measurable steps to strengthen climate resilience in the NWT.

DETAILED FEEDBACK SUMMARIES

This section provides a detailed summary of the feedback received during engagement on the draft 2025-2029 NWT Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP). The input is organized under the seven themes used in the draft CCAP, as well as feedback received on the Vision and Guiding principles of the 2030 Climate Change Strategic Framework (CCSF), the GNWT's overarching framework that the draft actions are intended to implement.

VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The 2030 Climate Change Strategic Framework (CCSF) identifies a Vision and Guiding Principles to guide its implementation. Feedback on the CCSF vision and guiding principles has been received on several occasions over the past couple of years. This includes public feedback captured in the March 2024 What We Heard Report on *Our Energy and Climate Future in a Changing World*, interviews and analysis captured in the *2030 NWT Climate Change Strategic Framework and 2019-2023 Action Plan – Final Evaluation* Report ("the Independent Evaluation") and further input during this engagement on the Draft Action Plan.

The Independent Evaluation identified that many people interviewed felt that the vision and guiding principles were still relevant and required no updating moving forward; however, others felt they could be revised to better reflect the current context. The evaluation recommended that the Framework's vision, guiding principles, and goals be reviewed and updated. The following section reflects feedback specifically on the Vision and Principles, however the GNWT acknowledges that a review of the Vision and Principles will also need to reflect the overarching themes heard during this engagement.

VISION

Some of the input received about the Vision was that it was too broad and vague, citing language like, "a healthy economy," and "less dependant on fossil fuels," caused confusion about the scope and accountability of the Strategy. The most significant input on both the vision and principles identified a need for more specific clarity and accountability for greenhouse gas emission reductions. "The Vision Statement and Goal 1 need to be updated to reflect the GNWT's commitment to net zero." *(Note: GNWT publicly committed to Net Zero emissions by 2050 during the engagement on the Draft Action Plan.)*

Many comments reflected that the Vision didn't reflect an adequate sense of urgency to address issues that NWT residents are and will be facing. One respondent highlighted that *climate change is a crisis and therefore effective action now should be a top priority*, another highlighted that there could be more of a focus on public safety and energy security in the Vision.

A key theme identified by Yellowknife students was that a better link between people and the environment was needed. One Yellowknife student suggested, "Going forward, we will make the NWT a happier, healthier ecosystem for humans and animals by reducing the use of fossil fuel. We will also develop knowledge and tools."

Another Vision suggestion from an NWT non-government organization spoke to caring for future generations and bringing people and knowledge together for a healthy northern environment.

> *"By 2030, the people of the NWT will enjoy healthy lives that are not dependent on fossil fuels and will be developing the knowledge and tools needed to increase resilience and adapt to the changing northern climate."*
> *- NWT resident's revised CCSF vision statement*

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

While most of the feedback on the guiding principles within the 2030 Climate Change Strategic Framework was that they are fine as they are, the most consistent input was that the 'meeting climate change commitments' principle needed to be more descriptive (e.g. Achieve Net Zero by 2050). While the importance of many of these principles were reinforced, including the need to collaborate and respect Indigenous cultures and values, comments were also received about the need to better reflect a fiscal commitment, or that the principles should consistently reflect value statements, (e.g. transparency and accountability are values, but the other principles are not).

TRANSITION TO A LOWER CARBON ECONOMY

Value statement: Transition to a strong, healthy economy that uses less fossil fuel, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Key Risks:

- The NWT economy needs to remain strong and viable while taking concrete action to reduce GHG emissions.
- Permafrost thaw, larger wildfires and longer wildfire seasons are likely to increase carbon dioxide and emissions from landscapes.
- Resource development projects can increase territorial emissions and support a transition to a lower carbon economy.

CONTEXT AND PUBLIC SENTIMENT ON EMISSIONS REDUCTION

While the 2030 NWT Climate Change Strategic Framework's Goal 1 is intrinsically linked with the 2030 Energy Strategy and the GNWT's approach to carbon pricing, the draft Action Plan does not include actions to reduce greenhouse gasses through energy systems. These are advanced through the GNWT's 2030 Energy Strategy's strategic objectives which drives towards a goal of reducing the NWT's 2005 emissions by 30% by 2030. [Note: In October 2024, the GNWT made a political commitment for the NWT to achieve net zero GHG emissions by 2050.] Instead, this section focuses on non-energy GHG emission sources, such as waste facilities and landscapes. However, feedback on energy system transition has been included here due to its prominence in engagement responses.

Participants across all engagement formats strongly supported more ambitious action to reduce emissions in the NWT. Many expressed that current targets and timelines are insufficient. Youth, environmental organizations, and Indigenous governments in particular, emphasized that emissions reductions must be approached systemically and through coordinated action across sectors.

Respondent insights into areas needing more development

Note: Some respondents identified necessary actions they felt were missing from the CCAP or areas where further work is needed to implement the actions in the CCAP. They have been compiled here:

- **Funding gaps:** There is a need for increased and sustained federal funding to support energy transitions, especially in smaller and remote communities.
- **Skills training gap**: There is a lack of formal education and workforce development programs related to renewable energy and emissions monitoring.
- **Energy literacy and communication gaps**: There are significant gaps in energy systems literacy among the public and decision-makers, and there is limited transparency in utility planning and decision-making processes.
- **Gap in focus on GHG contributors:** There is insufficient focus on methane emissions and industrial contributors to GHGs.
- **Gap in emissions target**s: Youth noted the absence of industrial emissions targets in the Action Plan.

DISCONNECT BETWEEN ENERGY AND CLIMATE PLANNING

Even as participants called for reductions in emissions, some NGOs proposed alternative approaches to the framing of emissions reduction. They suggested a holistic approach, where mitigation is not a standalone goal but a positive side-effect of efforts to build energy security, increase redundancy, and achieve resilience.

Likewise, there was a call for more emphasis on addressing climate change risks through renewable energy transition and a recommendation that the next draft of the GNWT Climate Action Plan should better link the NWT Climate Change Strategic Framework, 2030 Energy Strategy, and the NWT approach to carbon pricing.

There was consistent feedback that governance in the energy and emissions space lacks clarity and coordination. Suggestions included:

- Creating an Assistant Deputy Minister role to lead low-carbon economy work.
- Supporting shared governance structures with Indigenous governments.
- Ensuring transparency and accountability from utility companies.
- Clarifying the roles and mandates of departments and partners.

Across engagement activities, participants raised concerns about the disconnect between the GNWT's climate change planning and its energy strategy. Several Indigenous governments and NGOs noted that the Climate Change Action Plan, Energy Strategy, and carbon pricing mechanisms appear to operate in isolation from one another. This fragmentation creates confusion and hinders coordinated progress.

Participants emphasized that these strategies must be integrated if the GNWT is to effectively transition to a lower-carbon economy. Some called for a single decision-making framework that connects energy decisions with climate mitigation goals. Others flagged a lack of clarity on which departments or leaders are ultimately responsible for coordinating across these overlapping mandates.

CCAG participants specifically recommended that climate priorities be considered in all major public investments, including energy infrastructure, and that Indigenous governments be given a formal role in shared energy governance. Greater transparency on the relationship between energy utilities and GNWT decision-making was also identified as a gap.

LANDSCAPE EMISSIONS AND EMISSIONS FROM LANDFILLS

Emissions from NWT landscapes, as well as emissions from community landfills, are directly under the purview of the CCSF and its action plans.

One community government partner identified that emissions from their community landfill was the single largest source of emissions within the control of their municipality, and that more support for monitoring and mitigating those emissions would greatly improve their ability to meet their emissions reduction targets.

At the CCAG and in written submissions, many participants stressed the importance of tracking and managing emissions from land-based sources – including wildfires, thawing permafrost, and landfills. There was strong interest in exploring the following opportunities:

- Biological and geological carbon sequestration.
- Participation in global carbon offset markets.
- Monitoring programs focused on landscape carbon.

Some participants encouraged a shift in framing: to view mitigation as a by-product of resilience-building, rather than a goal in isolation.

TRANSITIONING COMMUNITIES OFF OF DIESEL

The transition of territorial utilities to renewable energy from diesel was a prominent concern in the engagement feedback. NWT residents called for transitioning to local energy sources such as solar, wind, hydro, biomass, biofuels and lower emission sources like liquified natural gas (LNG). Additionally, they urged greater investment in battery energy storage systems, the modernization of power systems, and the deployment of energy efficiency measures.

Youth participants issued a strong call for the prioritization of larger, systemic changes like building a public transportation network in the NWT -- not just individual energy projects.

Written feedback from an Indigenous government noted significant gaps between the goal of transitioning to a lower carbon economy and the actions taken by the GNWT, particularly regarding support for renewable energy projects. This aligned with feedback from the 2024 and 2023 Climate Change Advisory Group (CCAG) gatherings, indicating that the GNWT could do more to support regional Indigenous governments, specifically by providing support for regional energy planning.

> *"The NWT should be aggressively pursuing a diversified, resilient, sustainable, and self-sufficient zero-carbon energy grid and economy." - NWT resident*

REDUCING CARBON EMISSIONS

Feedback on emissions reduction was another strong theme that emerged from the public survey responses. More than half of the 44 NWT residents who provided written feedback feel that the NWT should increase its climate mitigation efforts and set more ambitious emission reduction targets, as they believe the target to reduce GHGs by 30 per cent by 2030 is insufficient and that more aggressive action is needed to address the climate crisis. [*NOTE: The GNWT announced a net zero by 2050 commitment during the engagement period, in October 2024. This target was not included in the draft Climate Change Action Plan*.] Engagement feedback showed strong advocacy for reducing emissions and reliance on fossil fuels by leveraging the territory's natural resources like wind, solar and water for energy production and addressing transportation sector emissions.

An environmental non-governmental organization (NGO) suggested using carbon offset trading more ambitiously to meet emission reduction targets. There were critiques about current emission reduction efforts. For instance, an NGO said the shift to Liquified Natural Gas in the Mackenzie Delta has increased

methane emissions, which are more harmful than carbon dioxide. Another strong critique from the same NGO was that they believed there is a fundamental error being made by the GNWT in prioritizing the Taltson Hydro Expansion Project as a main mechanism of achieving NWT GHG reduction targets. This criticism centred around the perception that there is little proof that this project would achieve significant industrial emissions reductions, as well as concerns about the timing of the project being out of sync with the shrinking of the NWT's diamond mining sector and overall economic outlook.

Governance was another theme emerging from this feedback. Specifically, regulatory changes and structural changes that could help lead the way to achieving an energy transition. Participants suggested that governance mechanisms should focus on lowering the cost of transitioning to renewable energy, encouraging zero-carbon home designs, and making supportive regulatory changes.

WORKING TOGETHER

There were also calls from Indigenous governments for the inclusion of open and transparent decision-making processes, a standardized approach to power purchase agreements, off-peak power rates, an increased cap for renewable penetration in diesel communities, and flexible grid-tied energy storage solutions.

Another suggestion from the CCAG tables was a revised governance structure that establishes shared governance of an energy strategy with Indigenous governments and organizations.

Finally, improving and investing in public infrastructure was another area of concern for several NWT residents. Suggestions included energy efficiency, upgraded hydro facilities, and improved infrastructure to increase use of electric vehicles, e-bikes, bikes, mass transit and active transportation.

"The utilities have a responsibility to diversify their energy technologies and spearhead efforts to transition to a zero-carbon economy. The GNWT has a responsibility to lower the cost of the transition for private companies, including utilities. New home construction should incentivize zero-carbon designs." - NWT resident

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ECOSYSTEMS (LAND, WATER, WILDLIFE)

Value statement: The Ecosystems value for climate resilience refers to thriving NWT ecosystems and sustainable livelihoods. Under this value, biodiversity is strong, ecosystems are stable and resilient to change, and animals, plants, water and air are healthy.

Key Risks to Ecosystems:

- Permafrost thaw is changing NWT landscapes.
- NWT biodiversity is impacted by warming temperatures, changing precipitation patterns, and extreme weather.

- The quantity and quality of water in the NWT is changing.
- Longer and more intense wildfire seasons are likely to alter NWT landscapes.
- Permafrost thaw and longer wildfire seasons are likely to increase carbon dioxide emissions from the landscape.

CONTEXT AND OVERVIEW

Across engagement activities, participants expressed widespread concern about rapid changes to ecosystems and the loss of biodiversity across the NWT. Many respondents shared that changes on the land and water are being observed at an alarming pace, with real implications for food security, harvesting, and cultural connection.

Participants also emphasized that Indigenous Knowledge and lived experience must be central to how ecosystems are monitored, studied, and managed. There was a clear call for more collaboration between communities and researchers, and for GNWT to support local leadership, coordination, and long-term planning that includes Indigenous Knowledge systems.

The strongest feedback in this theme called for the GNWT to invest in meaningful, community-driven monitoring and data collection, improve coordination across departments, and ensure that research efforts lead to action—not just more study.

Respondent insights into areas needing more development

Note: Some respondents indicated necessary actions they felt were missing from the CCAP or areas where more work is needed to implement the actions in the CCAP. They have been compiled here:

- **Data Gaps:** A lack of consistent baseline and historical data and limited access to current environmental data prevents effective monitoring of trends like permafrost thaw, wildfire activity, vegetation changes, entomology, and water quality. Participants questioned whether the right data is being collected to support climate adaptation and mitigation actions. There is also a lack of access to data for communities and insufficient attention paid to what data already exists.
- **Knowledge Gaps:** Insufficient understanding of complex systems, such as the role of carbon sinks or interconnections between climate change and biodiversity, restricts progress toward more adaptive and robust integrated actions.
- **Research-to-Action Gaps:** Participants emphasized the need for more deliberate connections between research, knowledge translation and implementation. There is strong interest in seeing scientific research and Indigenous Knowledge work lead to community-informed policies and tangible outcomes.
- **Coordination Gaps:** Feedback reflected a lack of clarity about who leads or supports various monitoring and research initiatives, and where partnerships need to be strengthened, especially across regions and sectors.
- **Policy Implementation Gaps:** GNWT's Indigenous Knowledge policy was cited as an example of a framework that exists but is not fully implemented or applied across departments. Staff awareness, training, and accountability mechanisms were identified as possibly missing.

INTEGRATING MANY WAYS OF KNOWING

Throughout these engagements, many Indigenous participants and Indigenous government staff – including members of the NWT Climate Change Council – emphasized the importance of applying both Indigenous and Scientific knowledge systems when addressing ecosystem issues.

Participants at the 2024 Climate Change Advisory Gathering (CCAG) strongly advocated for an approach to research and decision-making that respects both Indigenous and scientific worldviews. They emphasized that Indigenous Knowledge (TK) must not be confined to cultural or symbolic roles but recognized as a valid and necessary system for understanding environmental change.

Participants raised the need for GNWT staff to better understand and apply Indigenous Knowledge across departments. One specific recommendation was to include the GNWT's Indigenous Knowledge policy in onboarding training for all employees working on climate-related issues. While this policy exists, participants noted their view that it is outdated, poorly known, and inconsistently applied. Its timely renewal and full implementation were identified as critical next steps.

Indigenous leaders at the CCAG chose to remain within the Ecosystems breakout group rather than be redirected to the "Connection to the Land and Culture" themed discussions – explicitly to reinforce that integrating Indigenous Knowledge is foundational to environmental decision-making.

"Getting out on the land is essential. Outdoor education. Traditional Knowledge. True learning happens outside." – NWT Resident

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YOUTH VOICES AND THE CASE FOR ECOSYSTEM-CENTERED POLICY

Feedback from youth provided a perspective on the importance of ecosystem protection. Ecology North facilitated discussions with 190 students from three Yellowknife schools, across 12 classrooms and two Green Teams. More than half of these students chose the Ecosystems theme as the most important part of the draft Climate Change Action Plan.

Students consistently emphasized that the plan should reflect the long-term wellbeing of ecosystems and wildlife, which they associate with food security, mental health, and cultural survival. They expressed concern that current government priorities appeared too economically driven, and that climate actions should be more systemic, ambitious, and future-focused.

Many youth also shared feelings of anxiety about their future and questioned how much influence they could have. They did not feel represented in the plan and called for more accessible information, clearer explanations of GNWT priorities, and more meaningful opportunities to contribute.

"We need the government to protect animals and plants so we can have enough food to survive." – Yellowknife student

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COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH AND COMMUNITY-LED PRIORITIES

Participants across engagement activities stressed the need for more collaborative, community-driven approaches to research and monitoring. Many participants called for GNWT to act as a convener – bringing together governments, researchers, and communities to jointly identify research priorities and build long-term partnerships.

Some participants also felt that the GNWT could more effectively use its position to influence the focus of publicly funded research, address knowledge gaps, and ensure findings are accessible to communities.

Participants suggested that in-person gatherings – especially those that bring together Indigenous knowledge holders, community leaders, scientists, and business leaders – could help identify shared priorities and strengthen understanding across systems.

BUILDING A DATA CULTURE FOR CLIMATE RESILIENCE

Many participants emphasized the importance of consistent, long-term monitoring programs to understand climate change impacts on ecosystems. This includes baseline data collection as well as integrated programs that track key indicators such as wildfire frequency, permafrost thaw, and changes in water quality and quantity across lakes, rivers, and the Arctic Ocean.

The need for more relevant, accessible, and coordinated data was a central theme in this engagement. Participants asked fundamental questions about whether the GNWT and its partners are collecting the right inputs to support meaningful work on climate change mitigation and adaptation.

A common concern was that new studies are sometimes launched without fully reviewing or building upon data and research that already exists. Participants expressed frustration about duplicated efforts and missed opportunities to apply what is already known.

There were also repeated calls for improving community access to data collected on their lands. While data-sharing agreements have improved in recent years, many communities and Indigenous governments still struggle to access timely and useful information.

Participants also identified the need for more innovative, adaptable monitoring systems that can respond to rapidly shifting conditions on the land.

Participants across engagement activities emphasized the importance of consolidating and packaging research results and datasets, including Indigenous Knowledge, in formats that are accessible and useful to both governments and communities. Related feedback on the need for and importance of having access to clear and accessible information would help ensure that decision-making is fact-based, locally relevant, and informed by the full range of knowledge available.

INNOVATION, MONITORING, AND THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

Participants at the 2024 CCAG gathering highlighted the opportunity for the NWT to be a global leader in climate change adaptation, due to its geographic positioning and the speed at which climate change is occurring in the Arctic and sub-Arctic.

However, data and technological deficiencies were highlighted as key barriers to this potential. "Data deficiencies" refer to missing pieces of data for specific projects, while broader "knowledge gaps" signal entire topics or systems that are under-researched.

Participants called for:

- Greater investment in technologies to enable cost-effective, large-scale data collection.
- More accessible and consolidated data-sharing platforms.
- Stronger data culture within GNWT and its partners.

Some participants noted that the GNWT actions listed in the draft Action plan focus “almost entirely” on research without clearly connecting findings to outcomes. One NGO respondent wrote that the GNWT needs to link research more directly to tangible results, such as building community skills, informing policies, and supporting community wellbeing.

CONNECTION TO THE LAND AND CULTURE

Value statement: The Connection to the Land and Culture value means that Indigenous knowledge, culture, and identity are held strong and passed to new generations. NWT residents connect with, access, and experience the land in ways that are meaningful to them. Under this value, traditional livelihoods, community belonging, historical and spiritual connection to the land, and intergenerational knowledge transfer are strong.

Key Risks to Connection to the Land and Culture:

- Less predictable weather and ice conditions are affecting people's ability to access the land safely.
- Climate change is having a profound impact on Indigenous knowledge, culture, and identity.
- Culturally important places and heritage sites are being threatened by thawing permafrost, wildfires, erosion, sea-level rise, and flooding.

CONTEXT AND OVERVIEW

Across engagement activities, NWT residents emphasized that the GNWT must prioritize meaningful engagement with communities to understand their specific needs, vulnerabilities, and priorities. Many participants called for climate change work to directly support strong, resilient communities rooted in their connection to land and culture.

Residents expressed concern that environmental changes are threatening not only physical safety on the land but also cultural continuity and knowledge transfer. Elders and community members described how climate change is altering their ability to hunt, travel, and gather, impacting livelihoods, intergenerational learning, and spiritual well-being.

In the Yellowknife region, elders described changes in winter overflow and open water, reduced numbers of animals like muskrat and moose, and increased presence of muskox. These changes were described as occurring so rapidly that long-standing knowledge such as safe travel routes is no longer reliable.

"This impacts us spiritually – when we can't predict the weather and can't access our sacred areas. This impacts us emotionally – saddened that traditional knowledge is being impacted." – Indigenous Organization representative

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Respondent insights into areas needing more development

Note: Some respondents indicated necessary actions they felt were missing from the CCAP or areas where more work is needed to implement the actions in the CCAP. They have been compiled here:

- **Knowledge Transfer Gaps:** There is a need for greater institutional support for intergenerational learning, including land-based education, elder engagement in schools, and youth programming.

- **Funding Gaps:** Programs that support cultural continuity—such as harvesting, guardianship, and on-the-land safety require more predictable and flexible funding.
- **Data and Access Gaps:** Indigenous Knowledge must be safely documented and accessible to communities through respectful agreements and infrastructure. Digital platforms and liaisons were proposed to support this work.
- **Cultural Heritage Gaps:** Culturally important sites are at risk. Current approaches to heritage protection must incorporate Indigenous values, governance, and community-led mapping.
- **Capacity Gaps:** Communities need more trained local monitors and analysts to support culturally relevant research and decision-making.

INTERGENERATIONAL KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER AND EDUCATION

A major theme throughout the engagement was the importance of protecting and passing on Indigenous knowledge through culturally grounded education and community programs. Participants highlighted the value of involving elders in schools, hosting on-the-land classes, and developing curriculum that reflects Indigenous worldviews and languages.

Participants also recommended that the GNWT support climate-focused language revitalization efforts, including through the development of a glossary of climate terms in Indigenous languages. A terminology workshop was proposed to support this work and build tools for cross-generational knowledge sharing.

Federal funding mechanisms were flagged as a barrier to sustaining long-term land-based programs. Community members called for more flexible and predictable funding to support harvesting, guardianship programs, learning and sharing opportunities, youth training, and on-the-land safety initiatives.

> *"Harvest disaster needs more funding and reinstate trapping kits, transportation funds, and cabin building funds." – NWT Resident*

PROTECTING HERITAGE AND CULTURALLY IMPORTANT PLACES

Participants emphasized that many sacred and historically important places are increasingly at risk due to the impacts of climate change, including coastal and river erosion, wildfire, and permafrost thaw. Protecting these spaces is essential to cultural identity, spiritual wellbeing, and truth and reconciliation.

One recommendation was to revisit road development plans to avoid damage to sacred sites, and to integrate Indigenous perspectives into archaeological assessments and updates to the statement of significance process.

Participants also called for mapping burial sites outside of formal cemeteries, using community-led approaches grounded in both Indigenous and scientific knowledge systems.

One Indigenous Government representative noted that protecting sacred areas is not only historically important, but that these areas may become places of refuge if climate change continues to escalate, making preserving these areas potentially vital to future community survival.

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE STEWARDSHIP AND COMMUNITY CAPACITY

Participants emphasized the need to store and share Indigenous Knowledge safely and appropriately through data-sharing agreements and digital infrastructure. One recommendation was to create a liaison position responsible for safeguarding knowledge, supporting monitoring programs, and ensuring that Indigenous Knowledge is included in climate adaptation and mitigation planning.

Participants also emphasized the need to build local capacity through training, funding, and partnerships. One proposed action was to expand Indigenous community monitoring programs to include not only fieldwork, but also data analysis and knowledge translation. This would support the creation of accessible, relevant knowledge products that can inform decisions at all levels.

"There should be monitoring and warnings for safe travel on land, ice, and water." – NWT Resident

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YOUTH PERSPECTIVES AND CULTURAL RESILIENCE

Youth echoed many of the same concerns raised by elders and community members, underscoring the need for land-based learning, language revitalization, and culturally relevant education. Students emphasized that "true learning happens outside," and called for increased investment in outdoor education, Indigenous Knowledge sharing, and Indigenous language immersion.

Youth also expressed a desire to be part of climate change solutions that protect their identity and future. They called for greater visibility of their experiences and more opportunities to meaningfully contribute to the development of policies and programs.

HEALTH & WELLBEING

Value statement: The Health and Wellbeing value means that health and wellbeing of NWT residents are strong, and their communities are safe and sustainable. Under this value, residents have robust mental and physical health, their communities are stable and resilient to climate change impacts, and traditional food systems and ways of life are preserved.

Key Risks to Health and Wellbeing:

- The safety and wellbeing of many NWT communities is threatened by flooding, drought, and wildfires.
- Climate change is affecting physical health conditions for some NWT residents.
- Climate change is threatening the mental health of some NWT residents.
- Climate change is increasing food insecurity challenges in the NWT.

CONTEXT AND PUBLIC SENTIMENT

The draft 2025–2029 Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) identifies key risks to health and wellbeing, including the increasing threat posed by flooding, drought, and wildfires; impacts on physical health; threats to mental health; and worsening food insecurity. Feedback from public and targeted engagement on the CCAP highlighted that these risks are interconnected, with compounding effects across communities.

> *"Community health and wellbeing is being impacted by climate anxiety and food security, and mental health issues, and a loss of connection to the land." – NWT Climate Change Council member*

Participants emphasized that effective climate adaptation in health must address social and economic inequities, integrate vulnerable voices, and offer flexible, well-funded solutions. Feedback consistently called for better collaboration, trust-building, and regular engagement between communities and the GNWT.

Respondent insights into areas needing more development

Note: Some respondents indicated necessary actions they felt were missing from the CCAP or areas where more work is needed to implement the actions in the CCAP. They have been compiled here:

- **Mental Health Gaps:** More direct supports are needed for eco-anxiety, particularly for youth. Resources must be appropriate, accessible, and offered in diverse formats. Health services must also align more closely with emerging climate pressures.
- **Infrastructure Gaps:** Communities require safe spaces, air filtration systems, and energy-efficient buildings to reduce exposure to climate-related hazards. Emergency preparedness and response planning must be better integrated with health systems.

- **Food Security Gaps:** Many communities lack access to reliable, affordable, and culturally relevant food systems. Funding, education, and traditional food strategies are essential.
- **Public Education Gaps:** Public health education needs to focus more on climate impacts—especially wildfire smoke, clean air access, heat events, and water safety. Communications must be linguistically and culturally accessible.
- **System Leadership Gaps:** Organizations and residents called for clearer GNWT leadership in coordinating food security and health resilience work across sectors.
- **Capacity Gaps:** The frontline health workforce is overburdened and under-resourced. Participants stressed the need for multiyear, flexible funding for climate-health adaptation and training, as well as collaboration with academic and NGO partners.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ECO-ANXIETY

One of the most consistent themes from engagement feedback – particularly among youth – was the mental health toll of climate change. Survey respondents and engagement participants urged the GNWT to provide resources to help people cope with eco-anxiety by offering hope, actionable solutions, and better education about what individuals and communities can do.

> *"People need ways to cope with eco-anxiety. Give them reason to hope. [Share] actions society is taking, [and] actions they can contribute to." – NWT Resident*

Youth engagement revealed strong views on mental health and climate-related responsibilities. Many youth emphasized the importance of receiving information in ways that support – not worsen – their mental health. They also voiced concerns that residents in the NWT have been bearing too much of the financial burden of climate disasters in recent years and worried what that meant for their futures.

Participants emphasized the need for targeted campaigns and mental health supports that do not rely solely on social media, which some youth felt would increase anxiety rather than reduce it. In-person education and supports were strongly recommended, with a secondary recommendation for lower-tech alternatives such as mail-outs and printed or physical materials.

> *"A social media campaign is NOT a responsible or appropriate way to spread information about ecoanxiety – That will only prove to increase anxiety." – Yellowknife student*

Participants in the 2024 NWT Climate Change Advisory Group (CCAG) gathering also called for the GNWT to align climate-related health efforts with existing services, increase capacity for frontline health workers, and create training pathways that connect mental health, healing, and climate change.

HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

Participants shared that climate-resilient infrastructure plays a central role in protecting both mental and physical health. Suggested actions included making air purifiers more accessible, requiring high-efficiency and air-filtering systems in new buildings, and creating community spaces with clean air and cooling capacity to support residents during wildfire smoke events and heat waves.

> *"Reduce the impacts of wildfire smoke and heat waves on NWT resident health." – Feedback from CCAG gathering participants on Action 14 in the draft CCAP*

Public health education was also highlighted at the CCAG gathering as a necessary investment. Ideas included partnering with Aurora College's nursing program to create outreach materials, offering localized training, and improving translation and language accessibility for health communications.

FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

Food security was frequently identified as a major concern. Feedback included calls for the GNWT to invest in:

- Community greenhouses
- Sustainable hunting and fishing programs
- Low-emission gardening (regenerative practices)
- Traditional food replacement strategies
- Education on how to grow and harvest food locally

Partner organizations urged the GNWT to take a more active leadership role in driving food security research and policy development.

> *"Food security is a serious challenge, and the actions outlined in this section fall far short of the leadership, collaboration, and innovation needed. A great deal of research and assessment has already been done. Use this work to develop new actions that meet the urgency of the need." – NGO*

CCAG participants reinforced these points, while also advocating for the GNWT to take a collaborative approach. This included highlighting that Indigenous governments were often absent from food security actions listed in the draft Action Plan. They called for more flexible food policy regulations for small-scale producers, better integration of climate and health data, and funding for food sovereignty networks and fire-break gardens.

INFRASTRUCTURE & ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL SERVICES

Value statement: The Infrastructure and Access to Essential Services value means that NWT communities and residents have access to affordable, reliable, and sustainable essential services and infrastructure. This is represented by robust transportation, housing, energy, and communication infrastructure, which make essential services accessible. Under this value, NWT roads, buildings, power plants, supply chains, and telecommunications towers and lines are in good condition.

Key Risks to Infrastructure & Access to Essential Services:

- Supply chains in the NWT are being disrupted as the impacts of climate change intensify.
- Shoreline infrastructure and buildings will likely be at risk from more rapid erosion processes and flooding.
- Increasing extreme weather events, changes in precipitation and, in some cases, changes in soil conditions bring new risks that need to be considered when building, maintaining, and operating infrastructure.

CONTEXT AND PUBLIC SENTIMENT

The draft 2025–2029 Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) outlines several climate-related threats to infrastructure and access to essential services, including erosion, flooding, wildfire risk, and infrastructure vulnerability to extreme weather and soil instability.

Public survey respondents emphasized the importance of detailed climate risk assessments, resilient infrastructure planning, and comprehensive disaster response strategies. Meanwhile, broader engagement – such as discussions at the 2024 Climate Change Advisory Group (CCAG) gathering and written submissions from partner organizations – highlighted that these ideas must be supported by funding, stronger collaboration, and clearer communication from the GNWT about roles and responsibilities.

Respondent insights into areas needing more development

Note: Some respondents indicated necessary actions they felt were missing from the CCAP or areas where more work is needed to implement the actions in the CCAP. They have been compiled here:

- **Energy Infrastructure Gaps:** Stakeholders emphasized that more action should be placed on maintaining and protecting the territory's ageing existing energy systems – and highlighted their centrality to all essential services.
- **Data Gaps:** There is a need for reliable, accessible climate hazard information – especially flood and wildfire mapping.
- **Disaster Preparedness Gaps:** Emergency planning must be more inclusive, coordinated, and practiced regularly with clear leadership roles.
- **Community Resilience Gaps:** Funding is needed for community-driven adaptation plans and implementation of locally appropriate solutions.

- **Standards and Codes Gaps:** The lack of NWT-specific design standards for climate-resilient infrastructure was widely cited.
- **Communication and Redundancy Gaps:** Resilience in internet, telecommunications, and transportation systems must be built in through redundancy and upgrades.
- **Funding and Implementation Gaps:** Many actions remain unfunded or too general. Participants expressed uncertainty about how to access government support and called for clearer guidance, timelines, and accountability mechanisms.

DISASTER PLANNING AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Feedback consistently highlighted the importance of comprehensive disaster planning. Participants called for:

- Regular emergency training and simulations
- Stronger interagency coordination
- Community resources to support wildfire response, flood evacuation, and cooling/warming spaces

One recommendation from the public survey was the adoption of standardized emergency response systems, such as the Incident Command System, with integration of Indigenous leadership in planning and decision-making.

> *"Implement the incident command system throughout organizations and have plans in place for different disaster responses including opinions from Indigenous leaders." – NWT Resident*

CLIMATE RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE & SUPPLY CHAINS

Participants emphasized that future infrastructure must be designed with climate risks in mind. This includes:

- Locating **new construction** away from flood- and wildfire-prone areas
- Upgrading and **protecting telecommunications** and internet infrastructure
- Ensuring **buildings** can withstand more intense heat, cold, and precipitation

Public survey responses specifically noted the importance of protecting transportation networks and increasing the number of all-season roads to help keep communities connected, particularly during emergencies.

Feedback from partner organizations called attention to the absence of energy systems from the draft Action Plan. They emphasized that energy infrastructure underpins every other essential service and must be explicitly addressed.

"One of the most striking omissions is the absence of energy infrastructure in this section. Energy systems are fundamental to the functionality of other critical services, and their resilience must be explicitly addressed in the [Action Plan]." – NGO

ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND DECISION-MAKING SUPPORT TOOLS

CCAG participants identified several priority actions to strengthen decision-making, planning, and coordination:

- **Aggregate and disseminate climate hazard data**, including comprehensive wildfire and flood mapping
- **Complete climate vulnerability assessments** for essential assets and infrastructure, building on existing efforts such as NWTAC's work on building foundations and costs associated with permafrost degradation
- **Establish climate impact tracking systems**, including tools to assess the damage and costs of events like wildfires and floods, to support future planning and funding decisions.
- **Develop and promote NWT-specific codes and standards** to address local infrastructure needs, with input from initiatives like Housing NWT's Climate Change Risk Analysis

"Overall, increased coordination across sectors, communities, and government departments is vital to address climate hazards, improve emergency preparedness, and build resilient infrastructure in the Northwest Territories." – CCAG Participant

BUSINESS AND ECONOMY

Value statement: The Business and Economy value refers to economic self-sufficiency that promotes a positive economic environment in the NWT for both profit-based and traditional economic activities. Climate risks like extreme weather events (wildfires, flooding) are increasingly costly to NWT businesses as they are linked to revenue losses, property damage, insurance rate increases, and supply shortages.

Key Risks to Business and Economy:

- The high cost to adapt and respond to climate change and climate-related disasters can cause financial losses or constraints for governments, businesses, and residents, affecting economic resilience in the NWT.

CONTEXT AND PUBLIC SENTIMENT

The draft 2025–2029 Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) outlines the economic risks posed by climate change in the NWT, including rising costs due to supply chain disruptions, extreme weather events, and the need to repair or replace infrastructure. It also identifies some opportunities for economic diversification and local income generation.

While most public survey respondents focused on infrastructure and supply chains, other feedback highlighted a more complex picture. Letters from other orders of government and NGOs, as well as participants at the 2024 Climate Change Advisory Group (CCAG) gathering, emphasized the structural financial pressures facing governments and the need for long-term economic planning that balances climate risk with sustainable growth.

Respondent insights into areas needing more development

Note: Some respondents indicated necessary actions they felt were missing from the CCAP or areas where more work is needed to implement the actions in the CCAP. They have been compiled here:

- **Economic Planning Gaps:** Current government strategies do not fully integrate climate risk into economic diversification or resilience planning.
- **Funding and Incentives Gaps:** Financial tools such as grants, public insurance, and investment incentives are needed to help businesses adapt.
- **Coordination Gaps:** Investment planning often lacks input from communities and local businesses.
- **Integration of Traditional Economies:** Traditional and sustainable livelihoods are not yet fully integrated into economic development frameworks.
- **Technical Skills and Workforce Gaps:** There is limited focus on developing self-sustaining skills needed for climate-related economic opportunities and a need to support local training, retention, and collaboration.

INVESTMENT, INNOVATION, AND LOCAL CAPACITY

A common theme heard throughout engagement is that investing in public infrastructure upgrades is critical to supporting economic resiliency in the business sector. Participants also called for the GNWT to take on more responsibilities and coordinated actions to provide financial incentives and insurance tools to the business sector for climate adaptation, often citing that individual businesses do not have the tools, skills, or finances to adapt on their own.

> *"GNWT staff should help businesses adapt to climate change." – NWT Resident*

CCAG participants stressed that investment in climate action must be strategic, well-coordinated, and focused on sectors like energy, transportation, food security, and tourism. They called for:

- Clear priority setting given limited resources
- Cross-sectoral coordination to identify economic vulnerabilities
- Local employment opportunities tied to clean energy, eco-tourism, and infrastructure retrofits

Participants identified community-led adaptation planning and regional action committees as key mechanisms to ensure the GNWT's economic initiatives are grounded in community needs and build long-term resilience. Additional priorities included training programs to support local capacity, skill development for climate-related projects, and mechanisms for communities to collaborate and share knowledge.

> *"Our continued reliance on fossil fuels is becoming a key barrier to development of new mines or any other economic development." – NGO*

Participants also flagged a need for plain-language communication and simplified processes to help local businesses engage with climate-related programs. They emphasized the importance of clear, accessible guidance to help businesses understand emissions reduction goals and climate-related risks. Educational support and plain-language materials were recommended, especially for small businesses and entrepreneurs.

Participants also recommended regulatory improvements to align economic development with emissions reductions and resilience-building goals.

YOUTH AND SENIORS' PERSPECTIVES

A consistent theme in the feedback received from Yellowknife students, as well as participants at a youth and seniors potluck event, was concern that economic development priorities were often emphasized in the draft CCAP at the expense of environmental protection and climate action. Many voiced frustrations at seeing few pathways for meaningful involvement in shaping economic decisions that will ultimately impact their futures. There was a strong desire for more focus on sustainability, self-sufficiency, and nature-based solutions.

"There is no economy on a dead planet." – Participants at a Seniors-Youth potluck event in Yellowknife

Participants called on decision-makers to stop treating climate and economic concerns as separate issues. They want to see investments that create good jobs while protecting ecosystems, and support for local businesses that contribute to both community well-being and environmental stewardship.

Youth feedback also reflected deep concerns about long-term economic sustainability. Several students expressed skepticism toward short-term economic fixes and emphasized that climate action must guide economic priorities – not the other way around.

CROSS-CUTTING

Value statement: Improved leadership, communication and capacity-building are required to support all three goals of the 2030 Climate Change Strategic Framework (CCSF). The consequences of climate change span across multiple risk themes and can lead to cascading effects by adding stressors to other issues that the NWT is facing, like the lasting impacts of colonialism, a shortage of workers, and the lack of long-term climate data in the NWT.

Key Risks to Cross-Cutting topics:

- Efforts to reduce and adapt to the impacts of climate change may be slowed by limited resources, capacity shortages and a lack of adequate processes and/or governance mechanisms to respond efficiently.
- Climate change risks can intensify existing inequities and disproportionately affect certain communities and groups.
- Lack of robust historical climate data in the NWT, and limited climate monitoring and ways to share data can challenge informed decision-making in the NWT.

CONTEXT AND PUBLIC SENTIMENT

Cross-cutting actions are those that apply across multiple climate change impact areas and that support broader system change. Feedback received on this theme focused heavily on four priorities: education and outreach, culturally relevant communication, community-based monitoring, and accessible climate data.

Participants emphasized that addressing climate change in the NWT must involve more than infrastructure -- it requires engaging and empowering residents with knowledge, tools, and inclusive decision-making.

Respondent insights into areas needing more development

Note: Some respondents indicated necessary actions they felt were missing from the CCAP or areas where more work is needed to implement the actions in the CCAP. They have been compiled here:

- **Climate education gaps:** Students want climate education to be more present in their lives and linked to real-world action. There are few accredited climate-related programs tailored to Indigenous youth.
- **Communication gaps:** Many communities struggle to interpret raw data; it must be translated in terms that are relevant to the community.
- **Gaps in monitoring:** Monitoring systems need to include social indicators and be made more accessible.
- **Lightning monitoring gap:** Lightning monitoring was identified as insufficient, given its large contribution to NWT wildfires.

CLIMATE CHANGE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Youth feedback in this theme emphasized a strong desire for more meaningful engagement and practical learning opportunities. Students expressed that climate change education needs to be more relevant, local, and linked to action. Several noted that they are not represented in decision-making but will be the ones living with the consequences.

Suggestions included creating mail-out campaigns, in-person presentations, and credit-bearing education streams.

Public survey respondents and CCAG participants repeatedly emphasized the need to better integrate climate change into school programs and curricula. Suggested actions included:

- Adding climate change content to school courses, with a focus on Northern-relevant material
- Involving Elders and Indigenous Knowledge Keepers in curriculum development
- Hosting in-school presentations and climate-focused events
- Creating accredited programs that also offer summer job pathways

> *"[The GNWT should] review training opportunities and schooling in NWT and create courses and programs that provide skills and knowledge in climate change themes, adaptations and mitigation-related topics." – NWT Resident*

Participants also called for outreach tailored to youth and underrepresented communities, emphasizing that education is a long-term strategy for building climate resilience.

COMMUNICATION THAT REACHES EVERYONE

Residents voiced concern that current climate communications are too reliant on digital media and do not reach all communities effectively. Suggested improvements included:

- Using radio, printed posters, and local media
- Delivering urgent and action-oriented messages
- Promoting personal and collective responsibility
- Highlighting the NWT's unique climate impacts in national conversations and southern media

> *"A knowledgeable public will be better equipped to take action and contribute to territorial efforts to build resilience." – NGO*

Participants also emphasized the importance of sharing information about Northern realities with the rest of Canada and the world. Grants and awards for local storytelling and documentary filmmaking were suggested to help amplify Northern voices.

COMMUNITY MONITORING AND INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP

CCAG participants and Indigenous governments emphasized that local monitoring programs must be better supported—and that Indigenous-led initiatives like Guardian Programs are already playing a key role.

Key suggestions included:

- Expand funding for Indigenous Guardian and community-based monitoring programs
- Partner with non-profits that can act flexibly and efficiently
- Support Indigenous-led research and Indigenous Knowledge integration
- Create platforms for sharing climate knowledge in accessible formats

An Indigenous government highlighted that many communities—including their own—conduct science- and knowledge-based research. For example, ice thickness on Great Bear Lake is being tracked, but does not yet have stable funding. They urged the GNWT to commit to supporting long-term, community-led monitoring and to advocate for federal funding to ensure continuity beyond the interests of individual researchers or national science priorities.

Some written feedback from partner organizations shared challenges in navigating an "unnecessarily complex structure" of environmental monitoring plans, projects, and data-sharing agreements in the NWT. Overall, related feedback agreed that well-coordinated and accessible monitoring programs are a priority to strengthen climate resilience in the territory.

CLIMATE DATA AND CAPACITY BUILDING

The need for better access to climate data was a recurring theme. Participants highlighted gaps in data, challenges with analytical capacity, and a desire for more usable information.

Recommendations included:

- Translate raw data into practical, visual formats that are easy to understand
- Include social indicators, such as health and food security, in monitoring systems
- Make climate data publicly accessible and relevant to community needs
- Build a workforce skilled in climate monitoring and analysis

CCAG participants suggested that the GNWT support training programs in partnership with institutions like Aurora College, expand public health research related to climate, and build a data culture that supports both resilience and transparency.

NEXT STEPS

CHANGING THE GNWT'S APPROACH

From community resilience to economic opportunities, the challenges posed by climate change are urgent, complex, and interconnected with many other aspects of life here in the Northwest Territories. Given the feedback received during this engagement, the associated Independent Evaluation, and past engagements; particularly the 2023 public engagement on the 2030 Energy Strategy and Climate Change Strategic Framework; as well as two years of engagement on the contents of the 2024 NWT Climate Change Risks and Opportunities Assessment; the GNWT has committed to redrafting its approach to climate change planning.

The GNWT is now moving to a coordinated approach to strategic planning on both energy and climate change. This joint approach, announced in May 2025, will bring together the climate change and energy strategies, with the aim of taking more efficient, coherent, and impactful actions across government.

The GNWT anticipates releasing a final integrated strategy in the spring of 2026, while it continues to implement actions proposed in the draft 2025-2029 NWT Climate Change Action Plan.

APPENDIX A: 2024 NWT Climate Change Advisory Gathering

A more detailed synopsis of break-out group discussions during this workshop.

Description

A three-day Climate Change Advisory Group (CCAG) gathering took place in Yellowknife from October 16 to 18, 2024. It included a cross-section of NWT climate partners including members of the NWT Climate Change Council, NWT Climate Change Youth Council, researchers, land users, private industry, NGOs and government partners. The focus was to collect feedback on the draft Action Plan and discuss collaborative implementation of climate adaptation actions in the NWT. The event was attended by **95 in-person** representatives and **24 virtual participants.**

An opening event in Dettah began the CCAG gathering with conversations about Indigenous perspectives on climate change. Elders, land users, and representatives from Indigenous Governments and organizations highlighted the importance of respectful collaboration in addressing the many interconnected issues that are being directly and indirectly impacted by our changing climate.

Days 2 and 3 of this gathering emphasized small, in-depth group discussions organized by the seven action themes listed within the draft Action Plan. Participants were asked to identify shared priorities through a group exercise and then create a plan for how they and their respective organizations could collaborate on an initiative to advance one of those priorities. Different groups progressed to different stages of the exercise, which is reflected below.

Low Carbon Economy table discussion synopsis

Priority 1: Transition to a lower-carbon economy

- Assign clear leadership for this area (e.g., create an Assistant Deputy Minister role).
- Provide incentives and penalties ("carrots & sticks") to drive emissions reduction.
- Focus regulatory guidance on large emitters, including the mining sector.
- Mandate NWT Council of Leaders to assess all spending through a climate lens.

Priority 2: Identify and advance opportunities for carbon sequestration

- Monitor emissions from landscapes and landfills.
- Research nature-based solutions and emerging technologies.
- Share research findings with communities and Indigenous governments.

Priority 3: Improve ability to track, monitor, and mitigate GHG emissions

- Establish metrics, like Key Performance Indicators, to measure and monitor emissions, as well as energy security and energy affordability in each NWT community.
- Improve Carbon Tax revenue tracking.

- Promote collaboration between government, researchers, and communities to prioritize mitigation efforts.
- Address community-level emissions from waste management and transportation systems.

Ecosystems table discussion synopsis

Priorities:

1. **Data deficiencies and knowledge gaps** – Data deficiencies refer to specific pieces of data missing for particular projects/themes, and knowledge gaps refers to entire areas which are not being investigated. Participants identified data deficiencies and knowledge gaps as two of the highest priority items for Ecosystems, arguing that strong knowledge of all aspects of ecosystems is required in order to understand the areas of greatest concern.
2. **Clarity of collaboration/partnerships** - Participants identified that there was often a lack of clarity on the groups/partnerships involved in Action Items.
3. **Funding increased** – a lack of funding was identified as a key concern for addressing Ecosystem actions.
4. **Assess how climate change affects water** quality and quantity of lakes, rivers and oceans (action 5) this was also identified in the Connection to Land and Culture safety theme.
5. **Integrate Traditional Knowledge and Western science**, renew and promote GNWT's TK policy, and ensure all new employees review it during onboarding.

Connection to the Land and Culture table discussion synopsis

Vision:

Develop a collaborative environment where knowledge sharing and community-based monitoring drives innovative and effective program delivery and research.

Priority actions:

1. GNWT to identify pots of funding available to increase capacity for community-based monitoring, knowledge transfer and data management skills and technology, ensuring that Indigenous Knowledge is included in community climate adaptation and mitigation planning.
2. GNWT to support mapping and management of burial and archaeological sites at risk of climate change impacts, as identified as important by Indigenous community members.
3. Government and research partners to build stronger connections and relationships with Indigenous communities.
4. GNWT Climate Change and Waters staff to work together to share relevant scientific data with Indigenous Governments and Indigenous Organizations to inform community-based monitoring and decision making.
5. Indigenous Climate Leadership Initiative - discuss monitoring priorities and partnership opportunities.
6. Prioritize engagement opportunities on finding common ground for urgent climate monitoring data needed and why.

7. GNWT support glossary of climate terms in Indigenous languages for increased capacity for knowledge sharing between scientific and Indigenous communities and across-generations.
8. Building Partnerships with Indigenous Governments and Indigenous Organizations to support and increase community-based monitoring.

Who:

GNWT in partnership with partners such as the Indigenous Leadership Initiative, Aboriginal Aquatic Resource and Oceans Management, Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas, Water Stewardship partners and Wildlife Management boards, and Guardians.

Health and Wellbeing table discussion synopsis

Priorities:

At the CCAG, participants proposed a new collective action model to meet three shared priorities:

1. Secure substantial, flexible, and equitable funding.
2. Focus on knowledge translation, youth engagement, and workforce retention.
3. Foster creative solutions through partnerships between NGOs, government, and educational institutions.

Vision Statement:

"To empower communities and promote organizational capacity building through collaboration and partnerships, fostering resilience and sustainable solutions that promote and support health and wellbeing in the face of climate change."

What:

Establish community collective network across the NWT to promote sustainable climate change capacity building to protect and improve health and well-being of communities and residents.

Who:

NWT Association of Communities, GNWT Health and Social Services (Community Health Representatives, Nurses, Leaders, Health Promotion Officers), GNWT Executive and Indigenous Affairs, Indigenous governments, community organizations, NGOs, academic institutions.

Opportunities Identified:

- Capacity building through public health courses and training programs.
- Advocacy for flexible and equitable climate change health funding solutions.
- Improved access to information and resources through diverse voices and professional interpreting.
- Upscaled partnerships with academia and NGOs for research and preparedness.
- Development of more educational programs and training networks.

Key Actions and Recommendations:

1. Improve integration of emergency response, climate preparedness, and adaptation actions.
2. Reduce language barriers and emphasize preventative measures against wildfire smoke and heat waves.
3. Enhance coordination between health research institutions and integrate Indigenous knowledge.
4. Support climate-resilient food systems and address funding barriers.
5. Strengthen healthcare systems to address climate-related health risks and mental health needs.
6. Provide community-level training and education for wildfire management.
7. Improve sanitation infrastructure and increase access to clean water.

Infrastructure & Access to Essential Services table discussion synopsis

Priorities:

Participants in the Infrastructure breakout group at the 2024 Climate Change Advisory Gathering identified the following key priorities for increasing climate resilience across the NWT:

- **Aggregate and disseminate climate hazard information** to support planning, risk management, and emergency preparedness
- **Complete climate vulnerability assessments** for essential infrastructure, incorporating community and governance input
- **Advance community-driven adaptation planning**, including exploration of infrastructure relocation and regional coordination tools
- **Establish climate impact tracking systems** to log damages and costs to communities and GNWT assets
- **Develop and promote NWT-specific climate codes and standards** for infrastructure design, construction, and maintenance
- **Emphasize the resilience** of energy systems, communications infrastructure, and transportation networks/supply chains.
- **Ensure that funding, action timelines, and government support** pathways are clear and accessible

Business and Economy table discussion synopsis

Priorities:

1. **Investment in Climate Action**
    - Focus on infrastructure, energy, transport, tourism, and food security.

- Need for clear prioritization on investments due to limited resources.
- Better Coordination among governments, sectors, and communities to identify vulnerabilities and maximize resilience to climate impacts.

2. **Build Capacity to Act**
   - Training and retaining skilled workers.
   - Support collaboration and knowledge-sharing.
   - Government role in facilitating learning and best practices.
   - Better understanding on of vulnerabilities and economic opportunities is needed

3. **Community Involvement**
   - Establish local/regional action committees.
   - Promote energy independence (e.g., solar), food security, eco-tourism, and research partnerships.
   - Emphasis on local income generation and resilience.

4. **Plain Language Communication**
   - Simplify technical language to enhance understanding and participation.

5. **Regulatory Decision-Making**
   - Educate businesses on climate terminology to support sustainable practices and emissions reduction.

Cross-Cutting table discussion synopsis

Priorities:

- **Enhance Knowledge Exchange:** Create platforms and forums to make climate information accessible to communities and Indigenous partners.
- **Communicate Northern Realities:** Advocate for the North's climate context in national and international settings.
- **Climate Education:** Integrate culturally relevant materials and Indigenous knowledge into school curricula. Less digital messaging and more in person or paper/printable products.
- **Training and Capacity Building:** Invest in Guardian Programs and accredited programs for Indigenous youth.
- **Improve Climate Data Systems:** Address community-level accessibility and fill data gaps, especially for health and wellbeing.
- **Evaluate and Integrate:** Ensure that climate data informs real policy decisions.
- **Enhance Monitoring:** Standardize and expand environmental monitoring, with a goal of building a trained workforce by 2030.

APPENDIX B: Climate change actions happening outside the GNWT

An incomplete listing of partner-led NWT climate change initiatives.

Appendix B - Climate change actions happening outside the GNWT		
This list was compiled from the feedback received through public engagement in response to the 2023 NWT Climate Change Strategic Framework Draft 2025-2029 Action Plan. It includes only actions and projects that were captured on sticky notes at a Climate Change Advisory Group gathering in October 2024 and items from written feedback, including an online survey. The projects are listed in the order of the relevant NWT Priority Action, as outlined in the draft plan. Projects that fit into more than one NWT Priority Action were listed only once. Please contact ECC if you are involved in other relevant projects within the NWT and would like to ensure we are aware of them.		
Transition to a lower carbon economy		
Action #	**Project name**	**Lead organization**
1	Inuvialuit Settlement Region Energy Action Plan	Inuvialuit Regional Corporation
1	SHIFT NWT	SHIFT NWT
1	Arctic Energy Alliance programs	Arctic Energy Alliance
2	Preserving Our Land, Preparing for the Future	Tłı̨chǫ Government
4	City of Yellowknife Centralized Composting Program	City of Yellowknife
4	Remote Piloted Aircraft Systems & Methane Emissions	Aurora Research Institute
Ecosystems (land, water, wildlife)		
Action #	**Project name**	**Lead organization**
5	Global Water Futures modelling	Global Water Futures Observatories
5	Northern Contaminants Program	ECC Canada
6	Northern Forest Mapping project "NorthForM"	Canadian Forest Service
6	Ice Monitoring	Wilfred Laurier University
6	Wildfires Monitoring	Wilfred Laurier University
7	Sahtu K'aowe Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area (IPCA)	Délı̨nę Got'ı̨nę Government
8	Ekwǫ̀ Nàxoède K'è (Boots on the Ground) caribou monitoring	Tłı̨chǫ Government
8	Aquatic ecosystem monitoring program	Tłı̨chǫ Government
8	NWT: Our Land for the Future	NWT: Our Land for the Future
Connection to the land and culture		
Action #	**Project name**	**Lead organization**
10	NWT On the Land Collaborative	MakeWay
11	Dechnita on-the-land programs	Dechinta
12	Smart ICE	Smart Ice
12	Wildlife monitoring in protected areas	Tłı̨chǫ Government
12	Highway Monitoring Program	Tłı̨chǫ Government
Health & wellbeing		
Action #	**Project name**	**Lead organization**
13	Nursing program integration of planetary health	Aurora College
15	Hotıì ts'eeda programs and research	Hotıì ts'eeda
16	Food preservation workshops in the Dehcho Region	Ecology North

16	Food infrastructure upgrade in Nahanni Butte	Naha Dehe Development Corp.
18	NSMA Community Garden project	North Slave Métis Alliance
18	Let's be fire smart	Tłı̨chǫ Government
Infrastructure & access to essential services		
Action #	**Project name**	**Lead organization**
19	Community Mapping Action Plan project	NWT Association of Communities
19	Community Climate Change Profiles	NWT Association of Communities
19	Community Liaison	NWT Association of Communities
19	Nahanni Butte - Flood risk assessment and slope stability study	Nahɔą Dehé Dene Band
20	Review of foundations in top 10 communities	NWT Association of Communities
21	Riverbank erosion partnership table	NWT Association of Communities
21	Climate Change Adaptation Considerations Framework	Délı̨nę Got'ı̨nę Government
21	Yellowknife 2026-2036 Climate Action Plan	City of Yellowknife
21	Inuvialuit Regional Corporation Climate Change Strategy	Inuvialuit Regional Corporation
21	Climate Change Roadmap: A 5-Year Strategy and Action Plan	Dehcho First Nations
23	Northern Infrastructure Standardization Initiative	Standards Council of Canada
Business and economy		
Action #	**Project name**	**Lead organization**
24	Research Chair - Aurora Research Institute	Aurora Research Institute
24	Tłıchǫ Climate Change Knowledge Center	Tłı̨chǫ Government
25	Federal net-zero commitment	Government of Canada
Cross-cutting		
Action #	**Project name**	**Lead organization**
28	NWTMN 1st Annual Climate Change Summit Oct 22 & 23	NWT Metis Nation
28	Community Appropriate Sustainable Energy Security (CASES)	University of Saskatchewan
29	Coastal Erosion Initiative	Hamlet of Tuktoyaktuk
29	Indigenous Climate Leadership Agenda	Government of Canada
30	Arctic Energy Alliance outreach	Arctic Energy Alliance
31	Aurora College STEM programs	Aurora College
32	ForSITE program	Canadian Forest Service
34	JMR Climate Change monitoring	Tthets'ehk'edeli First Nation

APPENDIX C: Abbreviations

List of acronyms found throughout this report.

Abbreviations	
CCAG	Climate Change Advisory Gathering
CCAP	Climate Change Action Plan
CCSF	Climate Change Strategic Framework
ECC	Environment and Climate Change (GNWT Department)
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GNWT	Government of the Northwest Territories
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NWT	Northwest Territories
NWTAC	Northwest Territories Association of Communities
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound