



Climate Change Resiliency and Adaptation

Parts of the NWT are warming up to four times faster than global averages and experiencing considerable changes to the natural environment. This intense warming means climate change impacts are being felt more strongly and more rapidly in the NWT. For more information, see the Climate Change Impacts Fact Sheet and the Climate Change Knowledge Fact Sheet.

Resiliency and adaptation are two interrelated responses to address the various impacts of climate change on individuals, communities, ecosystems, infrastructure and the economy, industry and business.

Resiliency is the number or size of impacts an area can withstand before it is changed entirely by these impacts.

Adaptation to climate change is any activity that reduces the negative impacts of climate change or takes advantage of new opportunities arising from climate change impacts.

As the northern climate continues to change, decision-makers will need to adjust plans and operations to deal with a range of possible future conditions and unanticipated events. This approach is known as “adaptive management”.

Key steps in the adaptive management process include:

- Monitoring programs – understanding the changes occurring;
- Risk assessments and hazard mapping – understanding the implications of climate change and the corresponding risks to species, ecosystems, infrastructure and people;
- Planning and decision-making – managing the NWT’s lands, natural resources and infrastructure in the face of significant uncertainty and potential changes; and
- Resilience and adaptation – increasing our capacity to withstand climate-related impacts, adapt to unavoidable impacts and take advantage of new opportunities.

Some priority areas for further discussion and inclusion in the NWT Climate Change Strategic Framework (CCSF) may include:

- Ecosystems – changes to the natural environment and considerations for how natural resources are managed;
- Infrastructure – maintaining and constructing buildings, infrastructure, systems, etc. to withstand expected future climate change impacts;
- Health and well-being – identifying and addressing current and emerging health risks, including food security, air quality concerns, vector-borne diseases and mental health concerns; and
- Culture and heritage – consideration of how changes on the landscape are affecting the pursuit of traditional activities and cultural practices, including heritage sites and artifacts.