

2021-2025 NWT Water Stewardship Strategy Action Plan

2024 Progress Review Summary

Plan d'action 2021- 2025 de la Stratégie sur la gestion des eaux des TNO

Résumé du rapport d'étape 2024



Government of
Northwest Territories

Gouvernement des
Territoires du Nord-Ouest



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

Kĩspin ki nitawihtĩn ē nĩhĩyawihk ōma ācimōwin, tipwāsinān.

Cree

Thchq yatı k'ęę. Dı wegodı newq dè, gots'o gonede.

Thchq

ʔerihł'ıs Dēne Sųhné yatı t'a huts'elkēr xa beyáyatı theʔą ʔat'e, nuwe ts'ēn yółtı.

Chipewyan

Edı gondı dehghá got'ie zhatié k'ęę edatł'éh enahddhę nıde naxets'ę edahı.

South Slavey

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

North Slavey

Jii gwandak izhii ginjik vat'atr'ijáhch'uu zhit yinothtan ji', diits'át ginohkhii.

Gwich'in

Uvanittuaq ilitchurisukupku Inuvialuktun, ququaqluta.

Inuvialuktun

Ĉ'bdĠ 00ŋ'bbΔ° ΛϚLJΔŦ° ΔɔbŦɔc'ŋLɔŦb, ɔŋ°Ŧ°ɔc' ɔ'bbɔŋ°ɔc'ŦŦ°.

Inuktitut

Hapkua titiqqat pijumagupkit Inuinnaqtun, uvaptinnut hivajarlutit.

Inuinnaqtun

Aboriginal Languages Secretariat: 867-767-9346 ext. 71037

Francophone Affairs Secretariat: 867-767-9343

Table of Contents

Checking Our Progress - 2024 NWT Water Stewardship Strategy Action Plan Progress Review Summary	2
Our Vision	4
Acknowledging the 2024 Low Water Season	6
2024 Progress Highlights.....	7
NWT Community-based Water Quality Monitoring Program	
Community Monitors Training Workshop	7
15 th Annual NWT Water Stewardship Strategy Implementation Workshop	8
Youth Water Stewardship Gathering.....	9
NWT Youth Water Stewardship Mentorship Grant Highlights.....	10
Looking Forward - Initiating the evaluation of the 2021-2025 Action Plan	11
Appendix 1: Action Item Progress Status Overview	12
1. Work Together	13
2. Know and Plan	18
3. Use Responsibly.....	22
4. Check our Progress.....	26

Checking Our Progress

2024 NWT Water Stewardship Strategy Action Plan Progress Review Summary

Northern Voices, Northern Waters: NWT Water Stewardship Strategy (the [Water Strategy](#)), is a made-in-the-North strategy developed collaboratively with **water partners** in the Northwest Territories (NWT). The Water Strategy is put into action through five-year Action Plans, which outline the collective water stewardship priorities and efforts of water partners.

The *2021-2025 NWT Water Stewardship Strategy Action Plan* (the [Action Plan](#)) is the third in a series of five-year action plans that support the achievement of the Water Strategy's goals. This Action Plan was developed collaboratively, identifying lead and supporting water partners, 23 Keys to Success, and 86 Action Items and associated deliverable dates and performance indicators. The Action Plan also identifies outputs, which are tangible results of water partners' efforts.

This *2024 Progress Report* highlights Action Plan achievements and progress updates occurring from January 2024 to December 2024.

The Water Strategy, Action Plans, and the Annual Progress Reviews are available online at www.nwtwaterstewardship.ca. You can also request the information by emailing nwtwaterstrategy@gov.nt.ca.



Water partners include organizations that have a role in water stewardship, including all levels of governments, Indigenous governments and Indigenous organizations, regulatory boards, non-governmental organizations, academia, industry, and NWT communities.

Faire le point

Résumé du rapport d'étape 2024 du Plan d'action de la Stratégie sur la gestion des eaux des TNO

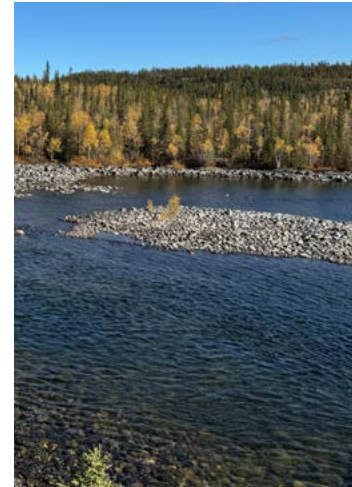
*Le document *La voix du Nord, les eaux du Nord : Stratégie sur la gestion des eaux des Territoires du Nord-Ouest* présente une stratégie nordique élaborée par des partenaires ténois dans le domaine de l'eau. Cette stratégie est mise en œuvre grâce à un plan d'action quinquennal dans lequel sont définis les priorités collectives en matière de gestion des eaux et les efforts à fournir par les partenaires concernés.*

Le Plan d'action 2021-2025 de la Stratégie sur la gestion des eaux des TNO (le [Plan d'action](#)) est le troisième plan d'action quinquennal visant à soutenir la réalisation des objectifs de la Stratégie sur la gestion des eaux. Ce plan d'action a été élaboré de manière collaborative. Il détermine les partenaires principaux et complémentaires dans le domaine de l'eau; il établit 23 facteurs de réussite; il pose 86 mesures à prendre, ainsi que les dates de livraison et les indicateurs de rendement associés. Le Plan d'action établit également les résultats attendus qui permettent de rendre concrets les efforts des partenaires.

Le présent rapport d'étape souligne les réalisations liées au Plan d'action et fait le point sur les progrès accomplis de janvier à décembre 2024.

Vous trouverez la Stratégie sur la gestion des eaux des TNO, les plans d'action et les rapports d'étape en ligne au <https://www.nwtwaterstewardship.ca/fr>.

Vous pouvez également les demander en envoyant un courriel à l'adresse nwtwaterstrategy@gov.nt.ca.



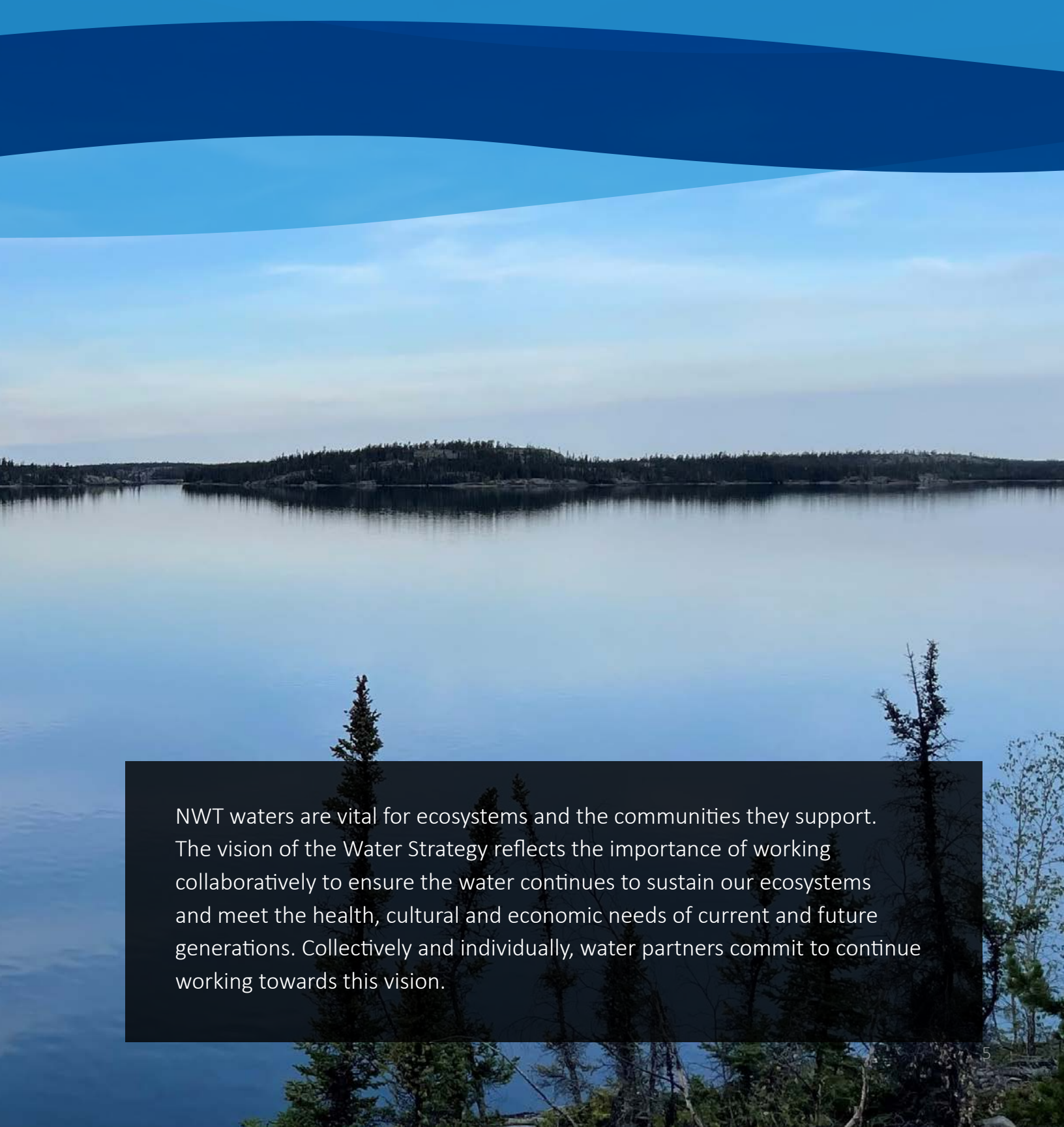
Les partenaires dans le domaine de l'eau

désignent les organisations qui ont un rôle à jouer dans la gestion de l'eau, notamment tous les ordres de gouvernement, les organismes et gouvernements autochtones, les organismes de réglementation, les organisations non gouvernementales, les établissements d'enseignement, les entreprises et les collectivités ténoises.

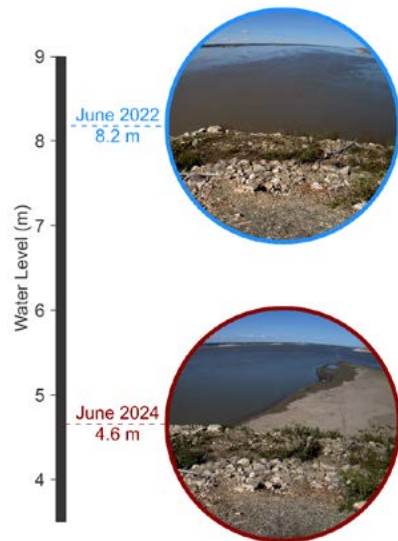
The image features a serene landscape of a calm body of water, likely a lake or wide river, reflecting the sky and the surrounding forested shoreline. The water is exceptionally still, acting as a perfect mirror for the scene above. The shoreline is composed of a dense line of evergreen trees, with some rocky outcrops visible. The sky is a pale, clear blue with a few wispy clouds. In the foreground, there are abstract, flowing blue shapes that sweep across the top and right sides of the frame, adding a modern, graphic element to the natural scene. In the bottom right corner, there are some dark, silhouetted trees.

OUR VISION

The waters of the Northwest Territories will remain clean, abundant and productive for all time.



NWT waters are vital for ecosystems and the communities they support. The vision of the Water Strategy reflects the importance of working collaboratively to ensure the water continues to sustain our ecosystems and meet the health, cultural and economic needs of current and future generations. Collectively and individually, water partners commit to continue working towards this vision.



Acknowledging the 2024 Low Water Season

In 2024, water levels and river flow rates across the Northwest Territories (NWT) remained critically low due to ongoing extreme drought conditions that began in summer 2022. The Slave, Lockhart, and Cameron Rivers remained below seasonal norms and Great Slave Lake also remained at a record low. The situation was similar for much of the Mackenzie River Basin, where many flow rates were at or near historic lows. Throughout the season, the drought was compounded by below-average precipitation and above-average temperatures.

The impacts of the low water were significant. While residents and water users applied caution while travelling and navigating waterways, the Department of Infrastructure was forced to cancel all Marine Transportation Services barges to Norman Wells and Tulita. This decision, driven by safety concerns due to shallow waters and physical obstacles, disrupted critical community resupplies.

The effects of consecutive years of drought, intensified by climate change, can create lasting challenges for aquatic ecosystems, wildfire risk, transportation, and community infrastructure.

For monthly updates on water levels, visit [Water Monitoring Bulletins | Environment and Climate Change](#).

2024 Progress Highlights

NWT Community-based Water Quality Monitoring Program Community Monitors Training Workshop

In May 2024, the NWT Community-based Water Quality Monitoring Program hosted a Community Monitors Capacity Building Workshop in Dettah.

The NWT-wide CBM program was created to address community concerns about water quality and ecosystem health. Since 2012, the program has expanded to partner with 21 communities at over 40 sites. The program provides water quality monitoring equipment, training, technical support, and data analysis to communities so that they can learn more about water quality in the NWT. The main goal of the program is to train local monitors to eventually perform the water monitoring independently in their communities.



The workshop brought together 60 community monitors from across the NWT to exchange knowledge, learn about monitoring methods, develop skills and connect. Interactive sessions included various monitoring methods for sampling water, citizen science, data sharing and literacy, and water safety.

How this work advances the NWT Water Stewardship Strategy 2021-2025 Action Plan:

Key to Success 1.3.A. Community knowledge and capacity in water management, aquatic research and monitoring increase over time.

Key to Success 2.2.B. Water monitoring networks are proactively and collaboratively managed through partnerships and agreements to maintain and improve long-term water quality and quantity knowledge, address gaps, and meet changing needs.

15th Annual NWT Water Stewardship Strategy Implementation Workshop

The October 2024 NWT Water Stewardship Strategy Implementation Workshop marked 15 years of water partners coming together to advance the vision and goals of the NWT Water Strategy. Over 100 participants took part in the two-day event, representing Indigenous governments and Indigenous organizations, guardians and community monitors, academia, federal and territorial governments, community organizations, and youth.



This year's workshop theme, *"Shaping the Future of Water Stewardship in the NWT – Actions, Learnings, and Insights for Tomorrow,"* welcomed reflections on 15 years of progress and insights on how to shape a collaborative path forward for water stewardship in the NWT. Key discussions highlighted the importance of community-based monitoring programs, fluctuating water levels, drinking water management, transboundary water management, flood mapping, youth water stewardship and more.

The workshop summary report can be viewed [here](#).

How this work advances the NWT Water Stewardship Strategy 2021-2025 Action Plan:

Key to Success 1.2 Water partners and the public are aware of water stewardship issues and activities.

Key to Success 1.3. Community knowledge and capacity in water management, aquatic research and monitoring increase over time.

Key to Success 2.2.C. Results of monitoring and research activities by researchers and water partners are provided to water partners in an understandable way.

Key to Success 4.1 Water partners maintain steady progress on Action Plan Implementation.

Youth Water Stewardship Gathering

Encouraging young people to be involved in water stewardship activities is an important part of the NWT Water Strategy. When young people learn about water stewardship, they grow into tomorrow's informed leaders and decision-makers.

The 2024 Youth Water Stewardship Gathering was hosted by Ecology North in partnership with Northern Youth Leadership, Treaty Talks NWT, North Slave Métis Alliance, Western Arctic Youth Collective, the Government of the Northwest Territories, and the Foster Family Coalition NWT.

The gathering took place in February for four days at the Camp Connections facility outside of Yellowknife, NWT. Thirteen youth joined activities centered on healing relationships with water. Activities included community building through art, discussions on transboundary water challenges and treaties, a body mapping workshop to highlight youth leadership qualities, and a visioning session where youth imagined and mapped out their ideal future. Unstructured art and crafting time played a crucial role in community building, fostering meaningful conversations on language revitalization, treaties, leadership, and life in the North. These informal moments were just as impactful as the structured sessions.



Youth had a lot to say about the importance of water stewardship and the impact this gathering had on them. To hear more from the youth directly, view the Youth Water Stewardship Gathering [video](#).

How this work advances the NWT Water Stewardship Strategy 2021-2025 Action Plan:

Key to Success 1.3.B. NWT youth are engaged in water stewardship learning and leadership opportunities and understand Indigenous and local water-related knowledge.

NWT Youth Water Stewardship Mentorship Grant Highlights

The NWT Youth Water Stewardship and Mentorship Grant Program provides funding to youth aged 18-30 to lead community projects and events that support the goals and vision of the Water Strategy. Youth engagement and capacity building in water stewardship are important for the continued success of the Water Strategy. It keeps NWT waters clean, abundant and healthy, and it prepares the next generation of water leaders. In 2024, three youth were awarded the NWT Youth Water Stewardship Mentorship Grant.



Aimee Yurris, mentored by Tree of Peace Friendship Centre, hosted a voyageur canoe day trip held on July 31, 2024, on Back Bay in Yellowknife. The event welcomed 10 youth, 5 adults, and 1 Elder. Participants paddled the canoe along the shoreline, enjoyed tea and bannock, and listened to Elder Felix Lockhart share stories and teachings on water stewardship, leadership, and Indigenous knowledge.

Clementine Bouche, mentored by Ecology North, hosted a swim packing event coupled with a water sampling activity. The event emphasized the accessibility and utilization of the fresh, clean, and calm waters of the North. The event took place on Long Lake, in Yellowknife. After leading participants through an introduction to swim packing and short swim, they discussed and learned about water stewardship and the basics of conducting water sampling.

Brandon Pludwinski, mentored by Ecology North, led three canoe trips providing an opportunity for youth to connect, learn to navigate, and better understand the local watershed.

How this work advances the NWT Water Stewardship Strategy 2021-2025 Action Plan:

Key to Success 1.3.B. NWT youth are engaged in water stewardship learning and leadership opportunities and understand Indigenous and local water-related knowledge.

Looking Forward - Initiating the Evaluation of the 2021-2025 Action Plan

As the 2021-2025 NWT Water Strategy Action Plan nears completion, an independent evaluation is being conducted. This assessment will measure the plan's effectiveness, highlight successes and challenges in advancing the vision and goals of the NWT Water Strategy, and provide recommendations for the next five-year Action Plan.



The evaluation will be led by an accredited third-party evaluator, MNP. A Water Partner Evaluation Committee, including representatives from the Water Strategy Indigenous Steering Committee, Wilfrid Laurier University, Nature United, Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Boards, Environment and Climate Change Canada, and the Government of the Northwest Territories' Department of Environment and Climate Change, was established in Fall 2024 and will oversee and guide the evaluation process. The findings and recommendations will help inform the next Action Plan.

Once the evaluation is complete, the development of the next Action Plan will begin. Water partners will be engaged beginning in Fall 2025 to help inform and draft an Action Plan. Active engagement and contributions of water partners will be key to creating a meaningful and effective Action Plan and advancing and promoting water stewardship in the NWT.

How this work advances the NWT Water Stewardship Strategy 2021-2025 Action Plan:

Key to Success 4.2 Water partners benefit from an independent evaluation to enable the incorporation of lessons learned into the next Action Planning cycle.

Appendix 1: Action Item Progress Status Overview

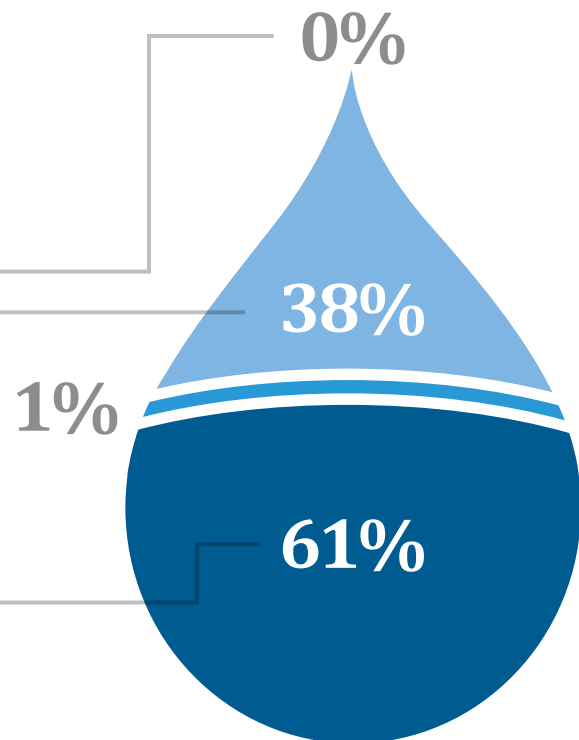
The table on the following pages provide progress status updates for all 74 Actions Items identified in the Action for 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024.

Progress on Action Items was assessed based on the following criteria:

- **Not started**
Activities towards completion of the Action Item have not started and no deliverables currently exist.
- **In progress**
Activities towards the completion of the Action Item have begun and there are deliverables; however, there is still work to do.
- **Complete**
The Action Item is complete, and information and deliverables are available to water partners.
- **Complete for reporting period and ongoing**
The Action Item is complete for the current reporting period; however, the Action Item requires ongoing work.

The percentages below indicate the proportion of the 74 Action Items in each category.

- Not started: 0%
- In progress: 38%
- Complete: 1%
- Complete for reporting period and ongoing: 61%



1. Work Together

Work together component includes:

- Partnerships
- Capacity Building, Leadership Training and Education
- Communication and Engagement
- Transboundary Discussions, Agreements and Obligations

Key to Success 1.1 A: Indigenous knowledge, perspectives, and values guide Water Strategy activities through strategic oversight provided by an engaged Indigenous Steering Committee.

	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)	2024 Status
1	ISC members actively liaise between their respective Indigenous governments or organizations and the Water Strategy.	Shared plain language and visual reporting tools	2021 and Ongoing	ISC	Complete for the reporting period, and ongoing
2	ISC members provide advice to water partners on how to effectively engage Indigenous governments or organizations, Indigenous knowledge holders and Indigenous communities in implementing activities and sharing information.	ISC meeting notes and annual Implementation Workshop	2021 and Ongoing	ISC	Complete for the reporting period, and ongoing
3	ISC members report on relevant regional initiatives at ISC meetings.	ISC meeting notes	2021 and Ongoing	ISC	Complete for the reporting period, and ongoing

Key to Success 1.1 B: Water partners strengthen strategic areas for cooperation through leveraging related initiatives.

	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)	2024 Status
1	Establish a multi-stakeholder working group to further support the collaborative implementation of the Water Strategy Action Plan and priority Action Items, such as an Awareness Building Strategy, and to track progress.	WSS Working Group (ToR)	2022 and ongoing	ECC	In Progress
2	Identify opportunities for water partners to support Water Strategy initiatives through collaborative partnerships and available funding opportunities.	Listing of ongoing water programs and initiatives	2022 and ongoing	ECC All water partners	Complete for the reporting period, and ongoing
3	Coordinate and share information with water partners on the emerging Canada Water Agency and its relevance to NWT Water Stewardship objectives.	Updates to water partners at the annual Implementation Workshop	2022 and ongoing	ECCC	In progress

4	Promote Water Strategy objectives in regional land use plans, protected areas management plans, and Conserved Area (IPCA) management plans as they are renewed and developed.	Land use planning documents Protected areas management plans Conservation Network Plan (Healthy Lands Healthy People)	2022 and ongoing	Regional land use planning boards Renewable resource boards NWT protected areas co-management boards ECC	In progress
---	---	---	------------------	---	-------------

Key to Success 1.1 C: Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing and being and local knowledge are valued and respected in water stewardship initiatives.

	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)	2024 Status
1	Support community and Indigenous governments and organizations' involvement in co-designing research and monitoring initiatives whose research questions respond to community prioritized questions.	Forums for co-developing research projects; community and regional research strategies NWT CIMP funded projects	2021 and Ongoing	ECC All water partners	Complete for the reporting period, and ongoing
2	Continue to support community-based monitoring programs to enhance shared learning, knowledge, skills, and consistent data collection, analysis, and results communication to communities and decision-makers.	Results reports NWT CIMP funded projects	2021 and Ongoing	ECC Academic partners Aurora College/ARI	Complete for the reporting period, and ongoing
3	Promote information sharing including local and Indigenous stories to better understand and document the significance of the land and water and its history. Use visual aids (e.g., field tablets, videos, etc.) where possible to document and promote knowledge transfer among Elders and youth.	Communications through written reports, oral recordings, illustrations, videos alongside collected data and scientific information	2021 and Ongoing	ECC All water partners	Complete for the reporting period, and ongoing
4	Support the development and implementation of Indigenous knowledge protocols.	Best practices session at annual Implementation Workshop	2022 and ongoing	ISC	In progress

5	Promote the use of plain language and Indigenous language audio video formats to help facilitate understanding within Indigenous communities.	NWT Water Stewardship Website Online platforms NWT CIMP website	2021 and Ongoing	All water partners	In progress
6	Promote the use of Indigenous place names associated with important water features in research and monitoring programs and model best Indigenization practices, such as producing multilingual maps, publications and websites.	Research reports Communication products	2022 and ongoing	All water partners	In progress

Key to Success 1.2: Water partners and the public are aware of water stewardship issues and activities.

	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)	2024 Status
1	Implement updated awareness-building and communications strategy to raise awareness of the goals of the Water Strategy, including engagement with and input from a broad range of interested parties (Elders, youth, land users, Guardians).	Awareness-building and communications strategy	2022 and ongoing	ECC ISC Ecology North WSS Working Group	In progress
2	Provide clear, concise and current Water Strategy information and data to the public in easy-to-access formats, at the community, regional and watershed level.	ENR Publications NWT Water Stewardship Website Communications products on monitoring results in scientific and plain language publications Water/sediment quality data on Mackenzie DataStream	2021 and Ongoing	ECC	Complete for the reporting period, and ongoing
3	Develop and coordinate activities that raise awareness of water stewardship, such as the #loveNWTwater campaign and the celebration of Canada Water Week.	Public outreach activities Publications	2021 and Ongoing	Ecology North	Complete for the reporting period, and ongoing

Key to Success 1.3 A: Community knowledge and capacity in water management, aquatic research and monitoring increase over time.

	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)	2024 Status
1	Explore strategic opportunities to coordinate training across the NWT for community-based monitors, including Guardians.	Workshop recommendations report	2021 and Ongoing	Dehcho AAROM ECC	Complete for the reporting period, and ongoing
2	Support and promote local and distance learning opportunities for community-based water monitors, Guardians, and future water leaders.	Peer-to-peer learning opportunities Guardian gatherings	2021 and Ongoing	ECC Makeway Aurora College/ARI DataStream	Complete for the reporting period, and ongoing
3	Promote and facilitate intergenerational on-the-land education/leadership camps.	On-the-land camps	2021 and Ongoing	Makeway ECC	Complete for the reporting period, and ongoing
4	Identify opportunities for water partners to support each other's educational initiatives, including the sharing of electronic and physical resources.	Information sharing at annual Implementation Workshop Website postings	2021 and Ongoing	ECC	In progress

Key to Success 1.3 B: NWT youth are engaged in water stewardship learning and leadership opportunities and understand Indigenous and local water-related knowledge.

	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)	2024 Status
1	Create resources that support and are aligned with the units of study found in the NWT science curriculum related to the theme of water to help students make connections between the curriculum, the NWT context, and the relevant teachings of the Dene Kede and Inuuqatigiit curricula.	NWT tailored learning activities that tie northern water topics into the curriculum	2022 onwards	Ecology North	Complete for the reporting period, and ongoing
2	Participate in school outreach to promote water stewardship and educate about aquatic ecosystems and their protection.	Science fairs Career fair School visits	2022 onwards	Ecology North ECC	Complete for the reporting period, and ongoing
3	Create an NWT-wide water stewardship youth group to provide a forum for collaborating and learning about water stewardship.	Online forum for youth Youth gathering	2022 onwards	Ecology North	Complete for the reporting period, and ongoing
4	Facilitate youth engagement in Water Stewardship activities through ongoing annual programs such as the Youth Multimedia Contest and the NWT Youth Water Stewardship and Mentorship Grant Program.	Programs delivered, evaluated, renewed annually	2022 ongoing	ECC	Complete for the reporting period, and ongoing

Key to Success 1.4 A: Bilateral transboundary water management agreements are in place with neighbouring jurisdictions to protect NWT waters.

	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)	2024 Status
1	Advance negotiations and sign bilateral transboundary water management agreements with the remaining jurisdictions.	Yukon-NWT Bilateral Transboundary Agreements (2) Saskatchewan-NWT Bilateral Transboundary Agreement NWT-Nunavut Bilateral Transboundary Agreement	2022 and ongoing	ECC	Complete for the reporting period, and ongoing
2	Continue to consult and engage Indigenous governments and organizations and engage the public during negotiations processes.	What we heard report	2021 and Ongoing	ECC	Complete for the reporting period, and ongoing

Key to Success 1.4 B: Bilateral transboundary water management agreements are successfully implemented through Bilateral Management Committees and NWT residents are kept informed of transboundary water management agreement activities.

	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)	2024 Status
1	Establish a Bilateral Management Committee (BMC) for each remaining agreement under negotiation, and develop work plans.	Yukon-NWT BMC Saskatchewan-NWT BMC NWT-Nunavut BMC	2022 and ongoing	ECC	Complete for the reporting period, and ongoing
2	Monitor and learn through Indigenous and western science about aquatic ecosystems, including surface and groundwater quality and quantity, and biology in the transboundary watersheds with consideration of climate change impacts.	Learning Plans (if required) Annual Reports	2021 and Ongoing	ECC	Complete for the reporting period, and ongoing
3	Implement an updated transboundary water management agreement communication strategy to ensure that water partners and the public are kept informed of negotiation and implementation activities.	Transboundary Water Management Agreement Communication Strategy Communication tactics and tools	2022 and ongoing	ECC	In progress

2. Know and Plan

Know and Plan component includes:

- Building Knowledge
- Applying Knowledge for the Long Term

2.1 A - Understanding is improved of NWT'S aquatic ecosystems, including water quality, water quantity, wetlands and biological components and the human dimensions of water management.					
	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)	2024 Status
1	2.1.A.2. Increase biological monitoring across the NWT (e.g. benthic invertebrates, fish) and use biological indicators, where possible, as part of ongoing aquatic monitoring to provide early warnings of change in the aquatic ecosystems.	Continued use of CABIN ² protocols for benthic invertebrates in NWT rivers	2021 and ongoing	ECCC ECC	Complete for the reporting period and ongoing
2	2.1.A.3. Complete fish studies to assess fish health and change, distribution, contaminants, and populations.	NWT CIMP funded projects	2021 and ongoing	ECC ECCC DFO	Complete for the reporting period and ongoing
3	2.1.A.5. Collect Snow Water Equivalent (SWE) information to assess spring water outlook and provide baseline SWE information. Data are archived and disseminated, including historic data to support assessment of change.	Annual spring water outlook Accessible SWE data for spring water outlook	2021 and ongoing	ECC	Complete for the reporting period and ongoing
4	2.1.A.6. Assess impacts of increasing air temperature on different components of the hydrological cycle.	Data assessments Historical trend detection	2021 and ongoing	ECC	In progress

Key to Success 2.1 B: Groundwater is better understood as part of the structure and function of aquatic ecosystems in the NWT.

	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)	2024 Status
1	2.1.B.1. Create a groundwater interdepartmental working group.	Interdepartmental working group established, and objectives defined	2022	ECC	In progress
2	2.1.B.2. Establish a groundwater monitoring well database (drawing on existing federal activities and protocols of the Groundwater Information Network).	Database design developed, including data management and public accessibility aspects Database populated with available well records	2023	ECC	In progress
3	2.1.B.3. Identify priority NWT regions for aquifers and groundwater assessments, including in transboundary areas.	List of priority aquifers List of existing monitoring sites	2022 2023	ECC	In progress
4	2.1.B.4. Undertake an information assessment for each priority aquifer in the NWT.	Assessment report on one or more of the priority aquifers	2021 and ongoing	ECC NTGS Academic partners	In progress
5	2.1.B.5. Add groundwater data as a data type that can be shared on Mackenzie DataStream.	Users can upload and access groundwater quality data on DataStream	2023	DataStream	In progress

Key to Success 2.1 C: Remote sensing imagery and geomatics tools assist in understanding water quality and quantity in the NWT.

	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)	2024 Status
1	2.1.C.1. Share information about existing water-related geomatics and/ or remote sensing uses to interested water partners.	Annual Implementation Workshop Publicly available reports Communications products on geomatics and remote sensing tools	2021 and ongoing	ECC NWT Centre for Geomatics (NWT CG)	In progress
2	2.1.C.2. Monitoring programs include geomatics and remote sensing tools, where appropriate.	Communications products developed for the public	2021 and ongoing	ECC	Complete for the reporting period and ongoing

Key to Success 2.1 D: Impacts and cumulative impacts of human activities and climate change on NWT waters are mitigated.

	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)	2024 Status
1	2.1.D.1. Work with key decision-makers and the NWT CIMP Steering Committee to develop detailed cumulative impact monitoring priorities for 2021-2025, for water and fish. Identify opportunities to include Indigenous and local knowledge relevant to cumulative impact monitoring.	Multi-partner meetings NWT CIMP Blueprints	2022 and ongoing	ECC	Complete for the reporting period and ongoing
2	2.1.D.2. Continue to fund water partners to undertake cumulative impact monitoring and research projects, with a requirement to report on results.	Cumulative Impact monitoring and research projects	2021 and ongoing	ECC	Complete for the reporting period and ongoing
3	2.1.D.3 Regulatory boards consider and assess methods and approaches to assess cumulative effects.	Cumulative Effects Guidelines	2023	MVEIRB LWB/IWB	Complete for the reporting period and ongoing
4	2.1.D.4 Develop a GNWT Cumulative Impacts Framework (CIF). The Framework will outline the steps to monitor and predict cumulative impacts.	GNWT Cumulative Impact Framework	2023	ECC	Complete

Key to Success 2.2 B: Water monitoring networks are proactively and collaboratively managed through partnerships and agreements to maintain and improve long-term water quality and quantity knowledge, address gaps, and meet changing needs.

	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)	2024 Status
1	2.2.B.1. Identify knowledge gaps across monitoring programs and networks (including transboundary water systems and NWT-wide water systems), prioritize long-term data collection, establish research priorities to address the priority gaps, and identify monitoring sites to fill gaps in accordance with available resources.	Prioritization, needs assessment, and gap analysis of long-term monitoring network sites Research and monitoring plans that respond to identified monitoring priorities Five-year status and water quality trend reporting by ECCC State of the Environment Report	2021 and ongoing	ECC ECCC Academic partners Indigenous governments and Indigenous organizations	In progress
2	2.2.B2. Water partners meet to discuss approaches and emerging science/tools, including Indigenous and local knowledge.	Annual Implementation Workshop	2021 and ongoing	All water partners	Complete for the reporting period and ongoing
3	2.2.B.3. Existing water quality and quantity monitoring programs are maintained and optimized, where possible, through collaboration with water partners.	Monitoring program review Monitoring partnership agreements	2021 and ongoing	All water partners	In progress

Key to Success 2.2 C: Results of monitoring and research activities by researchers and water partners are provided to water partners in an understandable way.

	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)	2024 Status
1	2.2.C.1. Researchers working in the NWT ensure that they understand and have adopted community research protocols.	Research plans include engagement and community research protocols	2021 and ongoing	ECC Aurora College/ARI	Complete for the reporting period and ongoing
2	2.2.C.2. Water partners work collaboratively with community representatives to establish research study goals that build on past and ongoing work in communities and community capacity.	Researchers engage with local communities prior to launching local research programs Annual Implementation Workshop session(s)	2021 and ongoing	All water partners	In progress
4	2.2.C.3. Ensure community-based monitoring data are relevant to local decision-making and help to address community concerns.	Monitoring and research plans and projects document community engagement and input to monitoring programs	2021 and ongoing	ECC Academic partners Research funding agents	Complete for the reporting period and ongoing
4	2.2.C.4. Technical experts and researchers communicate with communities during projects and present monitoring and research findings tailored to communities (in the appropriate context and plain language) upon completion of a project.	Researchers produce results, reports, databases, presentations, websites, social media messaging, or other products as appropriate on their research, using plain language Research data made openly available to the public (e.g. on the NWT Discovery Portal and/or Mackenzie DataStream) Project summaries and updates	2021 and ongoing	Aurora College/ARI ECC Academic partners Research funding agents DataStream	Complete for the reporting period and ongoing

3. Use Responsibly

Use Responsibly component includes:

- Municipal Water Use
- Industrial Water Use

Key to Success 3.1 A: Increased transparency, accessibility and knowledge sharing about water stewardship and drinking water quality generates improved resident confidence in NWT drinking water quality.

	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)	2024 Status
1	3.1.A.1. Launch the revamped drinking water quality website, featuring the WaterTrax database, and maintain it as an accessible and up-to-date resource.	Website	2022 ongoing	MACA Interde-partmental Drinking Water Management Committee	Complete for the reporting period and ongoing
2	3.1.A.2. Develop and implement a plan among water partners to educate, encourage, incentivize and support residents to clean home water tanks annually.	Plan to support home water tank cleaning	2023 Ongoing	Interde-partmental Drinking Water Management Committee	Complete for the reporting period and ongoing

Keys to Success 3.1 B. Municipal public works operators (water, wastewater, solid waste, and fuel storage facilities), senior municipal staff, and community leadership are increasingly skilled, knowledgeable and confident about how to manage community infrastructure for the protection of the aquatic environment and drinking water quality.

	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)	2024 Status
1	3.1.B.1. Identify and tailor learning options (e.g., peer-to-peer learning, job aids, coaching, field visits, courses, microlearning) that encourage the use of best practices in municipal works operations.	Learning interventions that are timely and tailored to support the operations within wastewater and solid waste management	2021 and ongoing	MACA	Complete for the reporting period and ongoing
2	3.1.B.2. Develop Operational and governance guidance materials, including standard operating procedures (SOPs), templates, and checklists to strengthen community wastewater and solid waste management practices.	SOPs, checklists, and templates (e.g. Operations and Management Manual, By-Law)	2021 and ongoing	MACA	Complete for the reporting period and ongoing

3.1 C. Drinking water in communities is protected through a multi-barrier approach to source water protection.

	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)	2024 Status
1	3.1.C.1. Support communities to develop source water protection plans where necessary and if required.	Community source water protection plan	2021 and ongoing	ECC	Complete for the reporting and ongoing
2	3.1.C.2. Review and update NWT drinking water sampling and testing requirements as per the Water Supply System Regulations Schedule under the <i>Public Health Act</i> .	Updated Schedule for the Water Supply System Regulations	2023	HSS Interdepartmental Drinking Water Management Committee	In Progress
3	3.1.C.3. Develop a rating system to assess risk of NWT landfills to water contamination, as guidance for prioritizing investments to those with a higher risk to the environment and public health.	Risk rating system for NWT landfills	2022	MACA Waste Technical Committee	Complete for the reporting period and ongoing
4	3.1.C.4. Seek to better understand the prevalence and effects of non-household wastes on municipal wastewater systems, such as landfill leachate, compost facility runoff, and water purification plan by-product.	Study results	2021 and ongoing	ECC LWBs/IWB	Complete for the reporting period and ongoing

3.1 D. Consistency, standardization, and guidance for managing community public works facilities are improved.

	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)	2024 Status
1	3.1.D.2. Identify, prioritize, and implement waste diversion programs.	Waste diversion programs (developed and implemented)	2021 and ongoing	ECC	Complete for the reporting period and ongoing
2	3.1.D.3. Continue to seek and dedicate financial resources to eliminate hazardous waste stockpiles and transition to temporary collection and storage of hazardous waste.	Removal of hazardous waste (stockpiles)	2021 and ongoing	MACA ECC	In progress
3	3.1.D.4 Examine the feasibility of a territory-wide backhaul program to ship some waste streams, including hazardous waste, to appropriate receiving facilities to lower logistical, financial and technical challenges faced in the north.	Feasibility study for removal of hazardous waste and other identified waste streams	2023	MACA ECC	In progress

3.2 A - Strengthen opportunities and clarify expectations for community involvement in environmental assessment, regulatory and post-regulatory processes, to improve understanding of the relationship of Indigenous people to the land and water and the importance of this relationship to community wellbeing.

	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)	2024 Status
1	3.2.A.1. Provide information to Indigenous governments and organizations and communities on how to participate in regulatory and environmental impact assessment processes.	Annual Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act Co-management workshop and report, social media, participant funding communication materials	2021 and ongoing	CIRNAC LWB/IWB MVEIRB ECC	Complete for the reporting and ongoing
2	3.2.A.2. Produce decisions statements, policies, and guidelines using plain language to communicate how Indigenous knowledge has been or will be considered in water licenses and environmental assessments.	Environmental Assessment Initiation Guidelines Reports of Environmental Assessment and Water Licence Reasons for Decision	2021 and ongoing	MVEIRB LWB/IWB	Complete for the reporting and ongoing
3	3.1.C.3. Develop a rating system to assess risk of NWT landfills to water contamination, as guidance for prioritizing investments to those with a higher risk to the environment and public health.	Environmental Assessment Initiation Guidelines Guidelines for Developing Baseline Water Quality Monitoring Programs in the NWT Editorial update to Guidelines for Aquatic Effects Monitoring Programs	2022 2023 2024	MVEIRB LWB/IWB	Complete for the reporting period and ongoing
4	3.2.A.4. Pilot a coordinated community meeting, bringing together representatives from industry, land and water boards, environmental assessment boards, and water licence inspectors, to support information sharing about industrial activities taking place in community watersheds. Assess and consider broader applicability of other workshops.	Coordinated community meeting	2023	MVEIRB LWB/IWB ECC ITI	In Progress

3.2 B: Management processes for water stewardship continuously improve in efficiency and effectiveness.

	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)	2024 Status
1	3.2.B.2. Review existing regulatory guidelines and policies relevant to water management and revise or develop new guidelines as necessary.	Guidelines for Developing Baseline Water Quality Monitoring Programs in the NWT	2023	ECC	In Progress
		Groundwater Guidelines	2023	LWB/IWB	
		Water Compensation Guidelines	2024	LWB/IWB	
2	3.2.B.3. Develop guidelines for assessing impacts of development on people to inform water partners on how the relationship between healthy water and healthy people is considered in environmental assessment processes and decisions.	Guidelines for Assessing Impacts on People	2022	MVEIRB	Complete for the reporting period and ongoing
3	3.2.B.4. Develop process guidance to assess and incorporate cumulative effects and regional change in regulatory and environmental assessment processes and proceedings.	Cumulative Effects Guidelines	2024	MVEIRB	In Progress

4. Check our Progress

Check our Progress component includes:

- Routine Checks
- Independent Evaluations

4.1 - Water Partners maintain steady progress on Action Plan Implementation.					
	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)	2024 Status
1	4.1.1. Hold an annual Implementation Workshop to report on successes, improvements, and remaining challenges.	Workshop reports	2021 and ongoing	ECC	Complete for the reporting period and ongoing
2	4.1.2. Survey appropriate water partners to assess progress on Keys to Success using performance indicators, and to identify challenges and solutions.	Water partners survey WSS Annual Progress reports	2021 and ongoing	ECC ISC WSS Working Group	Complete for the reporting period and ongoing
3	4.1.3. Routinely update water partners in implementation activities by providing information using plain language and using appropriate tactics.	WSS Annual Progress reports Website posts	2021 and ongoing	ECC ISC WSS Working Group	Complete for the reporting period and ongoing
4	4.1.4. Update water partners' roles and responsibilities for the WSS and the Action Plan using plain language.	Water partners Roles and Responsibilities document	2022	ECC	In Progress

4.2 Water partners benefit from an independent evaluation to enable the incorporation of lessons learned into the next Action Planning cycle.

	Action Item	Output	Timelines	Lead(s)	2024 Status
1	4.2.1 Establish an evaluation plan.	Evaluation plan	2024	ECC ISC WSS Working Group	In Progress





NWT Water Stewardship Strategy
Environment and Climate Change
Government of the Northwest Territories

E-mail: nwtwaterstrategy@gov.nt.ca
www.nwtwaterstewardship.ca