

Sustainable Livelihoods

Action Plan 2019-2023

What We Heard During
Public Review



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Introduction

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR), Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) developed an ENR Sustainable Livelihoods Action Plan to help prioritize resources, capacity and actions to support individuals, families, communities, regions, organizations and partners in advancing and promoting sustainable livelihoods and engaging in on the land activities.

The plan was built based on engagement across the NWT and reflects the needs, values and priorities of Northerners. It is ENR's intent that the actions in this Plan add value and support the great work happening across the NWT being led by Indigenous governments and organizations, renewable resource boards and councils, hunter and trapper associations, municipal and federal governments, non-governmental organizations and communities who want to deliver programming. Key to this will be continuing to build and strengthen partnerships.

ENR held regional meetings with Indigenous governments and co-management partners, community open houses and an advisory group workshop, met with other GNWT departments and non-governmental organizations, and visited schools where possible. A public survey and youth photo contest were also used to gather information. ENR compiled all of the information collected and drafted potential actions that respond to what we heard.

The draft Action Plan was released for a three-week public review period in July 2019. This document outlines the public feedback ENR solicited on the draft Action Plan through its website, social media, radio (in six languages) and print advertisements. Copies were also sent to Indigenous governments and co-management boards, and a summary of public engagement was released alongside the draft Action Plan. ENR received responses from Indigenous governments, renewable resource boards and the public on the draft Action Plan.

Summaries of comments received are provided in this document as general comments on the Action Plan as a whole, as well as comments on the major sections of the Action Plan:

- General comments on the plan as a whole
- Vision, goals and objectives and principles
- Objective 1
- Objective 2
- Objective 3
- Objective 4
- Objective 5

Summary of comments received

1. General comments on the Action Plan as a whole

1.1 Youth involvement

What we heard: While youth are mentioned under some actions, more opportunities to support schools, children and youth should be included in the document.

ENR response: ENR agrees it is important to engage children and youth in sustainable livelihoods programs. ENR has shared comments with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, whose mandate includes school-based education. ENR has also added an action under Objective #1 to “Act as a resource to support schools and child and youth programs in delivering on the land programs”.

1.2 Referencing land claims

What we heard: Land claims contain provisions for harvesting and traditional economy that should be considered in the context of Action Plan implementation.

ENR response: Land claims are critical for governance of harvesting and traditional economy activities. A section on land claims, and how this Action Plan can support those, has been added to the section on ‘Connections to other GNWT Commitments, Strategies and Action Plans’.

1.3 Performance indicators

What we heard: Some of the performance indicators are too vague and it is not clear how they will be assessed.

ENR response: As identified in Action 5.3, developing a more fulsome evaluation framework is a key action in the Plan. As this is developed, it is expected that individual performance indicators will be further refined and operationalized.

1.4 Clarity on implementation

What we heard: In the Action Plan, it is not always clear who is going to be implementing the actions, and whether there are enough staff persons at ENR to do so. Additionally, there was some concern that Action Plan implementation would be offloaded onto partners, such as Indigenous governments.

ENR response: The Action Plan is intended to guide ENR’s work on sustainable livelihoods. ENR will support and/or partner with communities and other partners to implement actions that are community-driven and identified as necessary by partners. The Action Plan will be implemented by ENR’s On the Land Unit.

1.5 Interest in economic opportunities

What we heard: Creating or providing support for different types of economic opportunities related to land-based activities (e.g., non-timber forest products, micro businesses, tourism, etc.) is not addressed in the plan, and is needed.

ENR response: Creating alternate economic opportunities is important. ENR has shared these comments with the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment (ITI), who has the mandate for business development. ENR would be pleased to collaborate with ITI and partners on related projects where appropriate and where driven by community interest.

1.6 Permaculture

What we heard: ENR should consider adding an action to the Plan related to permaculture.

ENR response: Permaculture is “an agricultural system or method that seeks to integrate human activity with natural surroundings so as to create highly efficient self-sustaining ecosystems”¹. While permaculture is a sustainable approach, it is beyond the scope of this plan. Comments have been shared with ITI, who has the mandate to advance agriculture in the NWT.

¹ Miriam-Webster. (2019). Permaculture [online]. Available at <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/permaculture>

1.7 Wildlife regulations and sharing and selling of country foods

What we heard: Questions were raised about whether wildlife and food regulations would need to change to implement certain actions and whether or not ENR would consider regulation changes related to selling country foods.

ENR response: There are no intended regulation changes associated with this Action Plan. This Plan will comply with existing and future land claims, the *Wildlife Act*, the *Public Health Act* and other legislation and regulations.

1.8 Defining barriers

What we heard: The Action Plan references barriers to getting on the land; these should be identified early on in implementation if they have not been already.

ENR response: Throughout the engagement, ENR heard about a number of barriers to getting onto the land (i.e., cost of equipment; landscape changes; shift to a wage economy and ongoing impacts of colonialism, among others), which informed the development of actions. Additional analysis on barriers will inform program development as well as the development of the evaluation framework.

2. Comment on vision, goals, objectives and principles

2.1 Addition of ‘responsibility’ as a principle

What we heard: Shared responsibility should also be a guiding principle in conjunction with respect.

ENR response: This was an excellent suggestion and has been incorporated into the final Action Plan.

2.2 Addition of ecological integrity and resilience as principles

What we heard: Ecological integrity and resilience should also be guiding principles, particularly as they establish global rationale for the need for sustainable livelihoods initiatives.

ENR response: This was an excellent suggestion and has been incorporated into the final Action Plan.

2.3 How ENR is going to implement the principles

What we heard: Some of the principles do not seem expressly tied to specific actions, so it is unclear how they will inform implementation of the Action Plan.

ENR response: These principles were developed based on what we heard across the NWT during our engagement, and therefore reflect community priorities. They are included in the Action Plan as the framework to guide all of our work under the Plan, and more broadly at ENR. Each of these principles will be considered when developing new programs and services identified in the Plan.

2.4. Language

What we heard: The Action Plan identifies language as a guiding principle, but does not have an action specific to language; nor is it reflected in the actions.

ENR response: ENR recognizes the importance and value of language being used in every possible way in the implementation of actions, including training and teaching. Wherever possible, ENR will support and advocate for the inclusion of language considerations, including working with Indigenous governments and GNWT's Indigenous Languages and Education Secretariat.

3. Comments on Objective #1

3.1 Involvement of women

What we heard: It is important to ensure increased opportunities for women to participate in harvesting initiatives, including support for increasing traditional knowledge among younger women. Take a Kid Trapping would be a good framework to begin with to encourage young women.

ENR response: ENR strongly agrees with this, and this reflects what we heard during our engagement throughout the NWT. Women are included specifically in Action 1.5, regarding development of mentorship programs. Additionally, Action 5.2 identifies the development of an assessment tool for ENR's on the land programs to ensure programs are equitable and inclusive, as well as culturally appropriate. Action 5.5 identifies a review of the Take a Kid Trapping program, and consideration of opportunities for young women and girls will be included in this.

3.2 Consideration of traditional laws

What we heard: Under Action 1.5, it is important to take into account traditional laws related to harvesting.

ENR response: This is an important point. ENR has amended the action to reflect the importance of ensuring programs and services implemented under this plan are culturally appropriate.

3.3 Timelines of actions

What we heard: ENR should consider moving up the timeline and priority of some of the bullets that include learning through Indigenous systems.

ENR response: ENR believes all of these actions are important. As such, ENR has developed a timeline for all actions that is believed to be realistic and allows for time to work with our partners to meaningfully implement actions, based on resource and capacity.

4. Comments on Objective #2

4.1 Reducing administrative burden

What we heard: The GNWT should look at whether or not it will decrease the administrative burden of its own funding programs rather than providing assistance to handle the burden, which actually can just add to the burden.

ENR response: ENR plans to review its own processes to determine how to streamline them and make them more accessible, while still ensuring proper accounting and use of public funds. ENR can support partners with accessing funds and developing proposals for external funding. ENR also plans to work with other departments to see where we can best align processes, as indicated in Action 2.2.

4.2 The role of Guardians in enforcement

What we heard: With ENR supporting Guardian programs, will ENR support a gradual move toward training Indigenous personnel to fill an enforcement role within traditional territories as it pertains to harvesting?

ENR response: Guardians play an important role in watching and protecting the land. However, Guardians are not considered a replacement for compliance and enforcement under applicable legislation.

5. Comments on Objective #4

5.1 Self-determination and support for communities

What we heard: Objective 4 actions are quite specific whereas the overall objective is broad, and the importance of self-determination and communities/organizations defining their own program needs should be clearer. ENR needs to continue to dynamically engage with communities on their specific needs for program development (existing and/or new). If an organization wanted to develop a program specific to its members, it should be supported under this objective.

ENR response: ENR agrees with this, and sees its role as one of support (e.g. resources and capacity) where desired by our partners. ENR has structured the plan to support community-driven programs based on identified local and regional needs. As such, any actions under this objective would be guided by our partners and would reflect the needs of their members. ENR is committed to working in partnership with Indigenous governments, co-management partners and others to promote locally and culturally appropriate opportunities. An additional action, which identifies support for individual communities/partners in developing specific programs, has been added under this objective.

6. Comments on Objective #5

6.1 Evaluation

What we heard: ENR should move up the timeline for development of an evaluation framework that draws on Indigenous methodologies alongside other approaches, as this will shape development of programs.

ENR response: Developing a proper evaluation framework is key to the success of this Plan. ENR has developed a timeline in the Action Plan for Action 5.3 that is believed to be realistic and will allow for time to work with the Advisory Group to develop a meaningful framework.

7. Next steps

Based on the feedback received, ENR has revised the Sustainable Livelihoods Action Plan and released it publicly. ENR will continue to work with partners to implement the actions identified in this plan. If you are interested in implementing any of the actions, developing partnerships or finding more information, please contact the On the Land Unit at OnTheLand@gov.nt.ca.

Appendix A – List of Meetings and Participating Governments and Organizations

The Action Plan was developed based on engagement held across the NWT. Engagement on the development of this Action Plan coincided with public engagement on a GNWT Traditional Knowledge Action Plan. Below is a list of the different engagement activities that took place.

1. Community Open Houses – 18 community open house events were held across the NWT. The majority of these events were held in prospector tents, with an Elder facilitator from the community and ENR staff. Open houses were held in:

- Paulatuk February 18, 2019
- Ulukhaktok February 20, 2019
- Sambaa K'e February 21-22, 2019
- Hay River February 26, 2019
- Déline March 5, 2019
- Fort Resolution March 6, 2019
- Fort Good Hope March 7, 2019
- Jean Marie River March 19, 2019
- Fort MacPherson March 19, 2019
- Inuvik March 19, 2019
- Tsiigehtchic March 20, 2019
- Aklavik March 21, 2019
- Fort Liard April 3-4, 2019
- Yellowknife April 15, 2019
- Łutselk'e April 24-25, 2019
- Kátł'odeeche First Nation May 8-9, 2019
- Wekweètì May 1, 2019
- Behchokò May 7, 2019

2. Regional Meetings – Two regional workshops with delegates from Indigenous governments and organizations, and co-management partners were held in Hay River (February 26-27, 2019) and Inuvik (March 18-19, 2019). The following organizations participated in these meetings:
- Aklavik Community Corporation
 - Aklavik Indian Band
 - Dehcho First Nations
 - Deh Gáh Got'ıę First Nation
 - Deninu Kue First Nation
 - Ehdiitat Gwich'in Council
 - Fort Providence Métis Council
 - Fort Resolution Métis Council
 - Fort Simpson Métis Local #52
 - Fort Smith Métis Council
 - Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board
 - Gwich'in Land and Water Board
 - Gwich'in Tribal Council
 - Gwichya Gwich'in Band
 - Gwichya Gwich'in Council
 - Hay River Métis Council
 - Inuvialuit Game Council
 - Inuvik Native Band
 - Kátł'odeeche First Nation
 - Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board
 - Nah?ą Dehé Dene Band
 - NWT Métis Nation
 - Paulatuk Community Corporation
 - Pehdzeh Kı First Nation
 - Sachs Harbour Community Corporation
 - Sahtú Land and Water Board
 - Sahtú Renewable Resources Board
 - Smith's Landing First Nation
 - Teetl'it Gwich'in Council
 - Tthets'ėhk'edėlį First Nation
 - Tulita Land Corporation
 - Ulukhaktok Community Corporation
 - Wek'èezhì Land and Water Board
 - West Point First Nation
3. Public Survey – A public survey was made available online to all NWT residents to gather input on barriers and challenges related to getting out on the land and/or harvesting, as well as ideas for needed actions. A total of 30 responses were received.

4. Youth Photo Essay Contest – ENR held youth photo and essay contest to engage youth up to age 25. Youth could submit photos and written summaries of what being on the land means to them. Participants included:
 - East Three School, Inuvik
 - Tristan Liske-Abel, Yellowknife
 - Andrew Mackenzie, Behchokò
 - Y. Hong, Yellowknife
5. A meeting with non-governmental organizations – ENR held a half-day meeting open to non-governmental organizations to discuss actions and opportunities for collaboration. The following organizations participated:
 - Dechinta Centre for Research and Learning
 - NWT Literacy Council
 - NWT Recreation and Parks Association
6. Advisory Committee Workshop – ENR held a 2.5 day workshop May 28-30, 2019 at Aurora Village with representatives from regional Indigenous governments and GNWT departments to review the results of engagement and discuss future actions. Participants included:
 - Inuvialuit Regional Corporation
 - Nah?à Dehé Dene Band
 - North Slave Métis Alliance
 - NWT Métis Nation
 - GNWT – Department of Finance
 - GNWT – Department of Health and Social Service
 - GNWT – Executive and Indigenous Affairs

7. Individual Indigenous Government and Organization Meetings – three individual meetings took place during the engagement period:

- Hay River Métis Council April 30, 2019
- West Point First Nation May 3, 2019
- Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute June 10, 2019



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