



WHAT WE HEARD

COMMUNITY HARVESTERS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (CHAP) SUMMARY OF ENGAGEMENT AND NEXT STEPS FOR ACTION

DEC | 2021

CE QUE NOUS AVONS ENTENDU PROGRAMME D'AIDE AUX EXPLOITANTS DANS LES COLLECTIVITÉS (PAEC) RÉSUMÉ DES CONSULTATIONS PUBLIQUES ET PROCHAINES ÉTAPES



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

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Executive Summary

This report provides a summary of what we heard from Indigenous governments and organizations (IGOs), renewable resource boards and councils, hunters and trappers' committees, community, and public engagement on a review of the Community Harvesters Assistance Program (CHAP). CHAP provides annual funding to IGOs, renewable resource councils and hunters and trappers committees across the NWT to distribute to their membership to offset costs associated with harvesting activities. CHAP promotes food security, traditional practices, land-based livelihoods, and a strong traditional economy.

There have been several external factors that have impacted hunting and trapping in recent years. Such factors include ongoing impacts of colonization and residential schools, and increases in cost of living, climate change, and decreased fur prices.

Due to the importance of this program review to the GNWT and our Indigenous partners, the impacts to harvesting outlined above, and concerns raised with current program delivery, it is important to make sure that CHAP is efficient, accessible, and useful to those who access it, and that program resources are used in the most effective way.

The engagements conducted in 2019 and 2021 by the Department of Environmental Resources (ENR) are an important step in evaluating the effectiveness of CHAP. Feedback provided to ENR during community engagement sessions for the development of the Sustainable Livelihoods Action Plan 2019-2023 made it clear that there was a need to review CHAP to address specific challenges and concerns.

Concerns that we heard in 2019 included:

- Equity in funding amounts between communities
- Program funding amounts not keeping pace with inflation and the increases in cost of living
- Perceptions of inequitable access to the program
- Need for greater communication and clarity on program goals and criteria

In 2021, ENR engaged IGOs, renewable resource boards and councils, hunters and trappers' committees, and the public to seek feedback on CHAP and how it is working.

What we heard in 2021 focused on:

- **Awareness:** ENR can do more to communicate about CHAP and its availability. We heard that some people weren't aware of, or had heard little about CHAP. Increased clarity on how the program operates, who is eligible and what expenses are acceptable is needed to improve overall program awareness.

- **Need and Value:** ENR heard that CHAP and programs like it are needed to support access to local food for people, and Indigenous Knowledge transfer. Programming would have greater value if focus was put on longer-term programs, with opportunities to apply skills learned through land-based programs and increased mentorship, learning and training.
- **Adequacy of Funding Level and Ease of Access to Funding:** Cost of living continues to steadily increase, with costs for fuel, supplies, and equipment going up, making it harder for people to participate in harvesting. Currently, the CHAP funding formula does not consider cost of living increases. ENR also heard that not everyone who would like to access CHAP receives it, due to the way it is currently allocated. Participants would like to see CHAP's funding formula reviewed and updated with these issues in mind.
- **Quality of Design and Implementation:** ENR heard very clearly from most engagement participants that revised program guidelines for CHAP are required. Clearer guidelines, including who qualifies, for how much, what items are eligible, and what rates apply were recommended. It was also suggested that a clearer, easier to use, reporting template would help improve data collection and would make the process easier for recipients.
- **Barriers and Supports:** The main barrier within the program is that CHAP funding has not kept pace with costs of inflation and increases to cost of living. Supporting out-of-community NWT residents was another issue raised by many participants. It was indicated that a clear process or source of funds for those who are living within the NWT but outside of their home NWT community/region would be beneficial.
- **Satisfaction with, and Usefulness of, CHAP to Harvesters:** We heard that CHAP is useful but could be adapted to better fit harvesters' needs. We also heard that while the funding support CHAP provides is critical for maintaining harvesting opportunities, additional support programs that complement CHAP would help funds go farther and encourage greater numbers of harvesters in the long-term.

Based on what we heard during the engagement process, ENR has identified a series of actions that will guide ENR's work to update and improve CHAP over the next four months.

To make sure we have accurately reported on what we heard and are moving forward with the right actions identified at the end of the report, ENR will share this What We Heard document with IGOs, renewable resource councils and boards, hunters and trappers committees and the public for feedback and comment.

A final evaluation report, containing all detailed changes to the program, will be released once we have incorporated further feedback.

ENR will continue to engage with program recipients to gather more feedback, through meetings as well as through written and oral submissions. ENR very much welcomes feedback on the evaluation and what has been identified in this report, and additional potential directions moving forward.

Sommaire

Ce rapport présente un résumé des avis entendus lors des échanges avec les Autochtones, les collectivités et le public dans le cadre de l'examen du Programme d'aide aux exploitants dans les collectivités (PAEC). Le PAEC fournit un soutien financier annuel aux conseils des ressources renouvelables et aux comités locaux de la faune des Territoires du Nord-Ouest, qui le répartissent ensuite entre leurs membres respectifs pour couvrir les coûts liés à la chasse et au piégeage. Le PAEC favorise la sécurité alimentaire, les pratiques traditionnelles, les moyens de subsistance basés sur la terre et une économie traditionnelle forte.

Plusieurs facteurs externes ont eu un impact sur la chasse et le piégeage au cours des dernières années. Parmi ceux-ci figurent les changements climatiques, la fluctuation du prix des fourrures, les répercussions continues de la colonisation et des pensionnats, ainsi que l'augmentation du coût de la vie.

Étant donné l'importance de cet examen du PAEC pour le gouvernement des Territoires du Nord-Ouest et ses partenaires communautaires, les répercussions préalablement citées sur la chasse et le piégeage ainsi que les préoccupations soulevées par rapport à l'exécution actuelle du programme, il est important de s'assurer que le programme est efficace, accessible et utile pour ceux qui en bénéficient, et que les ressources qui y sont affectées sont utilisées de la façon la plus efficace possible.

Les consultations effectuées en 2019 et 2021 par le ministère de l'Environnement et des Ressources naturelles (MERN) constituent une étape importante dans l'évaluation de l'efficacité du PAEC. Le programme a plus de 20 ans et n'a jamais fait l'objet d'une évaluation de programme officielle.

Les commentaires fournis au MERN lors des séances de consultation avec les collectivités pour l'élaboration du Plan d'action sur les moyens de subsistance durables pour 2019 à 2023 ont rendu évidente la nécessité de revoir le programme pour résoudre certaines difficultés et préoccupations.

- Les préoccupations ci-dessous ont été entendues en 2019.
- Il y a des préoccupations quant à l'équité des montants de soutien financier octroyés aux collectivités.
- Le soutien financier offert n'est pas indexé à l'inflation et au coût de la vie.
- On perçoit que l'accès au programme est inéquitable.
- La communication et la clarté de l'information relative au programme ont besoin d'être améliorées.

En 2021, le MERN a consulté les collectivités, les gouvernements et organisations autochtones ainsi que le public pour obtenir de la rétroaction sur le PAEC et son fonctionnement. Le MERN a invité l'ensemble des gouvernements et organisations autochtones, de même que les partenaires de cogestion qui représentent directement leurs membres, à participer à ce processus. Il a également mené un sondage public afin de recueillir les commentaires de ceux qui n'ont pas pu participer au processus.

En 2021, les avis obtenus étaient axés sur les thèmes ci-dessous.

- **Connaissance du programme** : le MERN peut en faire plus pour faire connaître le PAEC et l'accessibilité à celui-ci. Nous avons constaté que certaines personnes ne connaissaient pas le PAEC ou en avaient peu entendu parler. Une plus grande clarté sur le fonctionnement du programme, de même que sur les personnes et les dépenses admissibles, est nécessaire pour bien faire connaître le programme de tous.
- **Besoins et valeur** : le PAEC et les programmes semblables sont nécessaires pour favoriser l'accès à la nourriture locale et la transmission des connaissances autochtones. La valeur des programmes offerts serait accrue si ceux-ci étaient davantage axés sur le soutien à long terme et offraient la possibilité d'appliquer les compétences acquises dans le cadre de programmes axés sur la nature, et si le mentorat, l'apprentissage et la formation étaient bonifiés.
- **Adéquation du niveau de financement et accessibilité du financement** : le coût de la vie continue d'augmenter de façon constante, tout comme le coût du carburant, des fournitures et de l'équipement. Cette augmentation rend plus difficile la participation à la chasse et au piégeage. La formule actuelle du PAEC ne tient pas compte de l'augmentation du coût de la vie. Par ailleurs, il a été soulevé que les personnes souhaitant recevoir les prestations du PAEC n'y ont pas toutes accès étant donnée la manière dont elles sont actuellement octroyées. Les participants souhaiteraient que la formule de financement du PAEC soit revue et actualisée en tenant compte de ces questions.
- **Qualité de la conception et de la mise en œuvre** : la plupart des participants aux consultations sont d'avis qu'il est nécessaire de réviser et de clarifier les lignes directrices du PAEC, notamment en ce qui concerne les personnes et les articles admissibles, le montant octroyé et les taux applicables. Il a également été suggéré d'adopter un modèle de rapport clarifié et simplifié pour améliorer la collecte de données et faciliter le processus pour les bénéficiaires.
- **Obstacles et soutien** : le principal obstacle du PAEC est le fait que le soutien financier qu'il offre n'a pas suivi le rythme de l'inflation et de l'augmentation du coût de la vie. Le soutien aux personnes qui vivent en dehors des collectivités est une autre question soulevée par de nombreux participants. Il a été indiqué qu'un processus clair ou une source de financement conçue pour les personnes qui vivent en dehors de leur collectivité ou région d'origine serait bénéfique.

- **Utilité pour les exploitants et satisfaction** : les participants ont mentionné que le PAEC est utile, mais pourrait être adapté pour mieux répondre aux besoins des exploitants. Par ailleurs, bien que le soutien financier du PAEC soit essentiel au maintien de possibilités de chasse et de piégeage, des programmes de soutien complémentaires bonifieraient les retombées des fonds et favoriseraient à long terme l'augmentation du nombre d'exploitants.

Selon ce que nous avons entendu au cours des consultations, le MERN a déterminé une série de mesures pour orienter son travail qui vise à actualiser et à améliorer le PAEC au cours des quatre prochains mois.

Afin de s'assurer d'avoir bien compris et d'avoir déterminé les bonnes mesures à prendre, le MERN fera parvenir le présent document aux gouvernements et organisations autochtones, de même qu'au public, pour obtenir des commentaires.

Un rapport d'évaluation final, présentant en détail tous les changements apportés au programme, sera publié une fois les derniers commentaires intégrés.

Le MERN continuera à recueillir les commentaires des bénéficiaires du programme par l'entremise de rencontres ainsi que de soumissions écrites et orales. Le MERN encourage fortement la rétroaction concernant le processus et les constats, de même que la proposition de lignes directrices importantes pour la suite.



Introduction

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) offers a program called the Community Harvesters Assistance Program (CHAP). CHAP is a longstanding, important and generally well-liked program that provides support for hunting, trapping and other harvesting in the NWT. This program promotes and supports continuation of traditional practices, land-based livelihoods and the traditional economy. CHAP provides funding to Indigenous Governments and Organizations (IGOs), renewable resource councils, and hunters and trappers committees across the NWT to help offset costs associated with harvesting. Each recipient decides how to use the money to support their members. An overview of how CHAP works can be found in **Appendix A**.

Due to the importance of the program to Indigenous partners, and the need to address concerns with current program delivery, it was important for the GNWT to conduct a review to make sure that CHAP is effective, accessible and useful, and that program resources are used in the most efficient way.

As this is the first time the program has been formally reviewed, there are some gaps as some of the data gathered as part of the assessment has not been collected before. Going forward, information will be collected on a regular basis, and the program will be periodically reviewed, and an even clearer picture of CHAP's outcomes, successes and impact will emerge.

This report provides a summary of what we heard from IGOs, renewable resource boards and councils, hunters and trappers' committees, community, and public engagement on CHAP, both in 2019 as part of the development of the Sustainable Livelihoods Action Plan and in 2021 during the specific CHAP evaluation engagement process. Details on who was engaged in 2019 and 2021 are included in later sections.



Why we did this evaluation

Recently, ENR decided to review CHAP to look at what is working well, what isn't working, and where we could make changes to better meet the needs of those who use the program. The goal of this evaluation is to identify any changes to the existing program needed to best meet its purpose.

ENR decided to do this review now, for many reasons:

- During engagement sessions held to develop the ENR Sustainable Livelihoods Action Plan 2019-2023, ENR heard from IGOs and community representatives that the program needed changes to make it better.
- Currently, many things are impacting people's ability to hunt and trap, including climate change impacts (i.e., animal movements, distribution and abundance, land safety, travel risks, etc.), changing fur prices and fluctuations in the global fur industry, ongoing impacts of colonization and residential schools, and increases in costs for fuel and equipment.
- CHAP is more than 20 years old and has not been formally evaluated before. When CHAP first started it was delivered by the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development (RWED) and the Department Industry, Tourism and Investment (ITI). In 2015, ENR took over administration of CHAP.

For all these reasons, it was important to make sure that CHAP is effective, accessible and useful to clients, and that program resources are used in the most efficient way.

While this evaluation covered many things and will help guide future direction of CHAP, it is important to note what this evaluation did not do:

- Address wildlife management issues – There are a range of other ENR programs to support wildlife co-management, including decisions related to wildlife management and conservation issues.
- Impact Indigenous harvesting rights –The importance of, and rights associated with, harvesting are not up for debate in the NWT, and as such any contrary perspectives were not included in the evaluation. For example, any responses from a non-harvester to cease all hunting and trapping in the NWT were not considered a valid response.



How did we gather information for this evaluation?

It was important to gather information from a wide variety of sources to make sure we heard as many different views and ideas as possible. There are four key sources of information that shaped this What We Heard report and the next steps for the program: engagement on the ENR Sustainable Livelihoods Action Plan in 2019, IGO, renewable resource board and council, and hunters and trappers committee engagement, public engagement, and internal meetings with ENR staff involved in program administration and delivery. Each is described in greater detail below. The evaluation framework, including a logic model and performance measurement plan can be found in **Appendix B**.

Engagement on the ENR Sustainable Livelihoods Action Plan 2019-2023

In 2019, ENR led engagement sessions to develop the Sustainable Livelihoods Action Plan. ENR held open houses in 18 communities, in tents and on the land where possible. These open houses were open for all interested community members to come and identify actions they felt were important for supporting sustainable livelihoods. Where possible, Elder facilitators were hired to assist with facilitation and interpretation, and individuals were hired to help set up, keep fires going and provide food. We also held meetings with non-government organizations who support a wide range of programs broadly captured under the sustainable livelihoods umbrella. A public online survey was made available for individuals to submit their thoughts on what was needed to support strong sustainable livelihoods in the NWT.

A summary of these engagement sessions and survey was released publicly and shared directly with IGOs for comment and feedback, to make sure ENR captured key actions raised during engagement. An Advisory group, with representatives from regional IGOs and GNWT departments met in May 2019 to review, flesh out and finalize the actions included in the final plan, based on engagement results. A What We Heard Report, and the final Sustainable Livelihoods Action Plan were released in August 2019, and implementation of the Action Plan began.

Engagement with IGOs, renewable resource boards and councils and hunters and trappers committees

Specific engagement on CHAP began in 2021. ENR sent letters inviting all IGOs, renewable resource boards and councils and hunters and trappers committees that directly represent their members or have a role in harvesting management to participate in an engagement process. While renewable resource boards do not receive the funding (as it typically goes directly to the renewable resource councils), given their role in harvesting management overall, the boards were invited to participate in the engagement. Participation was available through scheduled virtual meetings with ENR, provision of written responses or participation in an online survey. Whatever option worked best for each government, organization, board or council or committee was utilized. Both those that directly administer CHAP (i.e., provide funding, equipment or services to their members) and ones that do not were purposefully included to ensure all potential perspectives were covered.

ENR developed a series of guiding questions to capture key categories of information that was needed to assess the program. For example, we asked questions related to program *awareness* to help understand if people knew about the program or were familiar with the eligibility criteria. We also asked questions about the *need* and *value* of the program, to understand if people felt the program was needed and provided them with benefits or outcomes that supported their harvesting activities.

The guiding questions were provided to participants in advance of meetings so that they could review and prepare responses. The questions were also provided in the original letter, so those that wanted could submit their responses in written form.

Examples of the guiding questions include:

- Do you feel there is a need for the program?
- How is the program funding distributed in your community?
- What is working well in this program? What do you like most about it?
- What would you change? Why?
- How could this program better support you/your community to harvest/ have country foods for you and your family?
- How is this program beneficial to you/your community?

During each virtual meeting, the questions could help guide the conversation, but we also took a fluid, partner-led approach so IGOs, renewable resource councils and hunters and trappers committees could focus on the areas of most importance to them.

The engagement period took place over roughly four months. Most virtual meetings lasted about 1-1.5 hours. Meetings ranged in size, from one person to over ten representatives from multiple communities. Most meetings involved IGO leadership (Chief and/or Council, Council members, etc.). As Covid-19 restrictions eased, some face-to-face meetings were also held.

In total, 22 IGOs, renewable resource councils and boards and hunters and trappers committees participated in the engagement, either in a meeting (19, including one joint meeting with multiple renewable resource councils and others), through written comment (2) or through the survey (1)). However, given anonymity in the survey is it possible that more organizations participated. More information on overall number of survey respondents is included in the next section.

Public engagement

In addition to seeking input from IGOs, renewable resource boards and councils and hunters and trappers committees, ENR also wanted to gather feedback from individuals, to ensure individual experiences and perspectives were included in the review. This was important because during the Sustainable Livelihoods Action Plan engagement, ENR heard from some individuals that they were excluded from participation in CHAP or did not feel the process was equitable or inclusive.

Public engagement took place in the following ways:

- Public survey – A survey was made available to collect input. The survey instrument can be found in **Appendix C**. In total, 24 individuals responded to the survey.
- Direct email and phone line for input – ENR recognized that not all people would be comfortable doing a face-to-face interview or meeting. As such, a direct, toll-free phone line and email address was made available for people to provide feedback. Advertisements (radio, newspaper and social media) ran for several weeks to inform the public on how they could provide their input.

Internal ENR engagement

ENR staff who assist in program delivery in various capacities were also engaged to share their experiences. This included regional operations staff, as well as regional and headquarters finance staff. This engagement took place through a series of virtual focus group sessions. All five ENR regions throughout the territory participated. As these staff are often the frontline in overseeing the program and work closely with IGOs, boards and councils, committees and individual harvesters, their observations on how the current program works are also critical for improvements.



What We Heard

This section presents the findings from all the types of engagement outlined above, from 2019 and 2021.

Awareness

Awareness of the program was mixed. Most IGOs, boards or councils or committees who participated in virtual meetings were aware of the program, as they are typically the ones administering CHAP locally, reviewing requests for funding or answering the questions of their members.

During ENR's engagement on the Sustainable Livelihoods Action Plan in 2019, some people indicated they are not always aware of the different types of programs that ENR offers, including but not limited to CHAP. Improving communication and promotion of programs and what is available is something that many residents raise. People are not always aware of what programs are available, when to access funding, and who to talk to.

During the 2021 engagement, it was noted that ENR could do more, on a regular basis, to communicate about CHAP and its availability. There were multiple respondents (survey and meetings) who noted they weren't aware of the program or heard little about it.

It was also clear that specific program details were not clear to all involved in CHAP. During virtual engagements, some participants identified that they weren't always sure why types of expenses were eligible or how to best allocate resources.

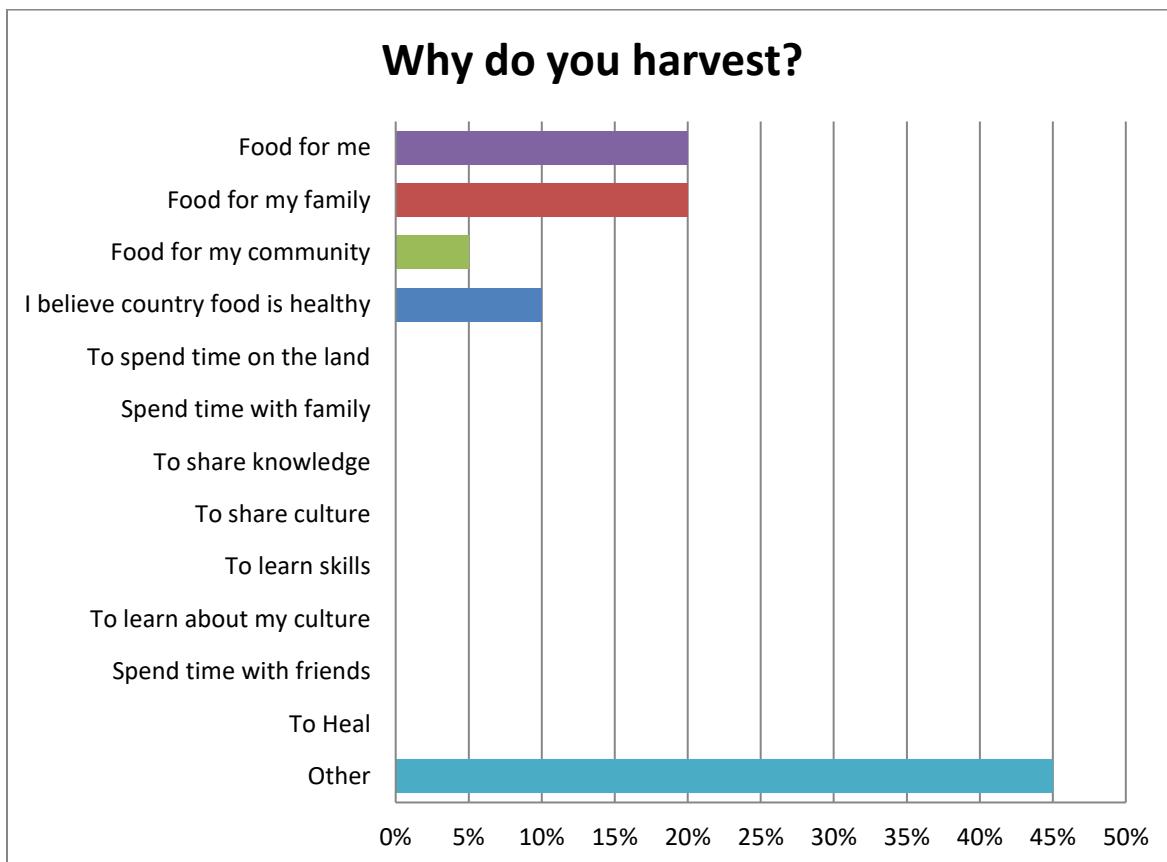
Overall, findings related to awareness suggest that people are generally aware of the program, but more work could be done by ENR and administering IGOs, councils, and committees to advertise and share information about the program. Additionally, increased clarity on how the program operates, who is eligible and what expenses are acceptable is needed to improve overall program awareness. Multiple participants indicated clearer guidelines for the program would be helpful.

Need and value

We heard very clearly from all forms of engagement that most participants felt that the program was valuable, useful for communities and important enough to continue. While changes are needed, few people felt there should be no program.

In the online public survey, respondents were asked why they participated in harvesting, which can help to assess the importance of the practice and the need for support programs. 23 of 24 survey respondents responded to this question, with 'food for my family' (four responses) and 'food for me' (five responses) the top two listed responses (Figure 1). Of eleven people that answered 'other,' six respondents indicated that all the options, or some combination of the options, were true for them.

Figure 1 – Why people harvest



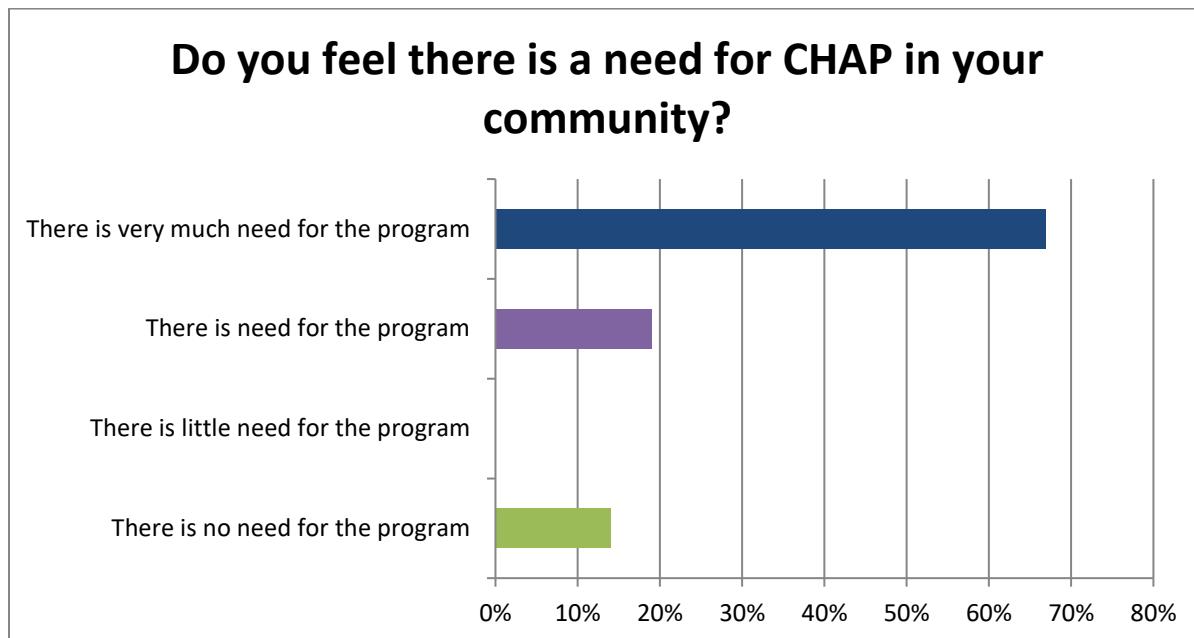
Of all 24 survey respondents, 16 indicated they had not accessed CHAP. Reasons ranged from not being aware of it, to not needing it, to not being eligible (i.e., non-Indigenous harvesters).

During the Sustainable Livelihoods Action Plan engagement in 2019, participants identified the importance of harvesting support programs such as CHAP. While conversations focused broadly on support programs for the most part (and not CHAP specifically), many felt there was need for programs to continue. Additional focus on longer-term programs, opportunities to apply skills learned through land-based programs, and a need for increased mentorship, learning and training were all identified. Participants noted strongly that the program needed a review to make sure it can best meet its purpose. This feedback was identified as important for increasing the value of the programs.

During the 2021 CHAP engagement, we heard many similar things in virtual meetings about the need for these types of programs. For example, IGO, renewable resource board and council and hunters and trappers committee participants raised the importance in CHAP in providing food for people, and the potential for on the land activities funded by CHAP to support people relearning local Indigenous Knowledge and identifying gathering places through Indigenous place names.

In the survey, respondents were asked about whether they felt there is a need for the program in their community (Figure 2):

Figure 2 – Need for CHAP



Of the 16 out of 24 survey respondents who indicated that they had not accessed the program, only four indicated there no need for the program. The majority of meeting participants felt there was need for the program.

Adequacy of funding level and ease of access to funding

Another category where there was consistency across all forms of engagement related to the adequacy and availability of funding. While many noted the funding was helpful and critically needed, we also heard that the funding amounts were not adequate for the programming or to meet the needs of IGOs, renewable resource boards or councils or hunters and trappers committees administering the support on behalf of their members.

One of the most frequent themes to emerge related to the amount of funding available per IGO, councils and committee. Many participants expressed concerns with the current amount of funding, noting that the funds don't go very far when divided among their members. It was recommended by almost all evaluation participants that the overall program funding increase, and that each IGO, councils and committee should receive additional funding for their membership. It was also suggested that ENR look at how the program can support efforts throughout the year, and not just in fall time when CHAP payments typically go out. This would require additional resources for the program overall.

Additionally, in the 10 years since the last increase in funding for the program, the total program value has remained at \$1,074,000 for CHAP. CHAP funds have not increased with inflation, or the ongoing increases in the cost of living. It is increasingly costly to go out on the land to harvest, and financial

challenges associated with the cost of purchasing equipment and supplies was repeatedly raised as an issue. Many participants noted that fuel costs have continued to increase and can create a barrier to going out on the land. At one 2021 virtual meeting, participants noted that people must travel farther now due to changing landscapes. This means the overall cost for harvesting is increasing, but the amount of CHAP funding given to organizations to support their members has not increased in step. This means overall, there is the same amount of money but the need for that money is now greater.

Equity issues within communities were raised, primarily during the community engagement on the Sustainable Livelihoods Action Plan. Some participants noted that local politics play a role in who gets funding, and that they felt not everyone who receives CHAP funding truly needs it. Some expressed concerns that people who receive funding (or in many cases fuel) are not active harvesters, or they are not using it for harvesting activities. If that is the case, it could impact the ability of CHAP to meet its overall goal of supporting harvesting activities. Participants would like to see the funding formula reviewed and updated with these issues in mind. Out of 24 survey respondents, 14 people responded that they felt the way funding was distributed was very unfair to somewhat unfair, while 6 felt it was somewhat fair to very fair. Of the 14 who said they felt it was unfair, 10 had not accessed the program before.



Some participants noted that programs should be designed and regularly reviewed to ensure they are inclusive, diverse and no one who wants to harvest is being left out. For example, offering training or programs for women or 2SLGBTQIA+ participants would go a long way in creating safe spaces for more people to become harvesters.

Equity issues *between* communities were also raised. Some felt that some communities received more than others, and it wasn't always clear why, or whether that was fair. Also, cost of living differences between communities are not currently considered in the funding formula (e.g., costs to purchase supplies are higher in Sachs Harbour than Hay River). It was also reported that some rights-bearing organizations do not currently receive CHAP funding. It is recommended these specific concerns be examined further and addressed.

In relation to issues of funding, many evaluation participants indicated that they felt the funding model for CHAP was out of date and no longer relevant to current situations. Additionally, participants noted that there is a lack of clarity on how the funding is specifically allocated to each IGO, council and committee. While the funding was initially provided on a base amount plus formula funding based on number of eligible harvesters, this funding has not increased since 2010. Additionally, it is not evident that the funding formula has been reviewed previously.

Cost of living continues to steadily increase, with costs for fuel, supplies, and equipment going up, making it harder for some people to participate in harvesting. Currently, the funding formula does not consider cost of living increases, though it was suggested that should be incorporated in a new formula.

[Quality of design and implementation](#)

One key criticism of the program was around clarity of program guidelines. While program guidelines exist, many evaluation participants indicated that these guidelines are not clear and that additional guidance on how to use funding would be helpful. This would be particularly useful for IGOs, renewable resource councils and hunters and trappers committees to communicate eligibility to their members. This concern was also raised by ENR staff who administer the program. Clearer eligibility guidelines, including who qualifies, for how much, what items are eligible, and what rates apply were recommended. A review of guidelines would also include looking at expanding the program's scope beyond hunting and trapping to include other types of harvesting that people engage in.

Additionally, it was suggested that a clearer, easier to use, reporting template would help improve data collection and would make the process easier for recipients and make it less burdensome. It was also noted that ENR should consider reviewing the types of information it collects in CHAP reporting to make sure information collected is consistent across all regions and that the information collected is necessary for reporting and transparency purposes.

Some participants indicated they wanted to see GNWT provide support for more costly items like snow machines and boat motors, which can be costly to purchase and/or repair, as well as support building of cabins and other structures that can facilitate harvesting.

As noted earlier, additional opportunities for complementary harvesting support programs, as well as more training, mentorship and learning, were identified as ways to improve the overall quality of the program and its implementation.



Barriers and supports

During the Sustainable Livelihoods Action Plan engagement in 2019, many participants noted that costs associated with harvesting activities are expensive and often a barrier to hunting, trapping, other harvesting and going on the land in general. As noted above, the cost of gas has increased quite a bit, as have the costs for food and equipment (i.e., snow machines, traps, firearms, etc.). Expenses are a barrier in participating in harvesting for many individuals and were a barrier for organizations administering the program.

This message about high cost of living was consistent with what we heard in the 2021 IGO, board and council and committee engagement, and from individual public survey responses. Many participants across all forms of engagement noted that the CHAP funding formula (or program funding broadly) has not kept pace with costs of inflation or increases to cost of living. This was seen as a significant barrier within the program. Some recipient IGOs, renewable resource councils and hunters and trappers committees use their CHAP funding to provide fuel to their members so they can go out on the land, while others use it to help offset the costs of equipment.

Supporting NWT residents who have moved out of their home NWT community was an issue raised by many participants. In meetings, participants noted that in some communities, there is limited support for members who move out of the community and still actively harvest. Many IGOs, renewable resource councils and hunters and trappers committees reserve their CHAP funds for in-town members. Some recipient IGOs, renewable resource councils and hunters and trappers committees do support others outside of their membership, including local members of other organizations that do not receive funding. At least one participant noted that it is up to local IGOs, renewable resource councils and hunters and trappers committees to determine how they support their members through CHAP even if they are not in the community; others suggested a clear process or source of funds for those who are living outside their home community/region would be beneficial.

Throughout the engagement, ENR heard that while the funding support CHAP provides is important for maintaining harvesting opportunities, additional support programs that complement CHAP would help funds go farther and encourage greater numbers of harvesters in the long-term. Many noted there are less people harvesting now, but training and other incentives would help get more people out on the land to harvest. Many noted the need to focus on educational opportunities for youth. A support program for helping to transport country foods between communities was also identified for consideration.



For example, support for new harvesters would be helpful, as the cost to purchase start up equipment can often be a major barrier for participation. Other participants noted harvesting training is important, particularly for new harvesters and in response to changing environmental conditions. Training for skills development (for example, small engine repair, butchering, preparing, storing, etc.), as well as installation, use and maintenance of community freezers would also assist in long-term food security. Forgivable loans for harvesting supplies were also identified, as was increased support for existing processing facilities.

In 2020 and again in 2021, due to Covid-19, ENR increased trapper grubstake payments from \$5 to \$10 for 20+ pelts, offered \$5 to those who brought in less than 20 pelts (normally not eligible) and removed the cap on payments. Some participants noted this was a very helpful program change and made a difference for their harvesting.



Satisfaction with, and usefulness of CHAP to harvesters

Overall, what we heard is that CHAP is a needed program that is important to those it supports, but could be improved to be more accessible, equitable and supportive for harvesters who rely on it and for those who haven't had opportunities to access it. Key areas of action are identified in the Next Steps section.

Improving access or clarity as to who can access the program may be needed going forward.

In the survey, when asked about program satisfaction, responses from 11 out of 20 respondents noted they were either not at all satisfied (ranked as '5' in the survey) or not satisfied (ranked as '4' in the survey). Of these 11, eight respondents had not previously accessed the program. For some, dissatisfaction stemmed from their perceptions that local politics or political affiliation had impacted their opportunity to receive funds. This is consistent with what was raised during engagement on the Sustainable Livelihoods Action Plan in 2019 and during the virtual CHAP engagement meetings in 2021.

While a number of survey participants noted dissatisfaction, many felt the program was at least somewhat helpful despite existing challenges. In one 2021 virtual engagement meeting, participants noted that CHAP helps people put food on their tables, and some people even feel guilty using the program if they are unsuccessful in harvesting. In another meeting, it was identified that CHAP helps with knowledge transfer related to harvesting. It was also noted that the funding can help reinforce cultural teachings such sharing with others and those who have less.

Does the program currently produce the desired outcomes?

Given that this is the first formal evaluation of CHAP, a logic model and performance measurement plan were developed at the outset and used to shape this evaluation process. This included identifying outcomes.

Going forward, building on the existing logic model, and based on the results of the engagement and overall evaluation, the desired outcomes will be reviewed and updated if necessary.

Based on the logic model developed for this evaluation, ENR can assess where the program is at currently to get a sense of if or how potential desired outcomes are being achieved. Table 1 below highlights outcomes (as defined in the current logic model) and how we are working to achieve them.

Table 1 – Outcome achievements

Timeframe	Desired outcome	How we have achieved this outcome
Short to medium term	More NWT residents have the resources to participate in traditional activities, such as harvesting, hunting, trapping, fishing, and gathering.	<p>Being met overall, however increasing accessibility to the program would increase its reach, impact and success.</p> <p>Program is currently best geared for existing harvesters; increasing parallel programs to increase skills for new harvesters is needed.</p> <p>CHAP to date has focused largely on supporting hunting or trapping; clearer guidelines can provide guidance in support for other harvesting activities.</p> <p>Increasing funds would mean more resources available for individual harvesters and for communities.</p>
	More communities have the resources to engage in community hunts.	<p>Being met overall; not all communities opt to use funds for community hunts. As identified during engagement, increased resources are required to support more harvesting and more participation; it is important to note ENR offers a range of support programs and often provides funding opportunistically when requested if resources allow.</p>
	More country foods are available to community members.	<p>Through virtual meetings and knowledge sharing, it is clear that country foods are being shared, and that consistency across the program could be improved. Tracking this information should be included in future reporting.</p>
Longer-term	NWT residents connect with and experience the land in ways that support the traditional economy and food security.	<p>Ongoing, and being met, despite numerous challenges that impact participation in harvesting activities. It is not yet clear in what ways the program facilitates this.</p> <p>Right now, this outcome can't be measured based on data collected, and an approach for gathering such information in reporting should be explored.</p>

Next Steps

Future feedback – Opportunities to comment on this document

Based on what we heard during the engagement process, ENR has identified a series of next steps that we will be undertaking over the next six months to update and improve the program. Some of this work, such as exploring updates to the funding formula and revising and clarifying goals, objectives and guidelines, has already begun.

To make sure we have interpreted responses correctly, and are moving forward with the right actions, this What We Heard Report is being shared with IGOs, renewable resource boards and councils, and hunters and trappers committees, and the public for feedback and comment.

A final evaluation report, containing all detailed changes to the program, will be released once these changes are ready to be implemented.

Key actions for program improvements

From across all information sources in our engagements, several key actions for program improvement emerged. Table 2 lists the eight key actions ENR will undertake over the next six months to update and improve the program.

Table 2 – Key Actions for Program Improvement

Action
1. Clarify and communicate clear program goals and outcomes
2. Clarify and communicate clear performance measures, and clearly identify data to be collected to support ongoing program evaluation
3. Explore opportunities to increase availability, access and equity of resources
4. Review and update the funding formula
5. Refine and communicate clear program guidelines
6. Improve overall program communications and awareness
7. Explore opportunities for better supporting out-of-community members
8. Look at opportunities to create parallel and complementary training and support programs

1. Clarify and communicate clear program goals and outcomes

This action will guide changes to CHAP and its ongoing implementation. Goals and outcomes will be developed by reviewing the information gathered through the engagement sessions previously discussed in this document, as well as building on the current logic model developed for CHAP's evaluation.

For example, through the 2019 and 2021 community engagements, public survey and internal staff review, the importance of CHAP, its key features and why people harvest have been identified. This will help to clarify goals and objectives and program outcomes going forward. Clearer program goals and desired outcomes will better inform ongoing evaluation.

The revised goals and outcomes will be clearly communicated by ENR to IGOs, renewable resource boards and councils, hunters and trappers committees and the public, and will be front and center in all program documentation.

2. Clarify and communicate clear performance measures and clearly identify data to be collected to support ongoing program evaluation

This action will create the basis of annual progress checks and future program evaluations.

Performance measures will be clarified based on the results of these engagements, as well as the existing logic model and performance measurement plan developed for the CHAP evaluation. Reporting on updated performance measures will be built into contribution agreements with recipient IGOs, renewable resource councils and hunters and trappers committees.

3. Explore opportunities to increase availability, access and equity of resources

ENR will review opportunities to increase available funding (both through internal GNWT mechanisms and external funding partnerships), developing clear criteria for assessing equity of the program, identifying and establishing feedback mechanisms to track concerns, and assessing current funding allocations in light of cost of living (including differences between locations) and other factors. In a few virtual engagement meetings, participants mentioned one-time support for capital equipment expenses in 2021 engagement meetings.

4. Review and update the funding formula

The CHAP funding formula is outdated. It was developed many years ago, and the last adjustment to program funding levels was around 2010. ENR will be revisiting and updating the formula. This action includes looking at impacts of cost-of-living increases, purchasing power of communities and differences in base costs between locations. Any updates to the formula will also identify if any eligible organizations are missing from the program and determining if additional organizations should be added. This action will require the securing of additional resources.

5. Refine and communicate clear program guidelines

Partners expressed the need for CHAP's guidelines to be clear and readily available to properly implement the program. In 2021 virtual engagement meetings, it was also noted that assistance from ENR in completing required forms would be helpful. ENR will be refining program guidelines and communicating this to all IGOs, renewable resource boards and hunters and trappers committees who administer the program locally. Updating guidelines will also help to address real and perceived equity issues in program administration by clarifying eligibility.

6. Improve overall program communications and awareness

To increase awareness of the overall program, and better support program knowledge and access, ENR will look at ways to improve overall communications about CHAP with administering IGOs, renewable resource councils and hunters and trappers committees and the public. IGOs, renewable resource councils and hunters and trappers committees and the public will be aware of the program's availability and any related criteria.

Communication planning will be done in collaboration with CHAP-administering IGOs, renewable resource councils and hunters and trappers committees so that key messages meet their respective needs. Sharing community harvesting success stories in interesting formats (i.e., video, art, social media, radio/audio, etc.) will also be explored as an opportunity to increase not only awareness of the program but of the importance of harvesting more broadly. This is consistent with what we heard during the 2019 Sustainable Livelihoods Action Plan engagement.

7. Explore opportunities for better supporting out-of-community members

Supporting NWT residents who are living outside their home NWT community but are still within the territory was an issue raised by many participants. In meetings, participants noted that in some communities, there is limited support for members who move out of the community but still actively harvest within the NWT. Some IGOs, renewable resource councils and hunters and trappers committees reserve their CHAP funds for in-town members. Some do support others outside of their membership, including local members of organizations that do not receive funding.

At least one participant noted that it is up to local IGOs, renewable resource councils and hunters and trappers committees to determine how they support their members through CHAP even if they are not in the community; others suggested a clear process or source of funds for those who are outside their home community/region would be beneficial.

ENR is looking at different mechanisms to clarify eligibility and processes to ensure all eligible harvesters have access to support. This will be clearly documented in program guidelines and communicated with all partners and the public.

8. Look at opportunities to create related and complementary training and support programs

As noted earlier, opportunities to expand related and complementary training and support programs would allow for more individuals to access CHAP. This will also include looking at existing programs and how they may better linked to or support CHAP (and vice versa) where appropriate.

Some of these actions are identified in the Sustainable Livelihoods Action Plan, such as training programs, pilot trapper program, and harvester subsidies. For example, ENR is currently working with several regional Indigenous governments to develop a pilot trapper mentorship program, which would help address this issue. For other complementary programs, ENR will assess resources and capacity to determine if there are additional parallel programs and services that can be offered in conjunction with CHAP. Development of any programs will be done in collaboration IGOs, renewable resource councils and boards and hunters and trappers committees.

Incentives to support harvesting activities, such as how ENR increased the grubstake amounts in 2020-21 and again in 2021-22, were identified in both the 2019 and 2021 engagements. Some participants also noted an emergency fund to help harvests in times of crisis (such as the Covid-19 pandemic) could be considered. ENR will explore opportunities for incentives and emergency harvesting support as complementary programs to CHAP.



APPENDIX A – Overview of how CHAP works

Brief program description

ENR provides annual funding assistance through CHAP to IGOs, renewable resource councils and hunters and trappers committees for distribution to their respective memberships. The purpose of this funding is to support and promote participation in harvesting activities for eligible harvesters. Funding is also used to provide administrative support to IGOs, renewable resource councils and hunters and trappers committees who deliver the programs, in recognition of the role they play in representing the interests of hunters and trappers within a particular community.

These program funds assist in defraying a portion of capital and operating costs of harvesting activities. Funding is available to harvesters for the purchase of small tools and related equipment required to store, process and preserve foods from community hunts or harvests.

Each IGO, renewable resource council or hunters and trappers committee makes decisions about how best to allocate their funding, within GNWT funding guidelines. Some use the funds to support community harvests, others provide gas/fuel to members to go out on the land, and still others provide support to members to purchase needed supplies and equipment.

Program oversight is coordinated by ENR headquarters, and is administered locally by the five ENR regional offices. Funding flows to recipient IGOs, renewable resource councils and hunters and trappers committees via contribution agreements.

For more information about key inputs, contextual factors that shape CHAP operation and other background info that influenced this evaluation, please see the full evaluation framework and methodology in **Appendix B**.

Program goals and objectives

The current goal of CHAP is to support continuation of harvesting as an important traditional cultural practice. Continuation of harvesting has long-term benefits for food security, community, family and social cohesion, knowledge transmission, and overall health and well-being.

Intended program outcomes

Outcomes can be short, medium or long-term, and can reflect changes in knowledge, actions and conditions as a result of the program.¹ Outcomes reflect the results, impacts or benefits associated with the program.

For this evaluation, we assessed newly developed outcomes defined in the CHAP logic model (see **Appendix B**). These outcomes are:

- Short to medium term:
 - More NWT residents have the resources to participate in traditional activities, such as harvesting, hunting, trapping, fishing, and gathering.
 - More communities have the resources to engage in community hunts.
 - More country foods are available to community members.
- Long term:
 - NWT residents connect with and experience the land in ways that support the traditional economy and food security.

CHAP by the numbers

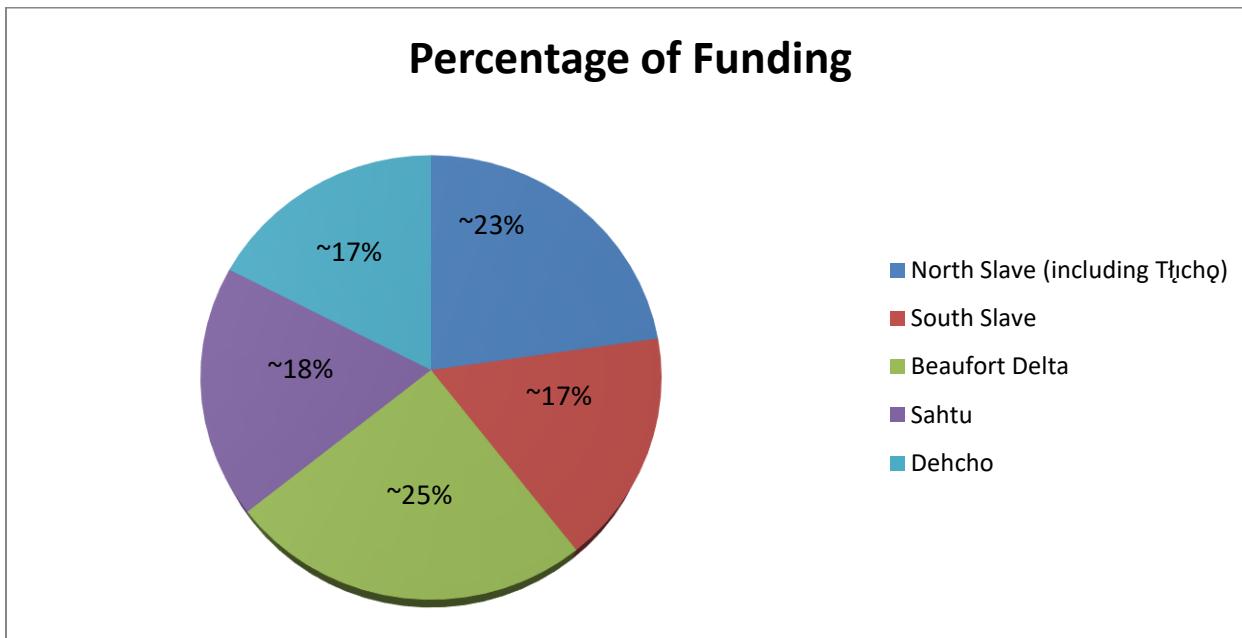
The annual regional breakdown of allocation of CHAP funds is as follows:

- North Slave (including Tłı̨chǫ communities) \$244,000
- South Slave \$180,000
- Inuvik \$266,000
- Sahtu \$197,000
- Dehcho \$187,000

Each amount, translated as a percentage of the total funding available, is presented in Figure A1.

¹ University of Wisconsin-Extension (2003). *Welcome to enhancing program performance with logic models*. Available at: <https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/programdevelopment/files/2016/03/lmcourseall.pdf>

Figure A1 – Breakdown of CHAP funding distributed by Region



Funding is also provided to support local administration of CHAP. This funding, called Local Wildlife Committee (LWC) funding, totals \$257,000 annually and is split amongst all recipients and varies depending on number of eligible harvesters.

There is limited data as to number of overall participants unless specifically provided in annual reporting by recipient IGOs, renewable resource councils and hunters and trappers committees. Going forward, collecting more detailed participation information should be considered.

The number of IGOs, renewable resource councils and hunters and trappers committees, by region, that receive CHAP funding is presented in Table A1 below.

Table A1 - Number of Recipients by Region

Region	Number of Funding Recipients
Beaufort Delta	10
Sahtú	6
North Slave	3
Dehcho	5
South Slave	9

APPENDIX B – Evaluation methodology and framework

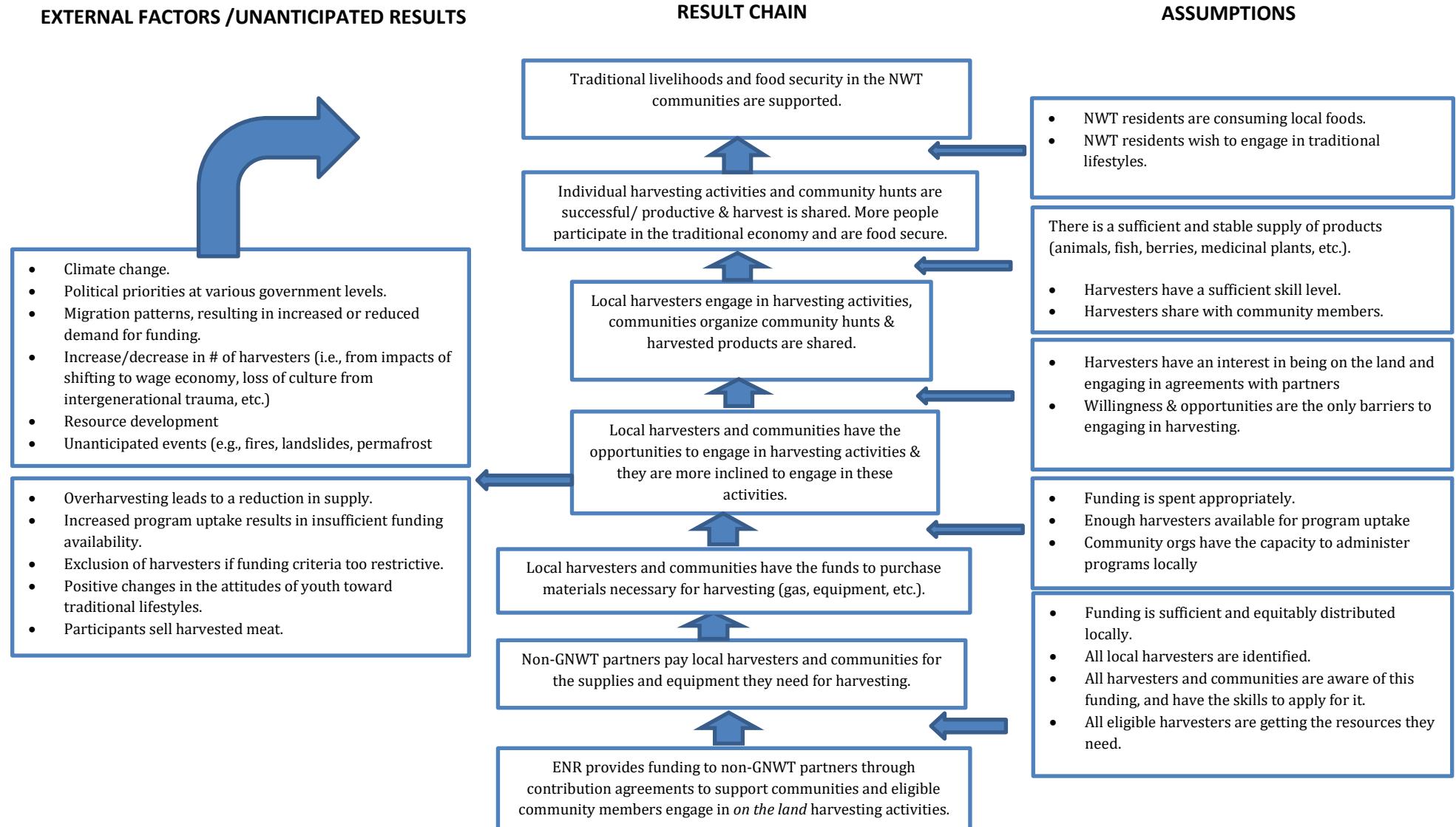
Evaluation design

The first step to this evaluation was to build a theory of change and a logic model for the program. These two interconnected tools provide the basis of the evaluation.

As the program has not been evaluated before, the theory of change was developed at the outset of the evaluation process. Following this evaluation, the theory of change should be revised to guide future program development and evaluation. Please see Figure B1 for the theory of change model developed for CHAP.



Figure B1 – CHAP Theory of Change



Key inputs

- Financial resources: the current total annual budget for CHAP is \$1,074,000, split amongst all recipients. Amounts are based on number of eligible harvesters the IGO, renewable resource council or hunters and trappers committee represents.
- ENR staff capacity: multiple regions, divisions and units play a role in the administration of CHAP. Overall program management and oversight is the responsibility of the On the Land Unit. Day to day communications, application development and review and community/region-specific oversight rests with regional offices. Processing of contribution agreements and expense reports is handled by Finance and Capital Planning Division staff. While they do not play direct roles CHAP delivery and administration, staff and information collected by the Wildlife and Fish Division and Climate Change and Air Quality Unit assist the program when and where required (for example wildlife population estimates, ice safety information, etc.).
- IGOs, renewable resource council and hunters and trappers committee staff capacity: staff play an important role in CHAP, including administrative support, financial management, direct program delivery, support for and problem-solving with individual recipients, and reporting.
- Annual reporting: Recipients of CHAP are required to provide annual expense reporting and project reporting. This information informs the flow of funding for each subsequent year.

Key outputs

Outputs are the products, goods and services that result from a program or activity. They can include things like: food harvested, food shared within a community, a community hunt or harvesting program, annual reports, program guidelines, and documented program operational processes and structures.

Examples of key outputs associated with CHAP, as identified in the logic model (Table B1), are:

- Completed contribution agreements.
- Funding assistance provided to harvesters who harvest fur, medicinal plants, and alternative food sources and to communities organizing community hunts.
- Financial and activity reports.

Table B1 - Logic model for CHAP

ISSUE / NEED / CONTEXT	INPUTS (Resources)	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS (products, goods, services)	OUTCOMES (results/impacts/effects)	
				Short to medium term (1-5 years)	Medium to long term (5-10 years)
Harvesters have insufficient resources to engage in traditional activities (such as hunting, trapping, fishing and gathering) to strengthen the traditional economy and food security at individual and community levels.	ENR Headquarters and regional staff IGOs Renewable Resources Councils, Hunters and Trappers Committees Core funding: \$1,074,000/year + \$257K LWC for administration of funds Sustainable Livelihoods Action Plan NWT Wildlife Act	Confirm previous year's program and financial reports from partners (Local Wildlife Committees, Hunters and Trappers Associations, IGOs) were received. Calculate funding amount using funding formula previously established. Transfer funds to local and regional partners according to funding formula. IGOs, renewable resource councils and hunters and trappers committees disburse funds to eligible NWT trappers and harvesters to defray cost of fuel, supplies and small capital items; and to communities to defray costs of community hunts. Partners submit activity and financial reports to ENR.	Contribution Agreements are completed. Funding assistance is provided to harvesters who harvest fur, medicinal plants, and alternative food sources; and to communities organizing community hunts. Financial and activity reports are entered into database.	More NWT residents have the resources to participate in traditional activities, such as harvesting, hunting, trapping, fishing, and gathering. More communities have the resources to engage in community hunts. More country foods are available to community members.	NWT residents connect with and experience the land in ways that support the traditional economy and food security.

APPENDIX C – CHAP Online Survey Instrument

The Community Harvesters Assistance Program (CHAP) is a GNWT program that provides funding IGOs, renewable resource councils and hunters and trappers committees who in turn distribute the CHAP funding to support their members. These groups determine how they wish to spend the money they are provided. The program is currently being evaluated with the goal of improving the delivery for both harvesters and the organizations that run the program. Please take a few minutes to give us feedback.

Your answers will remain anonymous (your name will not be linked to anything you share here). You can enter your name and email at the end to be entered into the prize draw. Your name and email will not be linked to any responses.

You do not have to answer question you do not want to, and you can exit the survey at any time.

- 1) What community do you live in?
-Select the community

- 2) Have you ever received funding from CHAP? (Y/N/Not sure)
-If no why not?

- 3) What is your overall satisfaction with the program? (1 not all satisfied -5 very much satisfied)
-why?

- 4) Do you feel there is a need for CHAP in your community? (1 there is no need -5 it is very much needed)
-why?

- 5) How helpful is CHAP to you or your community? (1 not at all helpful -5 very much helpful)
-why?

- 6) How easy has it been for you/community members to get funding through CHAP? (1 very hard - 5 very easy)

- 7) Do you feel the way the funding is distributed is fair? (1 I do not think it is fair at all -5 I think it is very fair)
-why?

- 8) Do you get other help in your community so you can harvest? (Y/N)
-what is it?

9) Why do you harvest? Please select below or add your own reason.

- For food for me	- I believe country food is healthy
- For food for my family	- For food for my community
- To spend time on the land	- Spend time with family
- To share knowledge	- To share culture
- To learn skills	- To learn about my culture
- Spend time with friends	- To heal
- Other reasons I harvest food on the land _____	

10) In what ways do you think could CHAP be improved?

- a. If there was more funding available (please share your ideas for improvement)
- b. If there is not more funding available (please share your ideas for improvement)

11) Is there anything else you would like to share about CHAP?

12) If you would like to enter the prize draw, please list your name and email or phone number.

