



IRMA PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS

The Interim Resource Management Assistance program (IRMA) was designed to strengthen Indigenous governments and Indigenous organizations' capacity to participate meaningfully in land and resource management processes in areas without a settled land claim agreement. Following devolution in 2014, the GNWT took over administering IRMA program from the federal government. Since that time, annual funding for the program has been static at \$1.65M with 75% coming from Canada and 25% coming from the GNWT. In early 2026, the GNWT doubled their IRMA contribution for a total of \$828k, bringing the total annual budget for IRMA to \$2.1 million dollars.

At that time, there was a decision to review the IRMA program to determine ways in which the program could be improved. After hosting an IRMA workshop in January 2026, ECC implemented changes to improve the program moving forward. The workshop, involving governments, organizations and co-management bodies, was an opportunity to reflect on the program.

Through the workshop, participants noted several key challenges they faced, including:

- Funding is insufficient to support long-term capacity building, and many organizations struggle to cover salaries and core operating expenses;
- Existing IRMA guidelines are outdated, and the population-based Base Funding system no longer reflects current realities;
- Participation in IRMA application and reporting processes places significant strain on organizational capacity.

Taking this into consideration, ECC sought feedback from participants on program changes, which resulted in the following improvements:

- Introducing a flat rate of \$90K of Base Funding for eligible Indigenous governments and Indigenous organizations.
- Increasing the eligible administrative fee to 15% to better support overhead and administrative costs.
- Reduction to one round of Resource Pressures Funding annually instead of two to help reduce administrative burden and to distribute IRMA funds earlier in the fiscal year.
- Removing the requirement for audited financial statements to assist in reducing reporting pressures and costs for organizations.



Government of
Northwest Territories

The January workshop reaffirmed the IRMA program's critical role in supporting Indigenous participation in land and resource management. The workshop is part of an ongoing effort to improve communication, strengthen collaboration and gather direct input from communities and partners.