



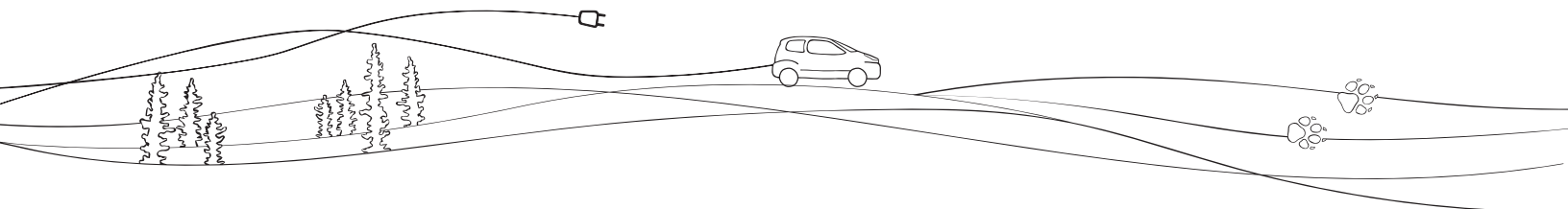
Responding to Climate Change in the NWT

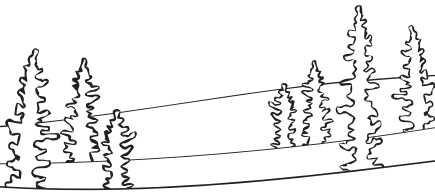
Plain Language
Overview Report

2020/21



Government of Northwest Territories / Gouvernement des Territoires du Nord-Ouest

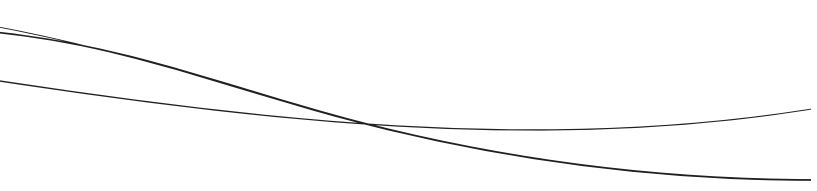




LEFT IMAGE ON COVER: WERONIKA MURRAY

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Tulita, NWT

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AEA

Arctic Energy Alliance

CCAR

Climate Change Annual Report

Climate Change Action Plan

2030 NWT Climate Change Strategic Framework
2019-2023 Action Plan

EIR

Energy Initiatives Report

GHG

Greenhouse gases

GNWT

Government of the Northwest Territories

IGOs

Indigenous governments and organizations

NGO

Non-governmental organization

NWT

Northwest Territories

PCF

Pan Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and
Climate Change

the Council

NWT Climate Change Council

Executive Summary

CLIMATE CHANGE IS ONE OF THE MOST FUNDAMENTAL CHALLENGES OF OUR TIME

Climate change has an overarching impact on many aspects of life in the Northwest Territories (NWT), including the natural environment, the health and safety of its residents, the culture and heritage of Indigenous peoples, NWT's infrastructure, and the economy. The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) must take action to mitigate and adapt to climate change in collaboration with Indigenous governments and organizations (IGOs), the Government of Canada, industry, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academia, and other partners to understand and respond to climate change impacts effectively.

GNWT DEPARTMENTS COLLABORATE ON AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO CLIMATE CHANGE

The GNWT's major climate change related initiatives include:

- The 2030 NWT Climate Change Strategic Framework and 2019-2023 Action Plan, led by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources
- The 2030 Energy Strategy and the 2019-2022 Energy Action Plan, led by the Department of Infrastructure
- The NWT Carbon Tax, led by the Department of Finance.

THIS REPORT SUMMARIZES THE GNWT'S RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE IN 2020-2021

Responding to Climate Change: Plain Language Integrated Report 2020-2021 summarizes how the GNWT and our partners took action to address the challenges of climate change from April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021. This report summarizes:

- The challenges and opportunities we face
- The progress we made, focused on working in partnership, reducing emissions, improving knowledge, and strengthening long-term adaptation and resilience
- Where we plan to go from here

WE FACE MANY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

In our efforts to reach our climate change goals, we face challenges and opportunities, both expected and unexpected. Some of the main challenges and opportunities we experienced in 2020-2021 included:

- The COVID-19 pandemic
- Balancing affordable, reliable, and sustainable energy
- The cost of reducing emissions
- The need for reliable emissions tracking
- Understanding longer term emissions trends
- Shared responsibilities
- Understanding of continuously changing conditions and the need to adapt



Refueling in Colville Lake, NWT

CLIMATE CHANGE WORK IN 2020-2021 FOCUSED ON FOUR MAJOR AREAS

- **Working with people** — The GNWT continued to work closely with IGOs and partners, and helped communities find funding, resources, and opportunities to build capacity. The GNWT continues to support empowerment of residents and communities and work with them toward finding energy and climate change solutions.
- **Reducing emissions** — The main driver of climate change is greenhouse gases (GHGs) from human activities being released into the atmosphere. The GNWT continued to work to reduce reliance on diesel, improve energy efficiency, invest in renewable energy solutions, and encouraged residents to substitute fossil fuels with alternative energy.
- **Improving knowledge** — To properly respond to climate change, we must first understand it fully. The GNWT and our partners continuously collected baseline data about current and changing conditions using new and long-standing approaches, filling gaps in our understanding from Indigenous and local knowledge and western science and studying new technologies and their viability in the North.
- **Strengthening Long-term adaptation and resilience** — While we are working toward reducing the impact of climate change, we also need to adapt to the changes that will come and that are already here. To do this, the GNWT:
 - o Shared the knowledge we have gained on climate change with communities
 - o Improved our collective capacity to respond to changes in the environment, our health, infrastructure, and the economy
 - o Increased grassroots resilience and our ability to adapt to unexpected changes



Elders in Deline, NWT

WHERE WE GO FROM HERE

The GNWT will continue to implement the 2030 NWT Climate Change Strategic Framework, 2030 Energy Strategy, and NWT Carbon Tax. More specifically in the coming year, the GNWT will:

- Continue collaborating with communities, industry, academia, and other jurisdictions in Canada to identify hazards, enhance research and monitoring
- Continue to advocate for federal support on key climate change initiatives
- Explore options for our energy future, including encouraging electric vehicle adoption and investigating emerging energy sources
- Promote a “green recovery” from COVID-19 that rebuilds our economy post-pandemic while supporting our climate change goals.



Deploying research equipment around the North Arm of Great Slave Lake, Dinàgà Wek'èhodi, NWT

SOME HIGHLIGHTS OF THE GNWT'S CLIMATE CHANGE RESPONSE IN 2020-2021

- The GNWT invested approximately \$55.6 million from April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021 to address climate change.
- In January 2021, the NWT became one of the first Canadian jurisdictions to include climate change considerations in key Executive Council and Financial Management Board decision making instruments.
- GNWT-led actions reduced GHG emissions by an additional 3.6 kilotonnes (kt) of CO₂e.
- The NWT Carbon Tax increased to \$30 per tonne of GHG emission in July 2020 from \$20 the year before.
- The GNWT funded 15 new climate change-related positions across five departments to meet commitments under Part 2 of the 2030 NWT Climate Change Strategic Framework – 2019-2023 Action Plan (Action Plan) and climate change Mandate Priorities set by the 19th Legislative Assembly.
- The NWT Climate Change Council was established in March 2021 as a forum for information sharing, collaboration and engagement between IGOs, communities and the GNWT, with input from youth, Elders, and stakeholders.
- Key initiatives were advanced to reduce GHG emissions and transition to a lower carbon economy:
 - The Inuvik Wind Project moved into the final design phase and construction is tentatively planned for 2021-2022. This project will install a single 3.5-megawatt wind turbine and a small battery storage system to reduce GHG emissions and support a secure grid in Inuvik.
 - The GNWT started the formal process to consult IGOs and stakeholders, applied for federal funds, and prepared for the regulatory processes for the 170 km transmission line project to bring surplus hydropower from the Taltson system to Fort Providence, Kakisa, and Dory Point.
 - The Arctic Energy Alliance (AEA), with support from the GNWT, completed the first year of a three-year project working with two communities to develop community energy plans.

Sommaire

LE CHANGEMENT CLIMATIQUE REPRÉSENTE L'UN DES ENJEUX FONDAMENTAUX LES PLUS IMPORTANTS DE NOTRE ÉPOQUE

Le changement climatique entraîne des répercussions sur de nombreux aspects de la vie aux Territoires du Nord-Ouest (TNO), notamment sur le milieu naturel, la santé et la sécurité des Ténos, la culture et le patrimoine des peuples autochtones, les infrastructures des TNO ainsi que l'économie. Le gouvernement des Territoires du Nord-Ouest (GTNO) doit collaborer avec les gouvernements et les organisations autochtones (GOA), le gouvernement du Canada, les industries, les organisations non gouvernementales (ONG), le milieu universitaire et d'autres partenaires afin de prendre des mesures pour atténuer les effets du changement climatique et s'y adapter et de comprendre ses répercussions et d'y faire face efficacement.

LES MINISTÈRES DU GTNO COLLABORENT À LA MISE EN ŒUVRE D'UNE APPROCHE INTÉGRÉE POUR FAIRE FACE AU CHANGEMENT CLIMATIQUE

Les principales initiatives du GTNO en matière de changement climatique sont les suivantes.

- Le Cadre stratégique sur le changement climatique des TNO pour 2030 et le Plan d'action 2019-2022, dont la mise en œuvre relève du ministère de l'Environnement et des Ressources naturelles.
- La Stratégie énergétique et le Plan d'action 2030, dont la mise en œuvre relève du ministère de l'Infrastructure.
- La Taxe sur le carbone aux TNO, dont la mise en œuvre relève du ministère des Finances.

LE PRÉSENT RAPPORT RÉSUME LES MESURES PRISES EN 2020-2021 PAR LE GTNO POUR FAIRE FACE AU CHANGEMENT CLIMATIQUE

Le Rapport intégré 2020-2021 en langage clair sur la lutte contre le changement climatique résume les mesures prises par le GTNO et ses partenaires pour relever les enjeux liés au changement climatique du 1^{er} avril 2020 au 31 mars 2021. Le rapport résume ce qui suit :

- Les enjeux auxquels nous faisons face et les possibilités qui s'offrent à nous.
- Les progrès réalisés du côté des partenariats, de la réduction des émissions de gaz à effet de serre, de l'amélioration des connaissances ainsi que du renforcement de l'adaptation et de la résilience à long terme.
- Ce que nous devons faire à partir de maintenant.

NOUS SOMMES CONFRONTÉS À DE NOMBREUX ENJEUX ET DISPOSONS DE NOMBREUSES POSSIBILITÉS

Dans le cadre de nos efforts pour atteindre nos objectifs en matière de changement climatique, nous sommes confrontés à des enjeux tant attendus qu'inattendus, mais des possibilités s'offrent à nous. Voici certaines de ces possibilités de même que certains de nos principaux défis en 2020-2021 :

- La pandémie de COVID-19
- L'atteinte d'un équilibre pour une énergie abordable, fiable et durable
- Le coût de la réduction des émissions de gaz à effet de serre
- La nécessité d'un suivi fiable des émissions de gaz à effet de serre
- La compréhension des tendances à plus long terme des émissions de gaz à effet de serre
- Le partage des responsabilités
- La compréhension des conditions en constante évolution et la nécessité de s'adapter

EN 2020-2021, LES TRAVAUX RELATIFS AU CHANGEMENT CLIMATIQUE ONT ÉTÉ AXÉS SUR QUATRE GRANDS OBJECTIFS

- **Travailler avec les gens** — Le GTNO a continué de travailler en étroite collaboration avec les GOA ainsi que leurs partenaires et a aidé les collectivités à trouver du financement, des ressources et des moyens pour renforcer leurs capacités. Le GTNO continue de soutenir l'autonomisation des Ténois et des collectivités, en plus de travailler avec eux pour trouver des solutions en matière d'énergie et de changement climatique.
- **Réduire les émissions de gaz à effet de serre** — La principale cause du changement climatique est le rejet dans l'atmosphère de gaz à effet de serre (GES) provenant des activités humaines. Le GTNO a poursuivi ses efforts pour réduire la dépendance au diesel, améliorer l'efficacité énergétique, investir dans des solutions d'énergie renouvelable et encourager les Ténois à remplacer les combustibles fossiles par des énergies de remplacement.
- **Améliorer les connaissances** — Pour réagir correctement au changement climatique, nous devons bien le comprendre. Le GTNO et ses partenaires ont recueilli des données de base sur les conditions actuelles et en évolution en utilisant de nouvelles ou d'anciennes approches, en améliorant leur compréhension à l'aide des connaissances autochtones, locales et scientifiques et en étudiant de nouvelles technologies ainsi que leur viabilité dans le Nord.
- **Renforcer la résilience et l'adaptation à long terme** — Bien que nous nous efforcions de réduire les répercussions du changement climatique, nous devons également nous adapter aux changements qui se produiront et à ceux déjà présents. Pour ce faire, voici ce que le GTNO a accompli :
 - Il a transmis aux collectivités les connaissances acquises sur les changements climatiques.
 - Il a amélioré notre capacité collective à répondre aux changements ressentis dans l'environnement, la santé, les infrastructures et l'économie.
 - Il a augmenté la résilience des collectivités ainsi que leur capacité d'adaptation face aux changements inattendus.

CE QUE NOUS DEVONS FAIRE À PARTIR DE MAINTENANT

Le GTNO poursuivra la mise en œuvre du *Cadre stratégique sur le changement climatique des TNO*, de la *Stratégie énergétique 2030* et de la *Taxe sur le carbone des TNO*. Au cours de l'année à venir, le GTNO effectuera notamment ce qui suit :

- Continuer à collaborer avec les collectivités, les industries, le milieu universitaire et d'autres instances canadiennes pour repérer les dangers et améliorer la recherche ainsi que la surveillance.
- Continuer à plaider en faveur d'un soutien fédéral pour les initiatives clés en matière de changement climatique.
- Explorer les options pour notre avenir énergétique, notamment en soutenant l'utilisation de véhicules électriques et en étudiant les nouvelles sources d'énergie.
- Promouvoir une reprise verte à la suite de la pandémie de COVID-19 afin de reconstruire notre économie tout en soutenant nos objectifs en matière de changement climatique.

POINTS SAILLANTS DES MESURES PRISES PAR LE GTNO FACE AU CHANGEMENT CLIMATIQUE EN 2020-2021

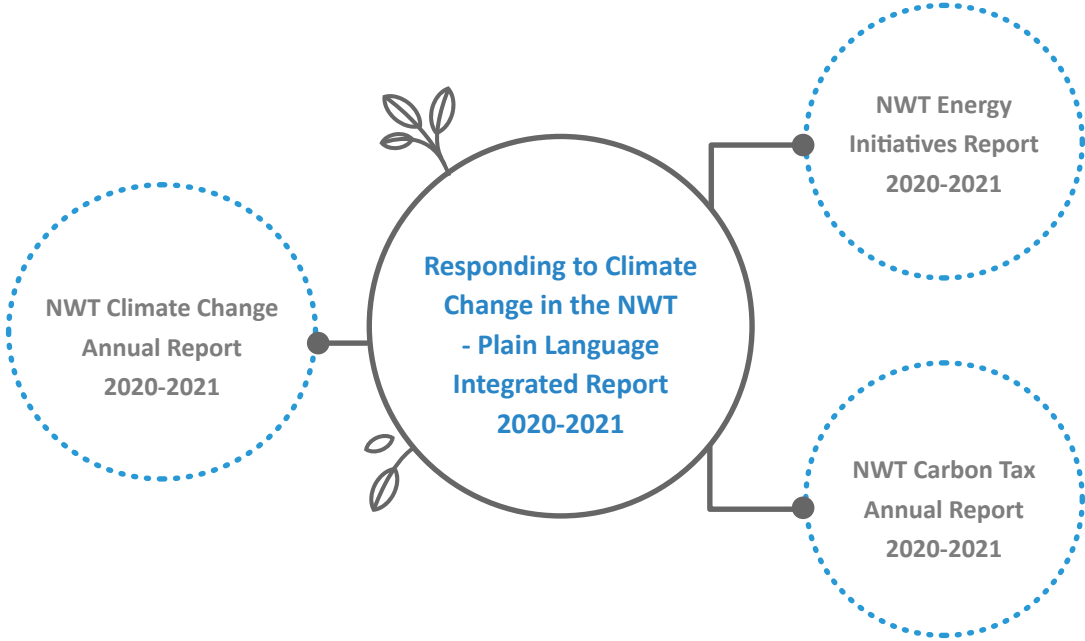
- Le GTNO a investi environ 55,6 millions de dollars du 1er avril 2020 au 31 mars 2021 pour lutter contre le changement climatique.
- En janvier 2021, le GTNO est devenu l'un des premiers gouvernements provincial ou territorial au Canada à inclure des considérations relatives au changement climatique dans les principaux instruments décisionnels du Conseil exécutif et du Conseil de gestion financière.
- Les mesures mises en œuvre par le GTNO ont permis de réduire les émissions de GES de 3,6 kilotonnes de CO₂ supplémentaires.
- La Taxe sur le carbone des TNO est passée à 30 dollars par tonne de GES émis en juillet 2020, comparativement à 20 dollars l'année précédente.
- Le GTNO a financé quinze nouveaux postes liés au changement climatique dans cinq ministères afin de respecter les engagements pris dans la partie 2 du Plan d'action 2019-2023 du Cadre stratégique sur le changement climatique des TNO 2030 ainsi que les priorités du mandat sur le changement climatique établies par la 19e Assemblée législative.
- Le Conseil sur le changement climatique des TNO a été créé en mars 2021 afin de servir de tribune pour le partage de renseignements, la collaboration et la mobilisation entre les GOA, les collectivités et le GTNO, et ce, avec la participation des jeunes, des aînés et des intervenants.
- Des initiatives clés ont été lancées pour réduire les émissions de gaz à effet de serre et assurer la transition vers une économie à faibles émissions de carbone.
 - Le projet éolien d'Inuvik est entré dans la phase de conception finale et la construction est prévue pour 2021-2022. Ce projet prévoit l'installation d'une seule éolienne de 3,5 mégawatts et d'un petit système de stockage par batterie afin de réduire les émissions de GES et de soutenir un réseau fiable à Inuvik.
 - Le GTNO a entamé le processus officiel de consultation des GOA et des intervenants, a présenté une demande de financement au gouvernement fédéral et s'est préparé aux processus réglementaires pour le projet de ligne de transport d'énergie de 170 km visant à acheminer le surplus d'hydroélectricité du réseau Taltson vers Fort Providence, Kakisa et Dory Point.
 - L'Arctic Energy Alliance (AEA), avec le soutien du GTNO, a terminé la première année d'un projet de trois ans qui consiste à travailler avec deux collectivités pour élaborer des plans énergétiques communautaires.

1. The Purpose of this report

This report, *Responding to Climate Change: Plain Language Integrated Report (The Plain Language Integrated Report)* summarizes how the GNWT responded to climate change from April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021.

It summarizes the progress made towards reaching our goals in the 2030 NWT Climate Change Strategic Framework, 2030 Energy Strategy and NWT Carbon Tax. Our progress is documented in further detail in three additional annual reports, available online.

FIGURE 1. PLAIN LANGUAGE INTEGRATED REPORT: WHERE OUR KEY CLIMATE CHANGE PRIORITIES MEET





NTGS staff conduct fieldwork to better understand permafrost.

2. Why we must act

Climate change is one of the most important issues of our time. It affects all aspects of life in the NWT, including:

- The natural environment — the land, water, air, and animals
- The health and safety of our residents — for example, the risk of wildfire and flooding, unsafe ice, water quality, air quality, and food security
- Culture — the living expression of the values of Indigenous peoples and the people that live in the NWT
- Heritage — archaeological sites, historical artifacts, and sacred places
- Infrastructure — roads, bridges, culverts, runways, buildings, and power systems
- The economy — businesses, jobs, and opportunities for investment

Addressing climate change is a priority for the GNWT. The GNWT is committed to:

- Mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change
- An energy system that ensures NWT communities, businesses, and industry have access to reliable and affordable energy
- Doing our part to transition to a lower carbon economy

3. Why we must work together

The GNWT, IGOs, the Government of Canada, industry, NGOs, academia, other partners, and NWT residents share the responsibility of taking action on climate change. To ensure that Northerners can thrive in a changing climate we must understand and respond to climate change effectively.

The GNWT recognizes the importance of working with IGOs, community, territorial and federal governments, industry, academia, NGOs, and Northerners on climate change. We work with IGOs and other partners to integrate Indigenous and local knowledge and western science into our response to climate change.

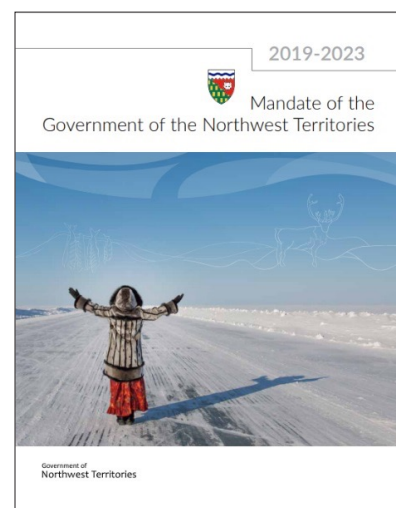
4. How the GNWT is responding to climate change in the NWT

AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

The GNWT identifies objectives, plans actions, and finds solutions to climate change. Three initiatives guide the GNWT response to climate change:

- The 2030 NWT Climate Change Strategic Framework
- The 2030 Energy Strategy
- The NWT Carbon Tax

The GNWT works across departments and agencies to contribute to meeting the NWT’s climate change goals. Some examples include interdepartmental working groups such as the Climate Change Directors Working Group, the Environment and Climate Change Assistant Deputy Minister and Deputy Ministers Committees, and the Environment and Climate Change Committee of Cabinet.



OUR MANDATE COMMITMENTS

The **Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories (2019-2023)** includes three climate change and mitigation priorities:

1. Strengthen the government’s leadership and authority on climate change
2. Ensure climate change impacts are specifically considered when making government decisions
3. Reduce the cost of power and increase the use of alternative and renewable energy

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources leads the first two priorities, and the Department of Infrastructure leads the third priority. In 2020-2021, both departments made progress towards these commitments.

| Highlights of progress on Mandate commitments | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. Strengthen the government’s leadership and authority on climate change</p> | <p>Establishing the NWT Climate Change Council</p> <p>The NWT Climate Change Council (the Council) was established in March 2021. The purpose of the Council is to be a forum for information sharing, collaboration and engagement between IGOs, communities and the GNWT, with input from youth, Elders, and external partners. The Council provides advice and guidance that informs GNWT climate change and environmental programs, to align with Indigenous and community perspectives, interest and knowledge. There are 14 active members of the Council, including 11 IGOs from across the NWT, two GNWT departments, and a representative from the Northwest Territories Association of Communities.</p> <p>Members met remotely five times in 2020-2021 to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalize a Terms of Reference • Agree on the intent of the Council • Select an IGO co-chair to head the Council with the GNWT • Work towards a shared understanding of current actions and priority topics <p>Council priority-setting will result in the creation of new panels that further guide and inform actions of the Council.</p> <p>A Climate Change Advisory Group is intended to ensure that the GNWT hears from a range of voices in the community, such as youth, Elders, and stakeholders such as NGOs and industry, and build them into our decisions.</p> |
| <p>2. Ensure climate change impacts are specifically considered when making government decisions</p> | <p>In January 2021, Executive Council and Financial Management Board decision-making tools were updated to ensure climate change factors are considered. The NWT is one of the only Canadian jurisdictions to include climate change considerations in its government decision-making processes.</p> |
| <p>3. Reduce the cost of power and increase the use of alternative and renewable energy</p> | <p>The GNWT is investing \$339 million over 10 years (starting 2018) to improve the NWT’s electricity system. This supports the Energy Strategy’s second and sixth Strategic Objectives.</p> <p>The GNWT increased its funding to the AEA to support new and expanded programs that help individuals, businesses, and community governments conserve energy and improve efficiency. This advances the Energy Strategy’s fifth objective.</p> |

2030 NWT CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The 2030 NWT Climate Change Strategic Framework is the NWT's long-term plan for addressing climate change. It focuses on three climate change goals and two cross cutting themes to help us reach those goals:

- Goal 1: Transition to a lower carbon economy
- Goal 2: Improve knowledge of climate change impacts
- Goal 3: Build resilience and adapt to a changing climate
- Cross Cutting Themes: Leadership, communication, and capacity and economic impacts and opportunities

The 2030 NWT Climate Change Strategic Framework 2019-2023 Action Plan (the Climate Change Action Plan) outlines to help us meet our goals to be undertaken during the first five years. The Plain Language Integrated Report highlights progress made in the second year of the Action Plan's implementation.





2030 ENERGY STRATEGY

The 2030 Energy Strategy outlines the NWT's long-term approach to supporting secure, affordable, and sustainable energy in the NWT.

The Energy Strategy includes six Strategic Objectives:

1. Work together to find solutions: community engagement, participation, and empowerment
2. Reduce GHG emissions from electricity generation in diesel-powered communities by an average of 25%
3. Reduce GHG emissions from transportation by 10% per capita.
4. Increase the share of renewable energy used for space heating to 40%
5. Increase residential, commercial, and government building energy efficiency by 15%
6. Develop the NWT's **energy potential**, address industry emissions, and do our part to meet national climate change objectives over the long-term

The **2019-2022 Energy Action Plan** sets annual goals and initiatives to help the GNWT and our partners achieve the Strategic Objectives. The Plain Language Integrated Report provides examples of progress from the third year of the plan's implementation.

ENERGY POTENTIAL
refers to the
development of the
NWT's significant energy
resources

NWT CARBON TAX

The carbon tax is a tax on fuel (except aviation fuel) sold in the NWT. It is intended to reduce GHG emissions by encouraging residents to use less fossil fuels and find alternative energy sources. It also seeks to not add to the NWT's cost of living or add barriers to economic development.

The NWT carbon tax was implemented on September 1, 2019 at \$20/tonne of GHG emissions. The rates will increase every year on July 1 until 2022, when it reaches \$50/tonne. This report documents the second year of the tax's implementation.

It is a priority for the GNWT to invest in alternative energy options for NWT residents and businesses. We will continue working closely with the Government of Canada, IGOs, community governments and residents to provide reliable, affordable alternatives to carbon intensive fuels.

EMERGING STRONGER

Through the GNWT's recently released *Emerging Stronger: Planning the NWT's Social and Economic Recovery Together*, additional commitments that relate to climate change include:

- Ensuring that GNWT capital planning supports equitable opportunities throughout the territory, and a greener more climate resilient territory, by:
 - Accelerating the review of GNWT procurement policies, including the Business Incentive Policy and the Negotiated Contract Policy, and consider the development of an Indigenous procurement policy
 - Inviting IGOs and businesses to be involved as equity partners in key strategic investments as projects develop

The GNWT makes substantial capital investments each year and is advancing major infrastructure projects. As part of the pandemic recovery, there is both opportunity and interest placed on green energy, climate change mitigation and adaptation actions, and ensuring a more environmentally responsible approach.

We will reference progress on these additional commitments in next year's report.

OUR FEDERAL COMMITMENTS

The Government of Canada has a plan to grow the national economy while reducing national GHG emissions and adapting to a changing climate. The Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change (PCF) was released in 2016, and outlines Canada's climate change goals. The GNWT signed the PCF when it was released and committed to reducing GHG emissions to 30% below 2005 levels by 2030. The three GNWT climate change and energy policies align with this goal.

The federal government rolled out a variety of climate change focused initiatives in 2020-2021, such as the announcement to further reduce GHG emissions, putting forward the Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act, and the initiation of a National Adaptation Strategy. The GNWT and its partners will do their part to participate in these initiatives while still addressing the NWT's climate change priorities.



Preparing for research, Upper Coppermine River basin, NWT

5. Investments

The GNWT has invested and will continue to invest significant resources to address climate change. We invested approximately \$55.6 million from April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021 to carry out the 2019-2023 Climate Change Action Plan, the 2030 Energy Strategy, and the NWT Carbon Tax. The \$55.6 million includes:

- Federal funding distributed by the GNWT for energy and adaptation-related projects
- Operations and management expenses to implement the three policies
- Time developing and implementing climate change policies in place, measured in GNWT salaries

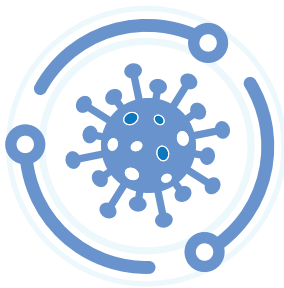




North Arm of Great Slave Lake, Dinàgà Wek'èhodi, NWT

6. Challenges and opportunities

This section summarizes the challenges and opportunities we faced in 2020-2021. Some challenges can only be resolved by planning many years in advance. Other challenges and opportunities, such as the global COVID-19 pandemic, were unexpected and required immediate action. We continue to study all challenges and opportunities we faced this year, work on solutions, and plan for the future.



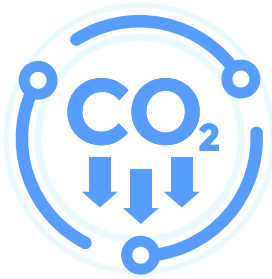
COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Field work and community engagements were delayed, greatly reduced, or cancelled to reduce the potential for COVID-19 transmission. Many GNWT staff members were redeployed as a result of the GNWT's response to COVID-19. This may continue to challenge us as we move forward. While the COVID-19 pandemic continues to be a challenge, the residents of the NWT have proven their resiliency, adaptability and dedication to addressing the impacts of climate change, by finding opportunities to ensure work could continue, building on existing local capacity while meeting COVID-19 risk mitigation measures.



BALANCING RELIABLE, AFFORDABLE AND SUSTAINABLE ENERGY

It is difficult to find and supply energy in the North. We face the ongoing challenge of reducing GHG emissions while making sure the people of the NWT have secure and affordable energy. This sometimes involves balancing priorities and making trade-offs. The goal of the 2030 Energy Strategy is access to reliable, affordable, and sustainable energy for NWT communities, businesses, industry, and people.



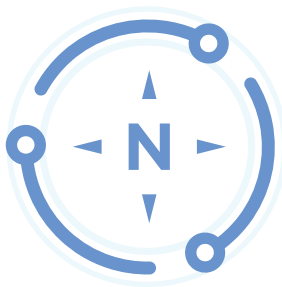
LOW-CARBON TECHNOLOGIES

Some low-carbon technologies that work well in the southern provinces do not work well in the North because of our cold climate and remoteness. We cannot assume southern technologies will work for us without testing them first. More Northern focused research and work is needed such as assessing the potential challenges and opportunities of these technologies through pilot projects.



THE COST OF REDUCING EMISSIONS

For technologies proven to work in the North, the NWT must often spend more money than the provinces to put the same technologies in place. In fact, such technologies often cost up to hundreds of dollars more per tonne to reduce our GHG emissions compared to southern Canada. There are many reasons for this, including the NWT having fewer people than southern provinces, residents being spread out across a large land area as well as our weather having greater extremes (for example, colder temperatures in the winter).



ADVANCING THE SOLUTIONS THE NORTH NEEDS

The GNWT must continue to learn about new technologies with the potential to stabilize or reduce NWT emissions. Because of these unique challenges and opportunities, the federal government has committed to working with the territories to find solutions that will work in the North. There is an opportunity to keep investing

in initiatives that are successful in the NWT's unique context, for example, using biomass energy for heating homes, schools, work places, and places where the community gathers.



HIGHLY VARIABLE EMISSIONS

Annual greenhouse gas emissions in the NWT are highly variable. This variability of fuel use is heavily dependent on economic activity and weather. As industry's emissions represent approximately half of territorial emissions, the addition or subtraction of just one industrial development can have a significant impact on overall emissions. For example, a cold snap one winter can impact the amount of fuel combusted as communities may need to burn more fuel to heat homes and buildings. Both factors can substantially impact progress towards the NWT's emissions reduction targets.



UNDERSTANDING LONGER TERM EMISSIONS TRENDS

Since annual fuel usage changes so significantly, the GNWT will need to continue to collect long-term data before we can draw conclusions about how much the NWT carbon tax reduces carbon emissions. This data will come from GNWT carbon tax data and Statistics Canada.



SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES

Tackling climate change is a shared responsibility between many different parties – including the territorial and federal governments, IGOs, community governments, and co-management boards.

Coordination will always be a challenge as we move forward, but also offers important opportunities for relationship building and information sharing. To this end, the NWT Climate Change Council (The Council) was formed to provide input and guidance on focuses and priorities for our work.

This Council is a forum for information-sharing and collaboration with non-elected representatives from IGOs, NWT communities, and the GNWT. They will work with advisory panels and groups including Elders, youth, and stakeholders to find shared solutions to the challenges and opportunities we face.



Snowmobile and sled



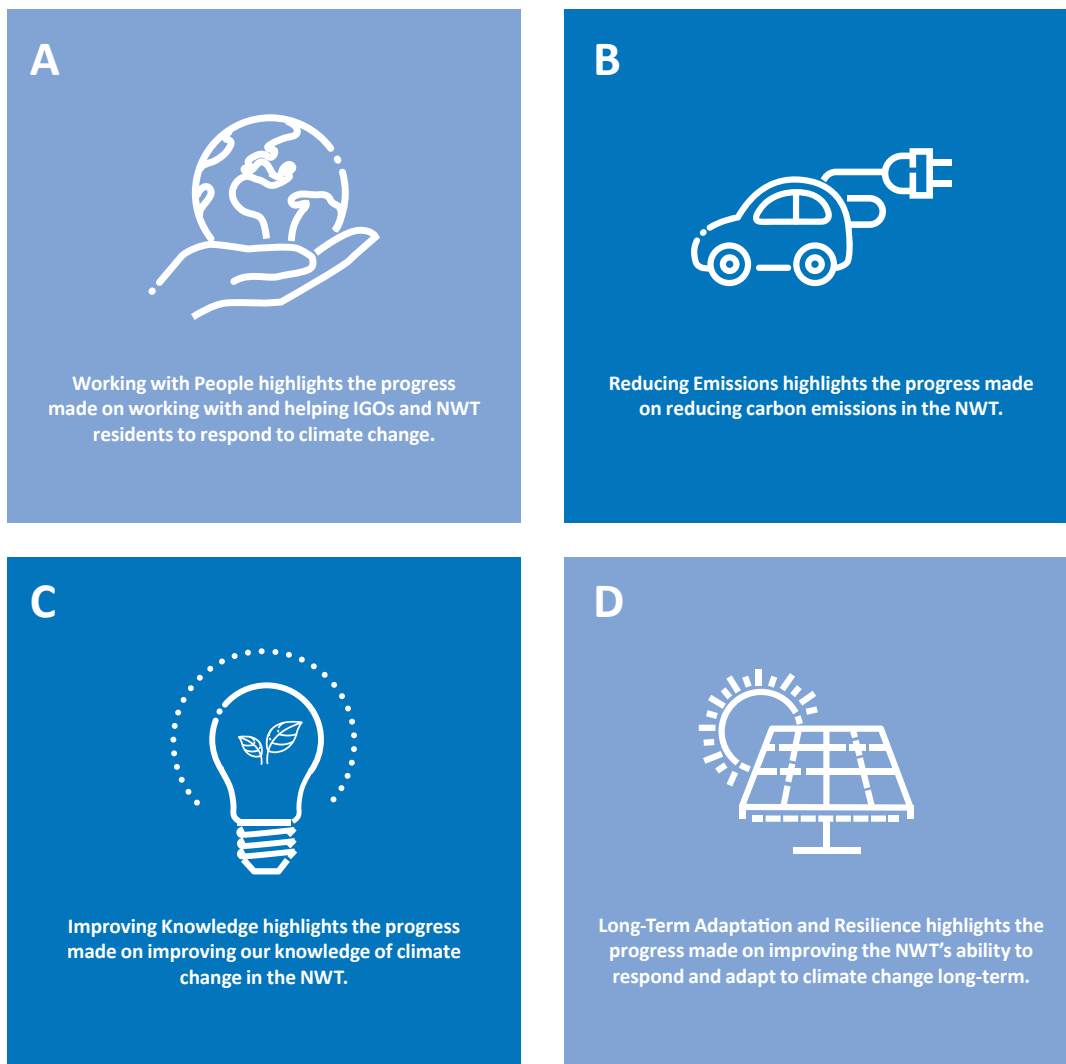
CONTINUOUSLY CHANGING KNOWLEDGE AND NEED TO ADAPT

Climate change is an ongoing challenge – and even as the GNWT and its partners improve our collective understanding of climate, the climate continues to change. This makes it difficult to appropriately prioritize actions to make the most progress towards adaptation and mitigation. A real difference could be made by establishing a Northern Climate Hub – an initiative that the GNWT and partners across the North have requested the federal government to implement for some time. This would ensure region-specific information is available for Northern decision-makers, including territorial, Indigenous and community governments. With continued targeted, long-term efforts committed to by partners in NWT climate action, and appropriate support from the federal government, the NWT will be able to better predict future climate-related changes, build more resilience, and advance climate change adaptation in the territory.

7. How the GNWT responded to climate change this year

This section outlines the progress we made this year towards implementing the *Climate Change Action Plan*, the *2030 Energy Strategy*, and the *NWT Carbon Tax*. Our progress is presented in four themes summarized below in Figure 2.

FIGURE 2. OUR FOUR THEMES OF PROGRESS.





Drumming with Yellowknives Dene Drummers

Working with people

The North is diverse and contains many cultures, outlooks, and values. Addressing energy and climate change in the NWT involves working together with IGOs, communities, and stakeholders, such as NGOs and industry.

It is critical that everyone in the NWT works together collectively to address the challenge of climate change. This section summarizes how the GNWT worked with residents this year to adapt to climate change and reduce GHG emissions.

HOW THE GNWT IS WORKING WITH PEOPLE

Involving communities in energy solutions

The GNWT heard from communities that they wanted to be more involved in the response to climate change. The GNWT worked to include communities by:

- Partnering with them to develop solutions
- Supporting them to undertake their own community-led energy and climate change projects
- Keeping them updated on solutions that are working in other communities

Supporting communities' capacity-building

The GNWT continues to support empowerment of residents and communities and work with them toward finding energy and climate change solutions, because residents of NWT communities best understand their local environment. Where there is interest and capacity, residents are leading local responses to climate change and directing energy solutions themselves. This year, the GNWT strengthened relationships with IGOs and other partners and helped communities find funding, resources, and partnership opportunities to address their priorities.

When IGOs and communities lead initiatives, it builds our collective understanding and capacity to adapt to changes to the natural environment, human health and well-being, public safety, culture and heritage, infrastructure, and the economy.

Communicating with communities about climate change

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the GNWT and our partners were quick to adapt to new, online ways of collaborating with and getting information to communities. Local residents took more leadership in climate change initiatives in their communities. The GNWT intends to keep building on the practices that worked well this challenging year.

SOME EXAMPLES OF WORKING WITH PEOPLE IN 2020-2021

Community energy planning

The AEA, with support from the GNWT and federal funding, completed the first year of a three-year project working with two communities to develop community energy plans.

Based on agreements that outlined this support and funding, the Hamlet of Tuktoyaktuk and the D  l  n   Got'  n   Government each hired a community energy champion. These champions were at the centre of each project and key to each project's success. They helped plan projects and engage their community in the process. The champions also ensure the project is grounded in Indigenous community traditions and respects local practices and governance.

Helping communities adapt to climate challenges

COVID-19 made face-to-face programs impossible, so the GNWT's approach to supporting the adaptation efforts of communities evolved.

Online fire prevention outreach included a "FireSmart Starts in Your Backyard" contest in the summer of 2020, where residents completed a FireSmart assessment of their home. The GNWT also hosted a webinar for community governments on implementing the Community Wildfire Protection Plan and FireSmart program.

Some IGOs deployed ice-monitoring equipment, trained community monitors, and documented Indigenous knowledge and practices of ice travel. This work was supported by SmartICE and will continue into 2021-2022.

Funding for positions

Funding for 15 new climate change-specific positions across the GNWT was approved in the fall of 2020. The positions are in Inuvik, Fort Smith, Hay River, and Yellowknife. These positions will strengthen existing or support new partnerships with IGOs, community governments, and others. The work will help add capacity for climate change initiatives in the NWT.

GNWT funding was also awarded to communities to recognize climate change and energy related work. The Hamlet of Tuktoyaktuk received the Climate Change Resiliency Award for leadership in adapting to climate change. The Energy Excellence Award was awarded to Tsiigehtchic for their commitment to improving energy efficiency in the community.



Aerial view, May 2021, Fort Simpson, NWT

Reducing emissions

The main driver of climate change is the release of GHGs into the atmosphere due to human activities. These gases are released when we use fossil fuels to transport people and goods, heat buildings, and power buildings and industry operations. We need to find innovative ways to reduce emissions that consider the vast distances between communities and extreme cold weather.

HOW THE GNWT IS REDUCING EMISSIONS

Working towards increased renewable energy options

The GNWT continued to invest in renewable energy options for territorial residents and businesses. Progress was made toward renewable energy solutions, such as a wind turbine and hydropower, to reduce how much communities rely on diesel to generate electricity. The GNWT will work closely with the federal governments, IGOs, community governments, and NWT residents to provide reliable, affordable alternatives to carbon-intensive fuels.

Supporting communities to become more energy efficient

The AEA is a non-profit organization that helps reduce costs and environmental impacts of energy in the NWT. With support from the GNWT, the AEA provided programs and services to residents and communities that helped them to make buildings more energy efficient and to use more renewable energy.

Encouraging reduced fossil fuel use

The GNWT increased the NWT Carbon Tax to encourage people to reduce fossil fuels, while minimizing the effect on the local cost of living and local economic development. Research continues into options for reducing fossil fuel use in transportation.

Working towards more accurate emissions reporting

Accurate reporting is an important part of understanding the NWT's GHG emissions levels. It allows the GNWT and NWT residents to see the progress made to meet territorial reduction goals. GNWT departments worked together to improve internal trackers and with federal departments to improve the data used to calculate NWT emissions.



Biomass heating system at Chief Sunrise School, K'at'l'odeeche First Nation Reserve

CO₂e

Carbon dioxide equivalent is a metric used to measure the cumulative effects from various greenhouse gases on our climate.

SOME EXAMPLES OF REDUCING EMISSIONS IN 2020-2021

Reducing diesel in communities

The GNWT continues to make progress on the proposed 170 km transmission line project from the Taltson system to Fort Providence, Kakisa, and Dory Point. This will bring surplus hydropower to these communities to reduce the reliance on diesel generated energy. Progress made in 2020-2021 included:

- Starting the formal process to consult affected IGOs and engage other stakeholders
- Submitting a federal funding application for the project
- Preparing for environmental and regulatory work in 2021-2022

The Inuvik Wind Project completed the permit phase and moved into the final design phase. The goal is to begin construction in 2021-2022. This project will install a single 3.5-megawatt wind turbine and a small battery storage system and is a key initiative under the 2030 Energy Strategy.

Reducing emissions from transportation

Switching to an electric vehicle in a community connected to the hydroelectric grid assists in reducing the amount of GHG emissions released into the atmosphere. In June 2020, the AEA launched the Electric Vehicle Rebate Program, which gives a \$5,000 rebate for NWT residents purchasing new electric vehicles and up to \$500 rebate for charging infrastructure in hydropower communities. The AEA

issued five rebates for new electric vehicles in 2020-2021.

Improving heat and energy efficiency

AEA provided 2,694 incentives in 2020-2021, representing \$1.8 million in funding. This reduced GHG emissions by 1.3 kilotonnes (kt) of CO₂e. LED lighting continued to be the most popular eligible product—over 900 LED rebates were provided in 2020-2021, almost double from 2019-2020.

The Capital Asset Retrofit Fund (CARF) funds energy efficiency projects for GNWT facilities to reduce GHG emissions, use energy more efficiently, and reduce operating costs. In 2020-2021, approximately \$3.8 million was assigned to GNWT energy retrofit program projects, which contributed a 2 kt CO₂e reduction of GHG emissions to the GNWT's overall reduction of 3.6 kt CO₂e and reduced estimated energy costs by an average of \$459,000 annually.

Large emitter GHG emissions reduction grants

The GNWT tracks carbon tax payments from large industries that emit a high volume of GHGs. These companies can apply for grants to support GHG emission-reducing projects.

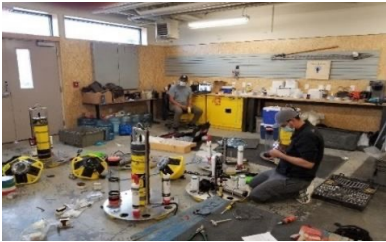
The Department of Finance posts guidelines for these grants to reduce emissions on its website. Approved projects must reduce GHG emissions by 5%. To date, this program has had no applicants.

Improving knowledge

We already know that the NWT is experiencing the impacts of climate change, including warming at up to four times the global rate in most Northern regions. What we need to better understand are:

- The impacts of climate change
- What technologies may be viable in our northern context to help us address climate change and reduce emissions

The GNWT and our partners are working together to collect new information and use it to plan for the future. This section summarizes some of our work this year.



Preparing for monitoring for SmartICE project

How the GNWT is improving knowledge

Data collection to inform decisions about climate change

The GNWT continued to collect baseline data and information about current and changing conditions. New monitoring and research initiatives and programs were also put in place. Step by step, the GNWT is creating a bank of knowledge that can inform our decisions about climate change and, ultimately, how best to adapt to it.

Gathering Indigenous and local knowledge

The GNWT worked with communities and Indigenous knowledge holders to:

- Fill in current knowledge gaps about the North and how the NWT is impacted by climate change
- Find solutions to climate change that are rooted in Indigenous and local knowledge and western science, and that work for our unique Northern condition



Monitoring the development of potential new technologies and their usability in the North

The GNWT reviewed both new technologies and policies other jurisdictions are using with the goal of:

- Adapting results from the test sections for highway design and construction
- Incorporating new technologies into designs
- Using low-carbon technologies and fuels
- Stabilizing or lowering energy costs for residents
- Ensuring energy systems remain reliable and secure

SOME EXAMPLES OF IMPROVING KNOWLEDGE IN 2020-2021

Studies to develop more renewable power in the NWT

In 2020-2021, three independent studies were commissioned that will inform potential updates to the NWT electricity strategy and approach.

- *Microgrid Stability with Intermittent Renewables:* This study was done to see if the limit on the use of intermittent renewable energy systems in diesel communities can be increased without causing technical and financial problems.
- *Assessment of Incremental Utility Revenues for Northwest Territories:* This study examined options for increasing the use of surplus hydroelectricity capacity to increase revenues and stabilize or reduce the electric power rate.
- *Net Metering and Community Self-Generation Policy Review:* This study examined options for potentially modifying the NWT net-metering program. It also considered potential solutions for regulating self-generation electricity projects.

The goals of the studies included looking at policy options for using more renewable power, decarbonizing the NWT's energy systems, lowering electricity rates, and ensuring grid reliability.

Improving our knowledge of permafrost in the NWT

The landscape is changing in the North largely due to climate-driven permafrost thaw. It affects ecosystems (including wildlife and fish, water, forests, landscapes, and people) and infrastructure (buildings, roads, and airports). It is critical for the GNWT and NWT communities to better understand thaw sensitive terrain, to better predict the future

impacts on NWT ecosystems and to inform planning. The Northwest Territories Geological Survey (NTGS) has made significant progress on permafrost-related monitoring and research:

- In 2020-2021, the ground temperature monitoring network along the Dempster and Inuvik-Tuktoyaktuk highways was established. Ground temperature data were collected at 120 monitoring sites along the Inuvik-Tuktoyaktuk Highway.
- The NTGS published several reports, along with the raw data and metadata, on ground temperature and geotechnical monitoring and research conducted in the NWT.
- The NTGS leads the Thermokarst Mapping Collective project <https://www.nwtgeoscience.ca/services/northwest-territories-thermokarst-mapping-collective>, in partnership with universities. The goal of the project is to develop, test, and implement a mapping framework to produce thermokarst and terrain sensitivity maps for areas around each NWT community, as well as all of the NWT.
- Significant progress was made on desktop-based mapping of four permafrost geohazard themes in 2020-2021. The third theme, Organic Terrain, was published and is available online (reference number 2020-010) <https://webapps.nwtgeoscience.ca/WebAppsV2/Searching/ReferenceSearch.aspx>

Protocols are being developed to map the remaining three themes, which are slopes and mass wasting, hydrological features, and periglacial features.

Strengthening long-term adaptation and resilience

Residents are already experiencing the impacts of climate change across the NWT. While the GNWT and its partners are working to reduce these impacts, preparation and adaptation planning must be done for the changes yet to come. Some effects may be opportunities, such as economic opportunities in specific sectors, and others will be challenges.

This section summarizes how the GNWT is planning ahead for the effects of a warming climate and building on the foundation we already have in place.

HOW THE GNWT IS ADAPTING AND INCREASING OUR RESILIENCE IN THE LONG-TERM

Working to build resiliency in ecosystems

Ensuring that ecosystems remain healthy and diverse is a priority for the GNWT, as food security and traditional economies rely on maintaining biodiversity.

Incorporating new information and traditional knowledge into decision-making

Accurate, timely information on climate change assists effective GNWT decision-making. This includes integrating Indigenous and local knowledge into our growing bank of data, so this information can inform GNWT decision-making processes in the future.

Supporting communities to build capacity

Communities have many Indigenous and local knowledge holders, but often limited or overloaded capacity to participate in initiatives. The GNWT is supporting communities to find funding, resources, and partnership opportunities to build community capacity. This capacity helps to spread shared knowledge gained on climate change across the NWT. It also improves collective capacity to respond to changes in the natural environment, our health and well-being, public safety, culture and heritage, infrastructure, and the economy. It assists in building grassroots resilience and the ability for communities to adapt to unexpected changes.

Developing Northern-specific practices and standards

The GNWT is working to update our practices and standards for northern infrastructure to make sure it is resilient in the face of a changing climate.

This planning will also help develop the NWT's energy potential, reduce industry emissions, and do our part to meet our commitments towards national climate change objectives.

SOME EXAMPLES OF LONG-TERM PLANNING IN 2020-2021

Opportunities related to energy in the future

The GNWT aims to establish a transmission corridor that will provide clean energy to industry, and eventually connect the NWT to the North American grid. Expanding the Taltson hydroelectricity site is the first step in this process. A transmission corridor would provide opportunities for clean growth, economic diversification, and partnerships with IGOs. Some technical studies have been completed and others are underway to further define the route. The GNWT expects to complete work on the preliminary business case for the project in 2021-2022.

The GNWT also commissioned a study in 2020-2021 to forecast the sale of electric vehicles in the NWT in the coming decade, examine how an electric vehicles charging corridor could be developed between Yellowknife and the Alberta border, and to learn the economic and environmental benefits and costs of a potential corridor. The report also investigated providing purchase incentives and included a scan of activities from jurisdictions across Canada, the U.S., and Europe.

Wildlife conservation amidst climate change

The GNWT is in the process of developing a Climate Change Adaptation Strategy for Wildlife in the NWT. In 2020-2021, 44 participants, including Elders, youth, and researchers were interviewed to help shape the goals and objectives of the Strategy.

The GNWT will:

- Hold workshops in 2021-2022 to discuss the priorities discussed in the interviews and progress towards developing the Strategy.
- Incorporate input and create an overall Climate Change Adaptation Strategy for Wildlife in the NWT.

Opportunities in the face of change

Climate change is also providing new opportunities. Warmer summers allow more opportunity to grow local food for individuals or for sale. Currently:

- There are 32 community gardens and 25 community greenhouses in the NWT.
- As of 2020-2021, every region has at least one commercial agricultural operation to help support local food security in light of a changing climate.
- Many communities have farmers markets to sell produce, thanks to the efforts of innovative local food producers.



Students gear up on research vessel *The Nahidik*, Great Slave Lake, NWT

8. Reporting results

The Departments of ENR, INF and Finance will continue to collaboratively implement our initiatives and report progress towards achieving the GNWT's climate change goals. This section summarizes our timelines for reporting.

2030 NWT CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2019-2023 ACTION PLAN

ENR will continue to provide annual progress reports on the Climate Change Action Plan until the period it covers is complete in 2023-2024. ENR will then develop the *2025-2029 Action Plan* using:

- The findings from an independent review and evaluation of the current Action Plan that will take place in 2024-2025
- Information on emerging issues, new technologies, and new opportunities
- Engagement with partners and NWT residents

2030 ENERGY STRATEGY

INF will continue to provide annual reporting on its actions and progress on the *2030 Energy Strategy* and accompanying *2019-2022 Energy Action Plan*. Beginning in 2021-2022, INF will use lessons learned from the first three years of implementing the 2030 Energy Strategy, combined with new research and analysis, to inform the revision and update of the Energy Action Plan, and help prepare for the eventual review of the Strategy.

NWT CARBON TAX

The Department of Finance will continue reporting annually on the NWT Carbon Tax.



Embankment Construction, NWT

9. Looking ahead

This section summarizes our next steps for 2021-2022. These steps include:

- Strengthening the NWT Climate Change Council
- Collaborating with communities to enhance research and monitoring
- Advocating for the unique needs of the North
- Exploring options for our energy future
- Supporting new federal targets
- Promoting a green economic recovery

STRENGTHENING THE NWT CLIMATE CHANGE COUNCIL

ENR will support the NWT Climate Change Council by setting up new panels and advisory groups. The purpose of these panels and groups is to:

- Identify climate change priorities and actions of interest
- Hear from a range of voices in the community, such as youth, Elders, and stakeholders such as NGOs and industry, and build them into our decisions
- Share information and work together towards solutions

COLLABORATING WITH COMMUNITIES TO ENHANCE RESEARCH AND MONITORING

It is critical to involve IGOs and communities in monitoring and responding to climate change. The GNWT will continue to ensure that funding and resources are available to IGOs and communities, so they can lead their own climate change research and adapt effectively.

ADVOCATING FOR THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF THE NORTH

The GNWT will continue to make sure our voices and needs are heard at the federal and international level by:

- Contributing to developing key federal strategies that consider the unique circumstances of the territories.
- Securing federal funding to help us implement pilot projects and necessary climate change initiatives that have been identified but are under-resourced.
- Informing the United Nations' 26th Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in November 2021. This is an important year where emissions reductions targets will be revisited and negotiated based on updated plans and targets brought forward by countries around the world.

EXPLORING OPTIONS FOR OUR ENERGY FUTURE

The GNWT will continue to look for opportunities to reduce GHG emissions. This includes:

- Investigating how to best use excess hydroelectricity, expand our hydroelectricity capacity, connect our hydro grid to southern markets, and electrify transportation.
- Monitoring emerging emissions-reducing technologies and fuels (like biofuels) to see if they are applicable in northern settings.
- Hosting workshops to engage with stakeholders to better understand how hydrogen could help decarbonize NWT energy systems, as well as work with the federal government on their recently released Hydrogen Strategy for Canada.

UPDATED FEDERAL TARGETS

In December 2020, the federal government released a more comprehensive climate plan, A Healthy Environment and a Healthy Economy. This plan builds on the PCF with new policies, programs, and investments to reduce GHG emissions. Its goal is to build a stronger, cleaner, more resilient and inclusive lower carbon economy.

The GNWT will continue to review and update its response to climate change, with consideration of the new federal targets:

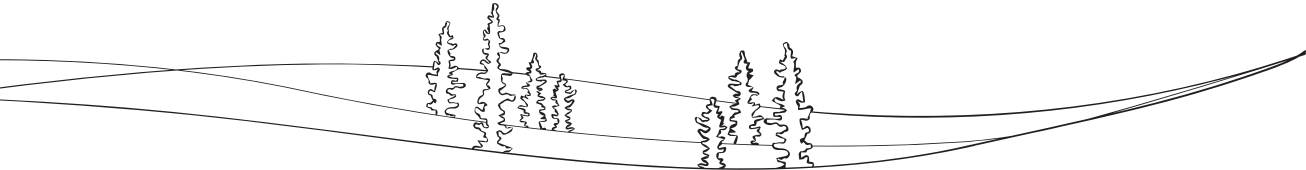
- In April 2021, the Government of Canada announced a new target of 40-45% reductions below 2005 levels by 2030. This target has been submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change as Canada’s goal by 2030.
- In June 2021, the Parliament of Canada passed the Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act which formalizes Canada’s target to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. It establishes a series of interim emissions reduction targets at 5-year milestones.

The GNWT will continue to work with the federal government and will apply for new and updated funding programs that align with NWT climate change and energy goals.

PROMOTING A GREEN ECONOMIC RECOVERY

The COVID-19 pandemic hit all sectors over the last year, and the economy needs to recover. We have the opportunity to support a green recovery — by investing in the jobs and technologies required to transition to a lower carbon economy.

As the federal government considers how to “build back better” from the economic crisis driven by COVID-19, Northern leaders have called for strategic investments in climate change adaptation and clean energy to help achieve our shared goals to reduce emissions, strengthen our communities’ resilience, and grow a sustainable economy.





Water samples, Upper Coppermine River basin, NWT

10. Detailed reporting

Detailed reporting on implementation for the GNWT's climate change initiatives can be found online:

- [NWT Climate Change Action Plan Annual Report 2020-21](#)
- [NWT Energy Initiatives Report: Reporting on Actions under the 2030 Energy Strategy 2020-2021](#)
- [NWT Carbon Tax Annual Report – 2020-2021](#)

