



Environment and Natural Resources Sustainable Livelihoods Action Plan 2019-2023

DRAFT FOR PUBLIC REVIEW



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Introduction

In the Northwest Territories (NWT), life is intimately tied to the land. Residents depend on the land for food, medicine, materials, shelter, income, culture, spirituality and recreation. For the NWT's Indigenous peoples, relationships with the land have existed since time immemorial.

Sustainable livelihoods - in the context of this Action Plan – are considered to be ‘a way of life connected to the land’¹. It is important to note that ‘the land’ does not mean just terrestrial ecosystems. This Plan approaches the land in a holistic way, considering the plants, animals, water, air, people, relationships, processes and connections that exist. Sustainable livelihoods include “the capabilities, resources and activities that support a means of living, in a way that is adaptable and resilient while supporting continuation of those resources and activities now and for future generations”².

At present, there are many barriers that can make it difficult for people to go out on the land, and engage in harvesting, including (but not limited to): high cost of fuel, equipment and supplies; changes to the landscape from climate change and development; shift to a wage-based economy where people working have less time to go out; and, loss of knowledge and skills due to colonialism and legacies of residential schools.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR), Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) recognizes the role it can play in supporting individuals, families, communities, regions, organizations and partners in advancing and promoting sustainable livelihoods and engaging in on the land activities. ENR has program and service responsibilities, on behalf of the GNWT, for country foods, traditional economies and land-based learning, which broadly make up the program areas captured in this Action Plan. Harvesting in this plan is defined as procurement of foods (animals or plants) directly from the land - whether through hunting, trapping, fishing, or gathering.

This plan is intended to help prioritize ENR's resources and capacity to support sustainable livelihoods across the NWT at local, regional and territorial levels, based on the needs, values and priorities of Northerners. It is ENR's intent that the actions in this Plan add value and support the great work happening across the NWT that is being led by Indigenous Governments and Organizations, Renewable Resource Board and Councils, Hunters and Trappers Associations, municipal and federal governments, and non-

¹ Note: ‘sustainable livelihoods’ is a broad term that can reflect many things, including health, income, housing and more. For this Action Plan, focus is on those activities that tie to land-based practices, though it is recognized that those activities fit within an individual's overall livelihood.

² Chambers & Conway (1991), Sustainable rural livelihoods: practical concepts for the 21st century. IDS Discussion Paper 296; UNDP, n.d.

government organizations, or communities who want to deliver programming. Key to this will be continuing to build and strengthen partnerships.

The plan was built based on engagement across the NWT. ENR held regional meetings with Indigenous governments and co-management partners, community open houses, an advisory group workshop and visited schools where possible. A public survey and youth photo contest were also used to gather information. ENR then compiled all of the information and drafted potential actions that respond to what we heard. ENR held an advisory group meeting with regional Indigenous Government representatives (staff, youth and Elders) to review and discuss draft actions and identify missing actions or things to consider during implementation. This Action Plan is the result of this whole engagement process.

Vision, Goals and Objectives

The **vision** for the Sustainable Livelihoods Action Plan is:

NWT residents have the opportunities to connect with and experience the land in ways that are meaningful to them.

To achieve this vision, ENR, with its partners, will work towards the following **goals**:

- More NWT residents are engaged in on the land activities that are important to them, such as harvesting, hunting, trapping, fishing, gathering, cultural activities, recreation and healing.
- Increase the number of people with harvesting and on the land skills and knowledge.
- Barriers to going on the land are reduced, through innovative, northern-driven approaches.
- Communities, Indigenous Governments and Organizations and others are supported in delivering sustainable livelihoods programs and services.
- The NWT traditional economy is vibrant and thriving.
- NWT residents have access safe, culturally appropriate and quality country foods.
- Reciprocal, multigenerational learning opportunities are promoted and supported.
- Programs and support are available for interested residents, regardless of age, knowledge, skill level and experience.

The following **objectives** will help ENR to work towards these goals:

- Objective 1: Promote and support opportunities for mentorship, learning and training related to on the land activities for interested residents.

- Objective 2: Support communities, organizations and other partners in pursuing sustainable livelihoods programs and service by reducing administrative burden.
- Objective 3: Strengthen communication about existing programs and increase promotion of sustainable livelihoods at multiple levels.
- Objective 4: Create and support opportunities for program development.
- Objective 5: Ensure programs run effectively, efficiently and support the people who need them, and ensure accountability in Action Plan implementation.

Guiding Principles

Based on extensive engagement, a number of overarching principles were identified that will guide the implementation of this Action Plan. These principles should be taken into account when designing and/or implementing the actions outlined in this Action Plan.

These include:

- Wellness
 - Being on the land is a big part of people's feeling of health and wellness. This includes physical, mental, emotional, cultural and economic health. Supporting healthy people, communities, families, and a healthy environment (including air, water, animals, plants) are at the forefront of the actions in this plan.
- Language
 - The land and language are intimately tied together. Language should be embedded in implementation of the Action Plan.
- Food security
 - Access to high quality, safe, nutritious and culturally appropriate country foods (directly or indirectly), and the equipment and means necessary to harvest, process, prepare and store foods.
- Seasons
 - On the land activities happen in all seasons; consideration of different seasons and the activities that take place in those seasons is important in design and provision of programs and services.
- Inclusivity & accessibility
 - Ensuring that there are diverse, broad opportunities to meet needs of all residents is important, regardless of age, skill, experience, knowledge, gender, ability, socio-economic status, and other factors. In particular, we heard about the need for programs that are either targeted or accessible to middle-aged participants, who have been impacted by residential schools resulting in loss of knowledge and skills.

- Knowledge
 - Traditional and local knowledge are foundational to on the land activities and design and delivery of programs and services that support sustainable livelihoods. Other knowledge systems can also support implementation of actions.
- Respect
 - Respect for the land and water, for each other, for animals and for cultural traditions and protocols should be at the heart of any actions.
- Community-driven
 - The intent of this Action Plan is to support and add-value to community-driven programs, based on the needs, values and priorities of Northerners. Communities and regions are in the best position to determine program and service needs of the residents, and to deliver upon those. ENR also recognizes the need and request to provide support and capacity to community and regional governments and organizations. Consistency will be important, while also ensuring different regional and community needs are accounted for.
- Partnerships
 - Partnerships are the foundation of the NWT, and are a core way of business of ENR. This Action Plan recognizes this, and action items will be implemented in partnership with a variety of partners.
- Climate Change
 - Climate change is impacting people's way of life on the land. It is changing how people can travel, how people read signs and signals, safety, and the animals people rely on. It will be important to consider climate change adaptation in implementation of this plan, and how actions contribute to strengthening individual, family, community and regional resilience.

Connections to Other GNWT Strategies and Action Plans

This Action Plan is linked to and supports a number of other GNWT initiatives underway, both directly and indirectly. Work by other departments under these strategies aligns with and supports the effort of ENR in this Action Plan. ENR will continue to work closely with departments to collaboratively advance work that supports sustainable livelihoods.

Some of these initiatives include:

- ***GNWT 2030 Climate Change Strategic Framework 2019-2023 Action Plan:*** The Climate Change Strategic Framework Action Plan identifies the following actions which align with and/or are reflected in this Action Plan: Support country food-related research, including climate change impacts to community food security; implement a sustainable livelihoods action plan to support country food research and programs; Building on the priorities to be identified in a sustainable livelihoods action plan, work collaboratively with partners to identify and secure funding to support projects; and, support Indigenous Guardians Programs led by Indigenous governments in the NWT to monitor climate change using traditional, local and scientific knowledge where requested.
- ***Working Together: An Action Plan to Reduce and Eliminate Poverty in the Northwest Territories (2015):*** The Anti-Poverty Action Plan sets a vision for a territory free from poverty; critical to this are on the land opportunities, traditional economies and country foods. Specific actions in the Anti-Poverty Action Plan that are supported by this Action Plan include: provide nutritious food to elders through lunch and community-based food sharing programs; encourage and support people to harvest, hunt and fish to meet their needs and those of their communities; and, expand on the land programming such as Take A Kid Trapping that encourage youth to learn harvesting skills from elders.
- ***GNWT Knowledge Agenda Action Plan 2019-2024:*** The need for research that supports decision-making is the foundation of the Knowledge Agenda Action Plan. There are a number of linkages to the Knowledge Agenda, including some of the following actions: Build on community-based monitoring initiatives including training and support for Guardian programs; provide key decision-making bodies with a list of departmental contacts who can provide information on various areas of NWT research; and, encourage and establish new partnerships that enhance NWT research capacity such as increased program support, new research chairs and new equipment.
- ***Northwest Territories Economic Opportunities Strategy: Connecting Business and Communities to Economic Opportunities:*** The Economic Opportunities Strategy identified a number of recommended actions that are reflected within this Action Plan, such as: increase funding and program support for the Traditional

economy through the GNWT's Community Harvesters Assistance Program and the Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur Program; engage the private sector to increase support to the GNWT's Take a Kid Trapping Program; create a mentorship program with supports to provide assistance to adults pursuing a return to a harvesting lifestyle; and, examine with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and Health and Social Services opportunities to incorporate traditional economy activities into social wellness and healing programs.

- ***Strong Cultures, Strong Territory: GNWT Culture and Heritage Strategic Framework 2015-2025:*** A number of cultural priorities in the Culture and Heritage Strategic Framework align with actions in this Action Plan. These include: celebrate the diversity of languages; make cultural programs hands-on, immersive and on location; support cultural programs for youth; support the preservation of traditional skills and practices; create demand for authentic NWT cultural products and services; and, support decisions by communities about their culture and heritage.
- ***Northwest Territories Aboriginal Languages Framework – A Shared Responsibility:*** As language is recognized as a key component of on the land activities, this Action Plan aligns with a number of elements of the Aboriginal languages Framework, including: acknowledge and affirm the importance of Aboriginal languages in the NWT; develop community capacity in Aboriginal language revitalization; and, develop the resources and capacity to deliver services in Aboriginal languages.

Additionally, it is ENR's intent that the actions in this Plan add value and support the great work happening across the NWT that is being led by Indigenous Governments and Organizations, Renewable Resource Board and Councils, Hunters and Trappers Associations, municipal and federal governments, and non-government organizations. These actions were built in response to what we heard from participants about priorities, needs and values of Northerners and where ENR can best support sustainable livelihoods.

Measuring Success

For each objective, a number of initial performance indicators have been identified to help us track our progress. Throughout engagement on the Action Plan, ENR heard about the importance of building an evaluation framework that is grounded in and uses Indigenous evaluation methodologies. To honour this, ENR commits (see Action 5.4) to developing an evaluation framework that builds on Indigenous methodologies, in concert with other evaluation approaches (including community-based approaches, process, impact or outcome evaluations) by the approximate halfway point of this plan. The intent is to work with the advisory committee to guide this process.

Actions

Identified actions fall under the five Action Plan objectives:

- Objective 1: Promote and support opportunities for mentorship, learning and training related to on the land activities for interested residents;
- Objective 2: Support communities, organizations and other partners in pursuing sustainable livelihoods programs and service by reducing administrative burden;
- Objective 3: Strengthen communication about existing programs and increase promotion of sustainable livelihoods at multiple levels;
- Objective 4: Create and support opportunities for program development; and,
- Objective 5: Ensure programs run effectively, efficiently and support the people who need them, and ensure accountability in Action Plan implementation.

Objective #1: Promote and support opportunities for mentorship, learning and training related to on the land activities for interested residents.

Actions under Objective 1 support opportunities for learning, mentorship and training that are key to encouraging and promoting sustainable livelihoods and on the land activities for all interested residents. Actions under this Objective also include support for and creation of opportunities to form networks and share knowledge and experience between communities and more broadly.

O1	Promote and support opportunities for mentorship, learning and training related to on the land activities for interested residents.	
<i>Initial Performance Indicators</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of people who take Hunter Education (online and in schools). • Number of training programs offered. • Number of people participating in mentorship or training programs. • Participants identify learning outcomes or development of new skills in mentorship or training programs. • Lessons learned and shared from community knowledge exchanges. • Third party funding secured for Take a Kid Trapping. 	
	Action Item	Deliverable Date
1.1	Expand the Hunter Education program to also be offered online.	December 2019
1.2	Work with Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) and School Boards to explore offering Hunter Education in high schools for credit.	February 2020 and ongoing
1.3	Establish a process for sending NWT trappers to represent the territory at the Fur Harvester’s Auction House annually.	January 2020
1.4	Work with harvesters to develop and pilot harvesting mentorship support programs, including ensuring access/programs for middle aged participants and women.	September 2020
1.5	Develop and pilot a ‘Take a Family On the Land’ small grant program.	December 2020
1.6	Work with harvesters, co-management partners and others, to develop and deliver harvesting training courses (for multiple demographic groups) including safety and navigation, harvesting and processing skills and food preparation.	March 2021 and ongoing
1.7	Pilot trapper/harvester starter kits to help new trappers/harvesters with some of the equipment necessary to get started in the activity.	March 2021
1.8	Support and/or facilitate community knowledge exchanges to promote knowledge	September 2021 and

	sharing specific to country foods, such as harvesting, preparation and processing.	ongoing
1.9	Engage the private sector, post-secondary institutions and other partners to increase support to the Take a Kid Trapping Program.	March 2021 and ongoing
1.10	Develop a youth leadership committee program, focused on country food security and climate change, to build capacity and knowledge in NWT youth.	December 2022

Objective #2: Support communities, organizations and other partners in pursuing sustainable livelihoods programs and services by reducing administrative burden.

Actions under Objective 2 are intended to reduce administrative burden on communities to secure funding and design and implement programs. This can include support capacity development at the community level, or providing in-kind capacity where possible.

02	Support communities, organizations and other partners in pursuing sustainable livelihoods programs and service by reducing administrative burden.	
<i>Initial Performance Indicators</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Success rates of proposals supported. • Third party funding secured for programs. • Positive evaluation from partners on support available. 	
	Action Item	Deliverable Date
2.1	Act as a GNWT champion for Indigenous Guardian and/or on the land monitoring programs, and function as a conduit/point of contact for communities to identify GNWT programs, resources and in-kind capacity to support such programs.	Ongoing
2.2	Work with GNWT Departments, the On the Land Collaborative and other partners to improve coordination and collaboration for on the land programming and funding.	Ongoing
2.2	Work with partners to identify and secure third party funding to support sustainable livelihoods programs and services.	Ongoing
2.3	Work with GNWT departments and other partners to develop a community funding application schedule for on the land/sustainable livelihoods program funding.	March 2020
2.4	Explore and pilot ways to best support communities in developing funding and program proposals for on the land/sustainable livelihoods activities, which could include resource materials, workshops, strategic reviews, liaison functions or application drafting assistance.	December 2020 and ongoing

Objective #3: Strengthen communication and information about existing ENR programs and increase promotion of sustainable livelihoods at multiple levels.

The strength of our programs rests on awareness of and access to those programs. Promoting sustainable livelihoods at multiple levels, through sharing of stories, lessons and experiences is also an important part of engaging communities, encouraging participation, and advocating for resources and support for external partners. Actions under this Objective address communication and promotion.

03	Strengthen communication and information about existing ENR programs and increase promotion of sustainable livelihoods at multiple levels.	
<i>Initial Performance Indicators</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased awareness of ENR training, harvesting programs and funding. • Lessons shared from success stories (reach). • Increased awareness of country foods across the NWT. • Number of people who participate in or experience trapper lifestyle campaign. 	
	Action Item	Deliverable Date
3.1	Develop an enhanced communication and promotional campaign for current ENR training, harvesting programs and funding.	July 2020
3.2	Work with partners to develop promotional materials to showcase community on the land success stories.	October 2020 and ongoing
3.3	Explore opportunities to have more ENR meetings with partners that take place on the land.	December 2020 and ongoing
3.4	Pilot NWT ‘Country Food Day’ and support community food celebrations.	October 2021 and ongoing
3.5	Support communities and regions developing country food materials (videos, books, pamphlets etc.).	March 2022
3.6	Work with partners to develop a trapping lifestyle campaign to showcase historic and current NWT trappers and their stories.	March 2023

Objective 4 – Promote and support opportunities for on the land program development.

There are many great things happening across the NWT, and there are opportunities to strengthen, expand, enhance, grow existing initiatives and develop new ones based on needs, priorities and lessons learned. Actions under this Objective focus on areas where ENR can help to support program development.

O4	Promote and support opportunities for on the land program development.	
<i>Initial Performance Indicators</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and quality of partnerships strengthened and established. • Number of people who use the community food systems planning workbook. • Number of 	
	Action Item	Deliverable Date
4.1	Strengthen partnerships with a variety of partners to support country food-related research, including climate change impacts to community food security.	Ongoing
4.2	Work with GNWT departments, Indigenous Governments and Organizations, non-profits and other partners to identify and develop a list of equipment that is available to loan out for community on the land programs.	March 2020
4.3	Finalize and release community food systems planning workbook.	March 2020
4.4	Identify potential resources and partnerships to support community-driven harvesting programs that contribute to local food security, particularly those that support people with limited access (e.g., single parents, Elders, people dealing with addictions, people with different mobility needs, etc.).	March 2021
4.5	Support and/or facilitate community or regional food systems planning, including resources, workshops, and in-kind capacity as available.	March 2021 and ongoing
4.6	Work with partners to support climate change adaptation programs that focus on harvesting, traditional economies and country food security.	March 2022 and ongoing
4.7	Explore potential opportunities for harvester equipment rebate or subsidy programs to help new and/or low-income harvesters have the basic equipment necessary to go on the land.	March 2023

Objective 5 – Ensure programs run effectively, efficiently and support the people who need them.

Actions under this Objective address long-term implementation and evaluation of this plan, as well as reviewing existing programs to make sure they meet the needs of NWT residents. It is a commitment to accountability and effectiveness.

05	Ensure programs run effectively, efficiently and support the people who need them, and ensure accountability in Action Plan implementation.	
<i>Initial Performance Indicators</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisory Committee evaluations of progress. • NWT residents feel there is equity in programs available. • Increase in available information on programs. • Changes from program evaluations are implemented in enhanced programs. 	
	Action item	Deliverable Date
5.1	Establish an advisory committee to guide the implementation of this Action Plan and broader ENR on the land initiatives.	December 2019
5.2	Develop an assessment tool for ENR on the land programs and services to ensure programs are equitable, inclusive and accessible as appropriate.	July 2020
5.3	Work with advisory committee to develop a comprehensive evaluation framework that draws on Indigenous evaluation frameworks and methodologies.	December 2020
5.4	Work with harvesters, Indigenous Governments and Organizations, co-management partners and others to identify Elders who could receive country foods from harvesting programs to promote food sharing and security.	March 2021 and ongoing
5.5	Work with Renewable Resource Councils, Hunters and Trappers Committees, Local Wildlife Committees, Indigenous Governments, schools, GNWT departments and other partners to undertake comprehensive evaluations of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Harvesters Assistance Program (CHAP); • Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur Program, and related sub-programs; • Harvester Disaster Compensation Program; and, • Take a Kid Trapping program. 	August 2021
5.6	Undertake a four year review of Action Plan implementation.	March 2023