



2030 NWT CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

What we heard: Summary of external review period

April 2018

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Introduction

Extensive engagement has informed the 2030 NWT Climate Change Strategic Framework (the Framework). In 2016-2017, input on the development of the Framework was solicited through a background paper, an online survey and regional engagement workshops. Subsequently, a draft Framework was produced by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) and released for external review from December 5, 2017 to January 19, 2018.

A total of 21 written submissions (including 145 comments) were submitted to ENR by Indigenous governments, community organizations, industry, non-government organizations and the public. A wide range of comments were received, covering numerous themes and topics pertaining to climate change. Comments were incorporated into the final Framework as appropriate.

A summary of the comments received is reflected under the following eight themes:

1. Clarifying the governance structure to address climate change in the NWT as per the Auditor General of Canada's recommendations
2. Mainstreaming climate change into plans, policies, practices and management in the GNWT
3. Providing details on implementation (Action Plan)
4. Respecting Aboriginal and Treaty rights
5. Increasing public awareness, capacity building, community involvement and partnerships
6. Addressing community adaptation needs
7. Clarifying the role of carbon pricing
8. Developing renewable and alternative energy

1 Clarifying the governance structure to address climate change in the NWT as per the Auditor General of Canada's recommendations

1.1 What we heard

The need for a clear governance structure with respect to climate change was emphasized in several comments received. Addressing and highlighting ENR's authority, roles, responsibilities and resources in the Framework was a priority for many. Some respondents referenced the Auditor General of Canada's recommendation that ENR consider options for how to fulfill its responsibilities as the lead for climate change in the NWT. (The Auditor General of Canada's [Climate Change in the Northwest Territories report](#) was released in October 2017). Specifically, the need for clear leadership and authority, improved communication and outreach, progress on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and support for adaptation efforts was highlighted. Some respondents requested that direct reference to the Auditor General's report be made in the Framework.

Several respondents specifically suggested that a Climate Change Secretariat, similar to that in the Yukon and Nunavut, be created to oversee all climate change related work, rather than compartmentalizing responsibilities by GNWT department. One respondent suggested that a GNWT Climate Change Policy or Climate Change Act be approved by the Premier of the NWT to establish ENR's authority as the lead climate change department.

It was also emphasized in one comment that a collaborative governance structure accounting for the role of Indigenous governments in climate change adaptation and mitigation was lacking and that a specific entity, such as a council, could be established to assist with adaptation efforts.

1.2 What we did

To address several of the comments received, ENR's role was clarified in the final Framework. Further text on governance and coordination was added to describe the establishment of a GNWT Working Group co-chaired by ENR and the Department of Infrastructure, which will focus on government efforts to implement and report on the Framework and assist with the development and implementation of the 2019-2023 Action Plan.

The GNWT has also committed in the Framework to exploring mechanisms to improve coordination and communication with community and Indigenous governments, industry, the NWT Association of Communities, non-government organizations, other stakeholders and the public. Having mechanisms in place to provide input into the implementation of the Framework will

support the identification of needs and interests; confirm priorities, knowledge requirements, adaptation efforts and other actions; provide guidance on program or project development; and support communications and capacity building.

The effectiveness of potential mechanisms to improve coordination and communication will also be discussed with community and Indigenous governments and stakeholders as they are engaged in the development of the 2019-2023 Action Plan to ensure an appropriate model is identified and implemented through the Action Plan.

With respect to the Auditor General of Canada's report, it is now highlighted at the beginning of the Framework. A new appendix has been added outlining the Auditor General's recommendations. For each recommendation outlined, the changes made to the Framework and those that will be addressed in the Action Plan have been described.

2 Mainstreaming climate change into plans, policies, practices and management in the GNWT

2.1 What we heard

Certain respondents felt that mainstreaming (integrating) climate change into plans, policies, practices and management was required within the GNWT. It was suggested this could be accomplished by addressing climate change within legislation currently undergoing development or amendment (e.g., mineral resources, waters, forest management, environmental protection and protected areas legislation), so that legislation is consistent with and supportive of the Framework.

Integrating climate change into policies such as the Land Use Sustainability Framework to support GNWT decision-making was also raised. Similarly, it was stated that the GNWT should consider climate change implications in spending decisions.

Lastly we heard that addressing the role of the natural environment in a changing climate in future plans and policies was imperative. For example, the impacts of permafrost thaw on practices, policies or codes pertaining to infrastructure, and the role of wetlands and need for heightened conservation to mitigate climate change impacts, were highlighted.

2.2 What we did

Mainstreaming climate change considerations into plans, policies, operational practices and management is very important. The need to address climate change is reflected in several GNWT policies and plans, such as the NWT Water Stewardship Strategy and Action Plan, transboundary water agreements, conservation network planning, the Land Use Sustainability Framework, the GNWT Knowledge Agenda, the 2030 Energy Strategy, the NWT Petroleum Resources Strategy and the NWT Geological Survey

Strategic Plan. Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of integrating climate change into GNWT plans, policies, practices and management will continue to be explored as the 2019-2023 Action Plan is developed. It is acknowledged that adaptive management will be necessary for incorporating climate change into management and decision-making.

Addressing the role of the natural environment in climate change mitigation and adaptation was expanded upon in the Framework. More references to plans, policies and practices relevant to climate change considerations on infrastructure in the NWT were added, and the importance of natural environmental components such as wetlands were further discussed.

3 Providing details on implementation (Action Plan)

3.1 What we heard

The lack of an implementation plan accompanying the Framework was a concern outlined in several comments provided. It was felt the Framework was too high level and not specific enough to lead clearly to action since information on the implementation plan was lacking. Similarly, other comments noted that funding assurances and processes to access funds for priority actions were also missing.

Respondents understood the 2019-2023 and subsequent Action Plans would be developed following the Framework, but would have preferred more concrete actions to be documented in the Framework. Several respondents specifically requested the opportunity to be consulted and engaged to provide input into the Action Plans.

3.2 What we did

A new section was added to highlight the Framework's role as a roadmap for addressing climate change to 2030 and setting the stage for the development of the 2019-2023 Action Plan. Additionally, efforts and potential actions needed to address climate change are identified in separate sub-sections following the three goals and in a new public awareness, capacity building and community involvement chapter. These efforts and potential actions will serve as the basis for developing the 2019-2023 Action Plan, which will outline details on timelines, leads and partners, and funding.

Given the wide-range of input provided during the development of the Framework, the intent is to collaboratively develop a comprehensive 2019-2023 Action Plan that includes actions being led or co-led by different levels of government (community, Indigenous, federal and territorial), industry, non-government organizations and other stakeholders throughout the territory.

Indigenous and community governments and stakeholders will be engaged in the development of the 2019-2023 Action Plan. New information on the process for developing the Action Plan has been added to the Framework along with a description of how resources will be sought to implement the Action Plan.

4 Respecting Aboriginal and Treaty rights

4.1 What we heard

Respondents commented that the Framework should minimize impacts to Aboriginal and Treaty rights. Specifically, it was indicated that any mitigation or adaptation strategies that could impact harvesting or other Aboriginal rights would be considered as an infringement on these rights.

It was also stated that meaningful consultation and accommodation where Aboriginal rights may be negatively impacted by decisions and actions on climate change are required.

4.2 What we did

Respecting Aboriginal and Treaty rights has always been the intent of the Framework. As such, this has been added as a guiding principle to support the vision of the Framework. The guiding principle specifically states that climate change mitigation and adaptation decisions respect Aboriginal and Treaty rights, including land, resource and self-government agreements.

Engaging with Indigenous governments is a key priority and fundamental to developing the two action plans required to implement the Framework. Indigenous governments will be invited to add new action items and review proposed action items resulting from the Framework, and asked to provide any specific concerns or feedback they may have regarding the action items. Should Indigenous governments, through their reviews, identify any possible adverse impacts to Aboriginal or Treaty rights, the GNWT will request that specific details of such impacts be shared in writing so these may be addressed as needed.

5 Increasing public awareness, capacity building, community involvement and partnerships

5.1 What we heard

Ensuring comprehensive public awareness, communication and outreach, local capacity building, and community involvement are addressed in the Framework was stressed in comments from numerous respondents. Several stated that regular, consistent and transparent communication among Indigenous, community, federal and territorial governments and stakeholders is essential. Such communications would result in access to the best available information, meaningful participation in decision-making and significant contributions to efforts to address climate change.

The importance of funding to support training, knowledge exchange and capacity building for community and Indigenous governments was emphasized by several respondents. It was also highlighted that innovative approaches and strategic communications initiatives will be critical to the implementation of the Framework.

One respondent stated that although strengthening collaboration between the GNWT, community and Indigenous governments, and stakeholders is identified as a guiding principle, detail was lacking on the approach to collaboration, specifically in terms of how the principle will be applied to ensure strong partnerships and collaboration.

5.2 What we did

As communication and outreach, capacity building and community involvement are critical to the successful implementation of the Framework, a new chapter was drafted focusing solely on these areas. New priority actions specific to these topics are highlighted in the chapter and will be further explored as the 2019-2023 Action Plan is developed.

Additional information has been provided in the Framework on the need for the GNWT to work collaboratively with Indigenous and community governments and stakeholders to identify potential projects and actions as various funding opportunities become available. In 2018-2019, the GNWT's new Community Climate Change Adaptation program was launched to support community level adaptation efforts (see Section 6). It is fully acknowledged that improving awareness and building capacity to address climate change will support the strong partnerships and collaborations necessary to access resources and implement the Framework.

6 Addressing community adaptation needs

6.1 What we heard

Respondents stressed that Indigenous and community governments want and need to be involved in adaptation planning to ensure ecosystems, including the people who live in them, remain healthy and diverse. They noted that actions are required to adapt to the impacts of climate change on various components of the natural environment.

It was also stated in some comments that more detail on the use of traditional and local knowledge, as well as knowledge mobilization, in the context of community adaptation needs, be included in the Framework.

6.2 What we did

Supporting community and Indigenous governments in the development and implementation of adaptation plans has been highlighted in the Framework as needed to build resilience and adapt to a changing climate. This will be further expanded upon in the Action Plan with input from Indigenous and community governments and stakeholders.

Beginning in 2018-2019, the GNWT is delivering an improved adaptation program— the Community Climate Change Adaptation program— that focuses on supporting community efforts to identify and prepare for climate-related impacts and opportunities. Improvements include a full-time position to work directly with communities to access federal funding programs for adaptation, participate in local climate change-related research and monitoring projects, and implement specific measures to increase community resilience or adapt, as needed.

A new section on the management of knowledge has been added to the Framework to clarify the important role of traditional and local knowledge, as well as stress the importance of managing and mobilizing knowledge and information.

7 Clarifying the role of carbon pricing

7.1 What we heard

Several comments were received pertaining to the role of carbon pricing in addressing climate change. Overall, it was felt that information on carbon pricing was limited and a greater focus on carbon pricing was needed.

Generally, respondents expressed support for the need for carbon pricing to reduce fossil fuel use and greenhouse gas emissions, including industry. Some noted concerns about the impacts of carbon pricing on businesses and the cost of living in the territory. Others commented that additional information on carbon pricing should be provided in the Framework, and that more needed to be done to specify how carbon tax revenues could support work to meet greenhouse gas emissions targets. One respondent suggested that any revenue generated should be used to invest in the development of local and alternative energy sources to address climate change, along with initiatives that support adaptation.

7.2 What we did

Based on the comments received, additional text on carbon pricing has been added to the Framework. Clarification is provided on the Department of Finance's role as the lead for the development of an approach to implement carbon pricing in the NWT. Encouraging carbon conservation and substitution to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while minimizing effects on the cost of living and preventing the creation of additional barriers to economic development is a priority for the GNWT. ENR will continue to work with the Department of Finance to ensure the approach is integrated into the Framework's 2019-2023 Action Plan.

8 Developing renewable and alternative energy

8.1 What we heard

There were numerous comments focused on ways to enhance renewable and alternative energy development. Several comments also stressed the need to access local natural gas sources as an alternative to diesel.

8.2 What we did

A clear link has been made to the 2030 Energy Strategy in the Framework. The Energy Strategy is the primary mechanism for energy related greenhouse gas reductions in the NWT. The Three Year Energy Action Plan (2018-2021) will set out investments through actions and initiatives to reduce emissions from electricity generation, road transportation, space heating and energy efficiency. As the Department of Infrastructure is the lead for implementing the 2030 Energy Strategy, all comments received pertaining to developing renewable and alternative energy have been shared among the departments.

With respect to local natural gas, some text has been added to the economic opportunities chapter acknowledging that locally available natural gas resources for power generation and space heating may offer a lower-cost and lower-emissions alternative to importing diesel fuel from southern Canada. This is consistent with the NWT Petroleum Resources Strategy.

9 Next steps

We look forward to working with Indigenous and community governments, federal and territorial government departments, community organizations, industry, non-government organizations, other stakeholders and the public in developing and implementing the 2019-2023 Action Plan and subsequent action plans to achieve the vision of the 2030 NWT Climate Change Strategic Framework.



If you would like this information in another official language, call us.

English

Si vous voulez ces informations dans une autre langue officielle, contactez-nous.

French

Kīspīn kī nitawīhtīn ē nīhīyawīhk ōma ācimōwin, tipwāsinān.

Cree

Tłjchq yatı k'èè. Dı wegodı newq dè, gots'ō gonede.

Tłjchq

ʔerihł'is Dēne Sųlíné yatı t'a huts'elkēr xa beyáyatı theʔa ʔat'e, nuwe ts'en yółti.

Chipewyan

Edi gondi dehghá got'ıe zhatié k'èè edat'éh enahddhę nide naxets'ę edahí.

South Slavey

K'áhshó got'ıne xədə k'e hederı ʔedıhtł'é yerıniwę nídé dúle.

North Slavey

Jii gwandak izhii ginjik vat'atr'ijāhch'uu zhit yinothān jı', diits'āt ginohkhii.

Gwich'in

Uvanittuaq ilitchurisukupku Inuvialuktun, ququaqluta.

Inuvialuktun

Ċ'bdĳ ɳɳ^ɓbd^c ʌɳLJΔɳ^c Δɓ^bɳɳc^ɓɳLɳɳ^b, ɳ^cɳ^cɳ^c ɳ^c ɳ^cb^cɳ^cɳ^c.

Inuktitut

Hapkua titiqqat pijumagupkit Inuinnaqtun, uvaptinnut hivajarlutit.

Inuinnaqtun

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