

NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT MINISTERS FORUM 2012

**Northern Directions:
An Evaluation of Strategic
Planning in Northern Canada**



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NORTHERN DIRECTIONS: AN EVALUATION OF STRATEGIC PLANNING IN NORTHERN CANADA

Executive Summary

Northern Canada is a distinct and integral part of this country's history and identity. Its people, land, resources, diversity, and culture have contributed to the social and economic fabric of this nation. With vast natural resource potential, the North is playing, and will continue to play, a role in contributing to Canada's social and economic prosperity. Recognizing this, it is critical for northern jurisdictions to capitalize on the North and its largely untapped resources. Governments are now in the process of implementing northern development plans that outline investments in infrastructure, economic development and social programming. Over time, it is expected that these investments will yield stronger, more vibrant northern communities which will be key contributors to the social and economic well being of Canada.

Despite the opportunities that lie ahead and the abundance of natural resources, there are fiscal realities. A plan with a vision, clear priorities, concrete deliverables and meaningful initiatives is critical to advancing the northern social and economic agenda as well as ensuring the North achieves its true potential in becoming a key contributor to the social and economic well being of Canada.

"Northern Directions: An Evaluation of Strategic Planning in Northern Canada" demonstrates the importance of strategic planning in northern Canada and highlights the approaches, best practices and lessons learned from each Northern Development Ministers Forum (NDMF) jurisdiction. These lessons are valuable in ensuring that the North benefits socially and economically from program and service offerings as well as resource development in a manner that is respectful to Aboriginal peoples and the surrounding ecosystems.

Background

The Northern Development Ministers Forum was established in 2001 to advance the diverse and common interests of the peoples living in Canada's North, while raising the awareness among decision-makers and the public about the accomplishments, contributions and potential of the North.

NDMF member jurisdictions include representatives from the governments of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Ontario, Québec, Newfoundland and Labrador, as well as Canada (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada). New Brunswick, Nova

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Scotia and Prince Edward Island are not members due to their southern geographic location.

The mandate of the NDMF is to:

- Reinforce cooperation among federal, provincial and territorial authorities in northern regions of Canada.
- Identify with the appropriate Federal-Provincial/Territorial (FPT) table and/or provide leadership on strategic actions that will advance the socio-economic development of the North.
- Exchange information, increase awareness, share best practices on northern priorities.
- Make recommendations on actions to be implemented by Ministers in accordance with their mandate and within their jurisdiction.

The last Northern Development Ministers Forum (NDMF) was held in 2010. It was at this Forum where Newfoundland and Labrador's Minister of Labrador Affairs put forward the theme of "*Northern Directions: An Evaluation of Strategic Planning in Northern Canada.*" This theme was supported by the NDMF Ministers, and direction was given to senior officials to establish northern strategic planning as a priority

project to be discussed at the subsequent year's Forum.

In November 2010 senior officials consisting of representatives from Canada (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada), Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Québec and chaired by Newfoundland and Labrador, met in Montréal, Québec to establish a working group with the objective of preparing a report on best practices associated with northern strategic planning highlighting the importance of advancing social, economic and environmental sustainability in the North.

Methodology

To develop this report, the working group used a four phase approach consisting of:

- Survey development
- Data collection
- Analysis
- Results

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A. Survey Development

A working group consisting of representatives from the Governments of Canada (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada), Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Québec, and Newfoundland and Labrador was formed with the purpose of developing a survey to collect information pertaining to the importance of broad-based strategic planning with the goal of advancing social and, economic and environmental sustainability in the North. Based on the information gathered from the survey, an inventory was compiled of the various strategic planning frameworks for each jurisdiction, along with their objectives and the anticipated sustainable impacts.

Other information collected as part of the survey included information related to:

- timeframes;
- themes;
- legislation;
- plan objectives
- challenges;
- monitoring commitments;
- communications;

- funding possibilities;
- exemplary practices;
- lessons learned; and
- keys to success.

B. Collection

Surveys were sent via email to Senior Officials Working Group of the Northern Development Ministers Forum in early 2011. Each jurisdiction was then tasked with the responsibility of sending the survey to the appropriate departments and/or agencies with northern planning responsibility. It was the responsibility of these departments and/or agencies to complete the survey and return it to the working group. The response rates for the surveys were 100%. The information in the report reflects the collection date of May 2011.

C. Analysis

The working group analyzed the responses to each question to highlight the various stages of development of strategic planning in Canada's northern regions. The analysis allowed the working group to conclude that despite the differences between the various northern plans currently being deployed, there are some overarching themes throughout the surveys that are common across all provinces and territories. The data also revealed

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that despite the differences in the plans, there are a variety of exemplary practices as well as a series of lessons learned that could benefit not just existing plans, but also subsequent future northern plans as well.

D. Results

The results of the surveys revealed vast similarities in the plans associated with Canada's northern regions, with the majority of these plans placing an emphasis on social and economic development. Of the eleven jurisdictions comprising the NDMF, eight have a dedicated northern strategic plan. Only three NDMF member jurisdictions do not have a northern plan. However, these member jurisdictions do have several pan-provincial overarching strategies to address the North.

Jurisdictions with strategic plans include the Northwest Territories' *Northerners Working Together*, Yukon's "Pathways to Prosperity", Nunavut's *Tamapta: "Building our Future Together"*, Manitoba's *Northern Development Strategy*, Ontario's *The Growth Plan for Northern Ontario*, Québec's *Plan Nord*, Newfoundland and Labrador's *The Northern Strategic Plan for Labrador*, and the Government of Canada's *Canada's Northern Strategy*.

For jurisdictions without a specific strategic plan, they have pan-provincial strategies that deal with matters that affect the North but encompass other parts of the province.

Objectives of the Plans

Although each northern plan is unique to its respective region and/or territory, the data collected indicates that survey respondents typically use one of three general approaches to establish the objectives of their respective northern plan:

Approach 1: Link the Plan's objectives to a long-term policy or visionary statement. These initiatives are outward looking and forecast the Plan's desired long-term outcomes (i.e. 20-30 years).

The data indicates that the Government of Canada, Manitoba, Yukon and Nunavut all favour approach 1 in establishing the objectives of their respective northern plans. Each of these governments has constructed its northern plan around established long-term policy objectives with the overarching goal of improving the quality of life of their northern residents through enhanced social and economic development.

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Approach 2: Provincial and territorial ministries work collectively to address northern issues within their mandates.

Several of the provincial and territorial governments who responded to the survey do not have an overarching northern strategic plan. This is true for Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, and Northwest Territories. Each of these jurisdictions is undertaking a series of distinct northern projects which are independent of any northern plan. The ultimate outcomes of these various initiatives is that they may directly or indirectly impact the social, economic and environmental well being of the northern parts of their respective provinces and territories.

Approach 3: This is a hybrid approach of Approaches 1 and 2 while incorporating input from the general public.

The Governments of Ontario, Québec and Newfoundland and Labrador favour the hybrid approach. Each of these provinces' northern plans/strategies has been linked to a series of policy objectives and/or "one-off" initiatives. For example, Québec's Plan Nord is built upon partnerships with government, and Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal stakeholders. These partnerships recognize the need to balance

provincial economic prosperity with the needs of Northern residents. As a result, the Plan's objectives are based on a combination of long-term policy statements and specific initiatives that are linked to government policies and regional/community needs. Ontario also links its northern initiatives to the overall northern vision that the Government of Ontario established in the Growth Plan for Northern Ontario, 2011. Under the Growth Plan, the Province is undertaking northern initiatives designed to create a skilled, educated, healthy and prosperous population and a diversified, resilient northern economy.



Photo: Churchill River Bridge, NL



Photo: Kenamu River Bridge, NL

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Anticipated Sustainable Impacts

When examining the data and analyzing it with regard to the various northern plan's anticipated sustainable impacts (i.e. 30 years), two trends began to emerge. Plans were either linked or not linked to a specific policy objective. Those provinces and territories that directly linked their plans' sustainable impacts to a specific policy statement reflect the long-term vision of the policy statement directly within their respective plans long-term outcomes. For example, the Government of Canada has linked its northern initiatives directly to its vision for the North; namely that any northern initiative will ultimately yield an improvement in employment opportunities and the economic prosperity of all northerners as a direct result of increased social and economic development (i.e. project specific outcomes). Other provinces and territories that have linked specific plan objectives to economic prosperity include Newfoundland and Labrador, Ontario and the Northwest Territories.

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is undertaking a variety of initiatives which will have a long-term sustainable impact on the development of Labrador. Examples of these initiatives and their anticipated impacts include the Energy Plan, Poverty Reduction Strategy, and Violence

Prevention Strategy. Ontario too has linked the Growth Plan for Northern Ontario, 2011 to the Province's long-term vision for Northern Ontario. The Growth Plan is focused on building a stronger, more resilient economy that will ultimately stimulate new investment and entrepreneurship in the North. The Northwest Territories plan corresponds with the term of the current Government and it is fluid to the policy initiatives of the Government in power.

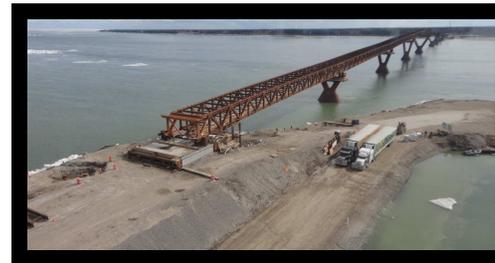


Photo: Deh Cho Bridge (NT)

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Jurisdictions that did not link their strategic objectives to a specific northern policy framework indicate that their various non-northern specific initiatives will directly or indirectly have sustainable long-term impacts designed to improve the social and economic well being of Northerners. For example, in Saskatchewan, the work being undertaken in the province's northern region will result in better informed and educated citizens who can better participate in the labour force through improved infrastructure and better service efficiency.

None of the survey respondents provided any of the specific measures they were using to indicate if the impacts of their northern initiatives are sustainable. Also, none of the survey responses provided any specific measures to indicate how sustainability and success were to be achieved. Any of the measures provided were generic measures.

The Lifecycle of Plans

In addressing the timeframes associated with the various northern strategic plans being deployed by the federal, provincial and territorial governments and

their ability to be renewed, the data indicates that jurisdictions are using three types of approaches:

- **An evergreen approach** – Where the strategy is being treated as a “living document” subject to changes in response to social and economic conditions.
- **A renewable strategy subject to Cabinet approval** – The strategy is in place for a finite period of time under its current terms and conditions, and it can only be extended and/or renewed under the approval of federal, provincial or territorial decision makers (Cabinet).
- **Non-renewable** – The strategic plan is in place for a finite period of time and is not planned to be extended.

The Governments of Yukon, Canada, Ontario and Québec favour an “evergreen” approach for their northern plans/strategies. These northern plans/strategies are viewed as living documents subject to change based upon prevailing economic conditions. The Growth Plan for Northern Ontario is for a period of 25 years and is subject to review every 10 years, while the Plan Nord is for a period of 25 years, subject to review every five years. Canada's Northern

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Strategy does not have a specific timeframe associated with it. Instead of using time as a measure of progress, the Northern Strategy uses milestones. Yukon's Pathways to Prosperity is a 20 year plan and uses the evergreen approach as well. Its strategic plan may be changed if the context is significantly impacted by political, economic or social changes.

Northern Development Strategy for Manitoba along with the various specific initiatives being undertaken in Saskatchewan are each subject to cabinet approval as are the specific initiatives currently being undertaken in British Columbia and Alberta. It is not yet known if the northern plans currently under development for Alberta and Saskatchewan will be subject to Cabinet approval for the purposes of renewal.

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador uses a hybrid of the evergreen and renewable approach with the Northern Strategic Plan for Labrador. Its original mandate was for five years and was launched on April 1, 2007. The Province's Labrador Affairs Office of the Executive Council is currently in the process of seeking direction on the future of the Plan. The Plan has grown and changed since its implementation in response to social and

economic need, thus taking an evergreen approach as well.

The strategic plans for Canada's territories are subject to the term of office of the government in power. In the event that there is a government change, the incoming government would need to determine if the current plan aligns with their specific policy objectives.



Photo: Cambridge Airport (NU)

Photo: Meadow Bay Mill (NU)

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Overarching Themes

The goal of all Canada's northern plans is to improve the social and economic well being of their respective Northern regions. To accomplish this, the various provincial plans/strategies must consider the needs of its population (including Aboriginal), the impact of climate change, geography as well as natural resources. In examining the data, it was evident that the majority of Canada's northern plans were constructed around the theme of sustainable development (social development, economic development and environmental protection).

Social Development

In analyzing the data, all jurisdictions identified a variety of conditions that have favourable impacts on the social development of their respective northern communities: Examples of these favourable conditions include: \The means required to be autonomous, dynamic, competent, effective and creative;

- A safe living environment and an appropriate quality of community life including access to drinking water; healthy, affordable food; suitable housing; and appropriate health care;

- Access to quality education in which the training available should be adapted, varied and relevant, so as to foster individual employability.

The data also indicated that for their respective northern regions to flourish, their populations (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) need to have the necessary tools required to protect and promote their "northern" identity, language and culture, as well as to maintain their pride and sense of belonging.



Photo: Underground Training MB (left)

Photo: A carver carefully cuts soapstone into an inuksuk in Iqaluit, Nunavut (right)

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Economic Development

The data indicated that economic development is an integral component of all northern plans. The data indicated that in order for economic development to be successful and for northern communities to prosper, the following conditions must be met:

- Access to infrastructure;
- Access to natural resources;
- Opportunities to capitalize on the demand in emerging sectors such as outfitting, travel and tourism;
- Access to private investment;
- An entrepreneurial spirit; and
- Access to global markets

Environmental Protection

Survey respondents also indicated that a key to any successful northern plan is an environmental protection component. Canada's northern ecosystems are unique and very fragile. Provinces and territories must engage in environmental protection to preserve these ecosystems and the wildlife found within. For example, Québec's

government intends to protect the Plan Nord territory by allocating approximately half of the Plan Nord region for non-industrial purposes in order to protect the environment and safeguard biodiversity. Respondents also indicated the need to focus on a green economy and study the impacts of climate change. For example, through the Northern Strategic Plan for Labrador, the province of Newfoundland and Labrador has committed to work with the Nunatsiavut Government on the implementation of a Climate Change Strategy for northern Labrador.



Photo: Water Plane (AB)

Photo: Water Treatment Plant (BC)

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Legislation

In the area of strategic planning within the various levels of governments, the survey examined if there was legislation required to proceed with the plan. The responses were varied with five jurisdictions identifying legislation directly tied to their planning:

- Nunavut with the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement
- British Columbia with sector-based plans supported by sector –based legislation
- Alberta with priority-based plans support by specific legislation, i.e. NADC Act, Water Act
- Ontario with Places to Grow Act 2005; The Far North Act 2010
- Québec is preparing a land use legislation to devote half territory of the Plan Nord to purposes other than industrial ones, environment protection and safeguarding biodiversity and Bill 27 an Act respecting the Société du Plan Nord pending in support of The Plan Nord.

Five jurisdictions reported legislation that indirectly supported their plan(s):

- Northwest Territories – legislation may be required for some initiatives

- Saskatchewan – legislation to support the work of individual ministries
- Manitoba – legislation for specific initiatives or generally supporting northern development
- Newfoundland and Labrador - no legislation, but authorization of actions by Cabinet Minute in Council
- Canada’s Northern Strategy and Sustainable Development Strategy are supported indirectly by legislation that is priority or policy based in relation to First Nations and the Territories.

Yukon noted that there were some direct and indirect ties with legislation to the plans.

Yukon – legislation may relate to specific goals within departmental plans and is considered both part of the context when you consider crafting the plan and a potential tool available to implement the plan (i.e. regulations, policies, and programs).

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Communication

In the provinces that do not have a dedicated northern strategy or framework such as British Columbia and Alberta, typically, communication responsibility resides with various ministries and/or agencies that have been designated as project lead. Communication responsibility is one-off, and these departments/agencies are responsible for the communication associated with their ongoing initiative. In other areas of Canada, northern strategies are in place or are in the process of being developed and implemented.

Overall, communication about northern strategies, plans and initiatives are conducted for the following purposes:

- Seeking out the views and aspirations of stakeholders and partners;
 - Informing and reporting to stakeholders and partners about government activities and processes;
 - Providing a response mechanism to stakeholders and partners;
 - Improving stakeholder and partner relationships and enhancing their ability to make timely decisions;
- Improving government efficiency and the effective development and implementation of programs and services; and,
 - Promoting and informing the public about the benefits of northern strategies, plans, and initiatives and potential opportunities in the north.

Each plan, strategy or initiative uses various communication tools that may include the following:

- Reporting routinely through stakeholder/partner groups, committees, consortium or network;
- Public notices in newspaper and on local radio, press releases, e-bulletins, newsletters or brochures;
- Annual Reports and other reports;
- An Interpretive Centre;
- Speeches, presentations, or panel discussions at group gatherings such as face to face meetings, consultations, economic summits, workshops or conferences;
- Field staff who deliver ministry programs and services;
- Annual budget addresses and House or Parliamentary proceedings; and,

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- Government websites.

In addition, it must be noted that communication occurs at the local, national and international levels.

Reporting and Monitoring

Communication is a key component of any strategic plan. As a form of measurement, the reporting and monitoring of commitments is integral in communicating the success of a strategy. Survey responses indicated that a variety of reporting strategies are used including the standard year-end reporting from a ministry-based, sector-based or priority-based perspective, as deployed in the Yukon, British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, to committee based oversight as deployed in Nunavut, Québec and Canada. The Northwest Territories, Ontario and Newfoundland and Labrador ministries are undertaking monitoring and reporting mechanisms developed specifically for their overarching plans.

Yukon

⇒ Yukon prepares year-end status reports on the annual departmental plans, as well as

interim updates that are submitted to the Premier's office;

⇒ Many departments also have performance measures built into the plans tied directly to the strategic goals and objectives. The status reports include output measures, ensuring commitments to action were achieved, while many strategic plans contain longer-term outcome measures; and

⇒ There are also many annual reporting mechanisms required under legislation, including the Annual Forest Health Report, the Annual Report of the Yukon Child and Youth Advocate, Annual Report of the Yukon Information and Privacy Commissioner.

Nunavut

⇒ Nunavut Implementation Panel (joint federal/territorial team) will monitor implementation of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement including:

- Making sure everything is done;
- Building consensus;
- Amending implementation plan as necessary

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- Recommendations on allocation of funds; and
- Reporting each year on what is being done;

Northwest Territories

- ⇒ Monitored by:
 - Cabinet;
 - Financial Management Board;
 - Standing Committees; and
 - As part of the business of the Legislative Assembly reviews.

British Columbia

- ⇒ Annual report on the global competitiveness of BC's mining related taxes, fees and regulations;
- ⇒ Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions undertakes research, monitor and assess the potential impacts of climate change;
- ⇒ Increasing the number of water monitoring stations in BC and making information on drinking water more accessible including a report on the state of the water every 5 years;
- ⇒ Enhancing and co-ordinating climate monitoring networks and regional centres of applied climate science;
- ⇒ Required reporting on greenhouse gas emissions;
- ⇒ Research into the impacts of global warming on invasive plants; inventory and monitor projects

that map species distribution and identify pathways for their spread;

- ⇒ Establish baseline information, monitor and protect water supplies critical to domestic, agricultural use, grazing use or fish habitat;
- ⇒ Monitoring of air quality;
- ⇒ Establish baseline information and monitor trends in public health and safety; and
- ⇒ Continue to conduct timely and appropriate detection and assessment surveys to monitor the level of infestation and success of mitigation actions.

Alberta

- ⇒ Annual reports, project reports and updates to the Northern Alberta Development Council;
- ⇒ Integrated information management systems and joint initiatives such as the Alberta Biodiversity Monitoring Institute;
- ⇒ Ambient environmental monitoring data;
- ⇒ Quarterly and annual timelines in action plans; and
- ⇒ Annual general meetings and ad hoc discussions.

Saskatchewan

- ⇒ Ministries conduct reviews with senior management;
- ⇒ Annual reports;

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- ⇒ Inclusion of stakeholders groups and partner in monitoring progress;
- ⇒ Education Indicators Report;
- ⇒ Annual review of land use plans; and
- ⇒ Five year revisions.

Manitoba

- ⇒ Regular reporting (on commitments) by respective government departments highlighting investments in northern-based/focused initiatives; and
- ⇒ Outcome based reporting on Key performance measures in annual reports.

Ontario

- ⇒ The Ministries of Infrastructure and Northern Development and Mines will develop a detailed set of performance indicators to assist with Growth Plan monitoring and reporting;
- ⇒ Measuring progress by assessing programs in key areas:
- ⇒ Attracting investment and business growth in Northern Ontario;
- ⇒ Diversification of the North's economic base;
- ⇒ Supporting education and skill development of the northern workforce;
- ⇒ Increasing the involvement of Aboriginal peoples in the northern economy; and

- ⇒ Improving connectivity through information technologies.
- ⇒ Establishment of a Northern Policy Institute to assist the government with measuring and reporting on the progress of implementing the Growth Plan. This could include engaging external partners in monitoring of progress;
- ⇒ Reviews with senior management committees; and
- ⇒ Updates to external partners on progress through e-bulletins.

Québec

- ⇒ Using a collaborative approach in which governmental entities promote the Plan Nord strategies to encourage international investments;
- ⇒ An implementation and monitoring mechanism for the action plans, based on joint actions by the various stakeholders has been proposed
- ⇒ Maintain the joint structure set up for preparation of the Plan Nord including a Partners' Discussion Table, an Aboriginal Partners' Discussion Table and more than ten sector-based working groups
- ⇒ Inter-ministerial coordination to ensure the Plan Nord is taken into consideration in government policies and programs;

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- ⇒ Each ministry implicated in Plan Nord will have to report and monitor its actions regarding the implementation of the first five-year basis plan's initiatives which it is responsible for; and
- ⇒ The Société du Plan Nord, a government corporation, will play a leading role in the implementation of the Plan Nord and will coordinate the implementation of actions and projects.

Newfoundland and Labrador

- ⇒ Each government department and agency has a designate appointed to work directly with the Labrador Affairs Office of the Executive Council;
- ⇒ Annual executive meetings with each department to discuss the status of current commitments and potential new commitments; and
- ⇒ Framework used to monitor and track all spending in the Northern Strategic Plan for Labrador – updated through regular contact between designates and the Labrador Affairs Office;

Canada

- ⇒ Commitments, projects and initiatives are monitored by two committees of senior officials chaired by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada: the Ad Hoc Committee of Deputy Ministers on the Arctic and the ADM Coordinating Committee on the Arctic.

- ⇒ Commitments, investments and implementation of projects and initiatives are being monitored through a *Project Implementation Dashboard* developed and updated by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada in collaboration with departments involved under the Northern Strategy.
- ⇒ The Dashboard includes name of departmental contact, name of the initiative, brief description of the initiative, achievements to date, milestones and target completion dates of the initiatives. This document is brought forward twice a year to the DM and ADM level Committees on the Arctic for consideration.



Photo: Musée Oujé-Bougoumou (QC)

Photo: Williams Lake Tourism and Discovery Centre (BC)

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Coordination of Strategies

Most governments have a coordinated approach to leading strategic plans and ensuring other ministries fulfill their mandated responsibilities. Jurisdictions utilize either a lead ministry, cooperative or hybrid model approach to coordinate their plans across government.

British Columbia, Québec, Newfoundland and Labrador and the Government of Canada utilize a model that designates a lead ministry responsible for the plan. The lead ministry provides a coordination of services and helps target efforts. It also collects information, sets policy direction, identifies the direction for government and is responsible for encouraging and ensuring other ministries fulfill their mandated responsibilities.

Once the plan's direction has been drafted, relevant ministries/departments are asked to contribute in the implementation stage. These various ministries/departments help organize the plan and provide insight and capacity behind various aspects of the plan. These ministries/departments also contribute specific technical expertise to help connect existing tools and programs to strategies. Different types of

implementation models for plans include Assistant Deputy Minister Committees, Communities of Practice, and Secretariats or Working Committees at the Executive Director/Director level. While this framework designates a lead department to ensure the success of the strategy, implementation of the plan requires an inter-connected approach. All ministries/ departments are viewed to have a role to play with aligning their policy to this strategy. In this model, a multi-ministerial approach is essential to successfully implement these strategies and the partners are dependent upon each other to work together over the long-term in the spirit of collaboration and common purpose.

Comparatively, Saskatchewan, Yukon, Manitoba, and Alberta utilize a cooperative approach where the work is done at an inter-ministerial level with no lead ministry providing a coordinating or authoritarian role. Emphasis in this approach is placed on the responsibility being dispersed throughout various ministries/departments. In some cases, inter-agency committees are formed where each ministries/ department is responsible for a particular project or program relevant to their sector.

Nunavut uses a hybrid model, employing a special team responsible for the implementation of their plan. This team is comprised of one senior official

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from the territorial government, one senior official from the federal government and two representatives from the designated Inuit organization. This approach designates a lead team to oversee the progress and implementation of their plan; however, membership of the team is comprised of multi-level participants. This approach leads to no one level of government or ministry responsible for the implementation of the plan or having an authoritarian role. In Nunavut, the responsibility for implementing the plan is dispersed amongst the multi-level partners who participate on the special team. In Ontario, the Growth Plan's development and implementation is co-led by two ministries, the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines. It is also a collaborative approach with 16 partner ministries.

British Columbia and Québec encourage the participation of multi-level stakeholders as opposed to working horizontally within their level of government. Some of their initiatives require collaboration within and among provincial, municipal, federal and Aboriginal governments, Aboriginal communities and organizations, Francophone organizations, industry, businesses, labour organizations, community organizations, and education and research institutions. Ontario is encouraging the participation of multiple external

partners and working horizontally within the provincial government.

Comparatively, the Government of Canada specifically works horizontally with Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada taking the lead on all their projects.



Photo: School in Sheshatshiu, (NL)

Photo: Bridge at God's Lake Narrows (MB)

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Working Together

It is important to note that not all plans or strategies are focused solely on the North, but some are province-wide initiatives that have the potential to impact the north. As such, areas that jurisdictions can work on together may extend beyond specific northern initiatives to include province-wide initiatives.

In many cases, jurisdictions have made it a priority to engage and work together in partnership with northern communities and leadership to address the specific needs and aspirations of local communities. This work informs any collaborative efforts that are made between jurisdictions.

Collaboration with other jurisdictions is possible where similar issues, needs, responsibilities, and opportunities exist. The sharing of information, pooling of data and expertise across regions, and in some cases, coordinated approaches, benefits all participants.

Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) have been used by some jurisdictions to overcome limited resources, and other opportunities also exist to work together in areas where there are similar issues, common interests, rights, and opportunities. It was acknowledged by many respondents that MOUs need to move more toward concrete action items rather than merely symbolism. They are effective in coordinating jurisdictions to prioritize and advance issues together.

Areas where collaboration has occurred or could occur include:

A. British Columbia

Mining Plan

- Collaboration with industry, First Nations, communities, interested parties and other levels of government to reinforce Canada's leadership in environmental stewardship and sustainable mining;
- Building jointly on world-class environmental standards and best management practices;
- Work towards harmonizing Fisheries and Oceans Canada and provincial fish and fish

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habitat management activities to reduce duplication and overlap; and,

- Identify, in partnership with industry, new opportunities for recycling metals and minerals.

Energy Plan

- Relevant jurisdictions could collaborate through the Western Climate Initiative; and,
- Advance bio-energy research, collaborate in project development and build upon shared interests with other jurisdictions in Canada and around the world.

Mountain Pine Beetle Action Plan

Collaborate with neighbouring jurisdictions to contain outbreaks and reduce damage in border areas.

B. Alberta

Northern Alberta Development Council (NADC)

Places considerable emphasis on developing partnerships and collaboration and provides support to some provincial MOUs within other jurisdictions.

Watershed Advisory Councils and watershed management plans

Work together on setting policy direction and outcomes, implementing regulatory requirements, and ensuring we are moving forward in an integrated manner. MOUs could be developed to overcome limited resources.

Northwest Corridor Development Corporation

Consortium of municipal, industry, government members from British Columbia, Alberta, and Northwest Territories. Membership is wishing to expand to include the Yukon and Saskatchewan.

Northern Highways Strategy

Alberta, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Northwest Territories, Yukon prepared a report Northwestern Canadian Integrated Road Network: Conceptual – Long-Term Vision in 1998. Since then, this report has been the basis for promotion of primary roads in northern Alberta. Some road initiatives have been completed while others are in progress.

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C. Saskatchewan

Government wishes to keep abreast of activities in other jurisdictions and is interested in creating dialogue.

Joint Cabinet Meetings

Saskatchewan has held joint Cabinet meetings with the Governments of British Columbia, Alberta and Manitoba for the purpose of sharing information and identifying opportunities for collaboration.

New West Partnership

An agreement is in place between the Governments of British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan that focuses on working together to increase economic competitiveness, build cooperation for accessing international markets, coordinate innovation activities and establish joint procurement. Some of this work may impact the north.

Aboriginal Affairs Working Group (AAWG)

Provincial and Territorial Ministers of Aboriginal Relations and National Aboriginal Organization

leaders established AAWG, whose primary goal is to work together more effectively to improve outcomes for Aboriginal people in the areas of Education, Economic Development, and Violence against Aboriginal Women and Girls. The group is currently chaired by Ontario.

Active Measures MOU

An MOU has been signed between 5 Tribal Councils, the Government of Canada and Government of Saskatchewan. The MOU is a collaborative effort to increase labour force participation of First Nations through active measures in Saskatchewan.

D. Manitoba

Manitoba has a strong record of working collaboratively with neighbours on matters of mutual interest.

Manitoba and Nunavut MOU

In 2010, Manitoba and Nunavut signed an MOU to work on the following priorities:

- Health opportunities for enhanced services and improved patient care

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through collaboration between the Department of Health and Social Services (HSS) and the Churchill Regional Health Authority;

- Renewable energy including sharing best practices and technology;
- Economic growth, through co-operation, consultation, joint tourism development and marketing projects;
- Transportation, through initial consultations on a cost-benefit study on a Manitoba-Nunavut all-weather road; and,
- Exchange opportunities in areas of culture, education, and sporting activities.

Interprovincial Wilderness Area

In July 2008, Manitoba and Ontario established Canada's first interprovincial wilderness area which lies along Manitoba's East Side and Ontario's Far North, and covers over 9,400 square kilometres. It is of ecological importance to both provinces. Both provincial governments committed to working together on joint resource management, research projects, marketing and developing recreational opportunities. This joint effort supports the First

Nations-led initiative to create a UNESCO world heritage site in Ontario and Manitoba.

Joint Cabinet Meetings

Manitoba and Saskatchewan have held joint cabinet meetings. Through this process, the provinces have reached three MOUs on electricity, transportation and emergency response.

E. Ontario

Growth Plan for Northern Ontario

- Beyond the Ontario government, the Growth Plan's implementation chapter commits to working collaboratively with other partners, including federal and municipal governments, Aboriginal communities and organizations, Francophone organizations, industry, business, labour organizations, and education and research institutions.
- The regional economic planning initiative described in the Plan, and announced as part of the 2010 Budget's Open Ontario Plan, will be an inclusive, collaborative mechanism for economic

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development, workforce and infrastructure planning. It will strengthen integration between rural communities, First Nations and larger urban centres.

- The strategies in the plan also endeavour to promote a greater level of collaboration amongst industry and the training and education sector in order to ensure the ability to meet labour market needs.
- There are many other areas of collaboration that align with the Growth Plan including development of the Ring of Fire, the Northern Ontario Multimodal Transportation Strategy, Northern Ontario broadband investments, and tripartite discussions on Aboriginal health and education.

F. Newfoundland and Labrador

Various types of MOUs relating to Northern Development include but are not limited to:

- Signed between the province and a third party stakeholder (i.e. industry associations, unions and/or businesses);

- Signed between the province and another order of government with respect to a third party stakeholder and/or common interest(i.e. NL and Canada for an aboriginal communities initiative); and
- Signed between another sovereign government with respect to a third party stakeholder and/or common interest (i.e. trade with Iceland).

Examples related to Northern Development include, but are not limited to:

- Memorandum of Understanding for Joint Management and Protection of the Proposed Red Bay Basque Whaling Station World Heritage Site located at Red Bay, Labrador
- MOU between the former Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Government of NL for funding for the National Aboriginal Women's Summit in Corner Brook
- MOU between Government of Iceland and Government of NL regarding trade
- MOU on the Environmental Assessment of the Proposed Trans-Labrador Highway (Phase III)

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Newfoundland and Labrador, through the Arctic Opportunities Working Group has identified possible areas of interest with respect to:

- Research and development, particularly ocean technology and marine safety;
- Education and training, particularly related to northern and Aboriginal communities;
- Supply and service for the exploration and development of natural resources (oil, gas, minerals); and
- Support and development of transportation links (marine and air).

The Province's Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture has been active in collaborating on northern issues that include, but are not limited to:

- In 1999, Canada, the provinces and territories signed the Agreement on Interjurisdictional Cooperation with Respect to Fisheries and Aquaculture. The Agreement committed governments to work in the spirit of co-operation and established a formal structure for their

collaboration, the Canadian Council of Fisheries and Aquaculture Ministers (CCFAM).

- At the same time, the Atlantic Council of Fisheries and Aquaculture Ministers (ACFAM) was established to provide a forum for Canada, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Labrador and Nunavut to exchange information on and to facilitate coordination of approaches to Atlantic fisheries issues.
- Newfoundland and Labrador is collaborating with CFIA on the development of protocols for the export of seals from Canada to China.
- Several provinces, Canada and the Fur Institute of Canada (representing industry) continue to support the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami application to the European Court of Justice for an annulment of the EU seal regulation.

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G. Yukon

Areas of collaboration with other jurisdictions include:

- Energy Strategy for Yukon
- Climate Change Action Plan
- Land-Use Planning
- Pan-Territorial Adaptation Strategy
- Pan-Territorial Renewable Energy Inventory
- Pan-Northern Telecom Policy Committee
- Pan-Territorial Strategy, “A Northern Vision: a Strong North for a Better Canada”

H. Nunavut

Other Aboriginal peoples used areas in Nunavut before the NLCA (Nunavut Land Claims Agreement). As such, the Inuit of Northern Québec, other Aboriginal peoples in the Northwest Territories, the Denesuline of Manitoba and the Denesuline of Northern Saskatchewan are still able to access those areas.

Inuit have rights outside the NSA (Nunavut Settlement Area). Other Aboriginal people also have rights on some of the same land.

I. Government of Canada

The Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada works in partnership with many stakeholders such as the voluntary sector, industry, and provinces and territories. Partnership arrangements, including formal agreements, allow the pooling of resources and expertise to improve results for the benefits of all parties and could be considered to:

- Identify issues and challenges that could be addressed by the development of joint policies, projects or initiatives;
- Develop early responses to potential emerging issues and develop strategies to address these issues;
- Align investments when addressing common issues;
- Share data and research results on issues of common interest; and,
- Share best practices and concrete project results.

Northern Strategy

To implement the Northern Strategy, the Government of Canada has partnered with Territorial governments, Aboriginal Organizations, other Arctic States and industry in

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many projects and initiatives. The following are examples of partnerships developed by the Federal government that could be used as best practices for developing partnerships between NDMF jurisdictions:

- The Government of Canada is partnering with the Territories in infrastructure projects including green infrastructure and projects to facilitate access to clean energy;
- The Government of Canada signed an MOU with the United Kingdom for cooperation in polar research activities;
- The Government of Canada signed an MOU with the State Committee on Northern Affairs of the Russian Federation concerning cooperation on Aboriginal and Northern development;
- CanNor and Human Resources and Skills Development Canada have signed an MOU to strengthen cooperation and northern economic and skills development and ensure that existing and future programs are coordinated effectively;
- The Government of Canada signed Labour Market Agreements with the Territories to ensure the delivery of territorial labour market

programs and services that focus on skills development.

CanNor's flagship program, SINED (Strategic Investments in Northern Economic Development) includes a number of features intended to promote partnerships:

- Investment plans developed in light of input from the territorial governments and other partners/stakeholders;
- Pan-territorial Fund designed to support projects involving more than one territory; and,
- Support to Partnership and Advisory Forums to increase dialogue on northern economic development issues.

Gender and Minority Languages

The majority of strategies that focus on Canada's north impact the Aboriginal community, which make up approximately 84% of the population of the north. Jurisdictions in the NDMF have all noted the need to work with Aboriginal communities to work toward restoring literacy and fluency in Aboriginal languages. For example, Manitoba's Northern Development

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Strategy is primarily targeted to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people who comprise 72% of Manitoba's northern population and only 15% province wide. Manitoba has legislation in place to protect Aboriginal languages and culture.

With Saskatchewan, in most cases, ministries do not target specific gender issues, or language minority communities. However, it is acknowledged that English is a second language in some far North communities, and they would be encompassed by programs targeted at all Northern communities. Education encompasses language preservation for First Nations and Métis. As well, with regard to land use planning, and some resource development issues, the Province has arranged for some proceedings to be translated into the local Aboriginal languages (Cree and Dene).

Newfoundland and Labrador has placed interpreters on site at the Supreme Court in Happy Valley-Goose Bay to ensure that Aboriginal language rights are protected. British Columbia has a policy for consultation with First Nations throughout the province. In addition, a new Francophone school was recently opened as part of a commitment to the

Northern Strategic Plan for Labrador. The intended impacts of The Growth Plan for Northern Ontario, 2011 include capitalizing on Northern Ontario's bilingual workforce to attract investment and promote growth, as well as enhancing opportunities to pursue education and training in French and Aboriginal languages. There are additional policy directions that support the preservation of Aboriginal culture and language, and the participation of under-represented groups in the workforce.

The Government of Canada uses a gender-based analysis (GBA) to assess the differential impacts on women and men by considering their different life situations, their different socioeconomic realities and a GBA must be conducted for every policy and program developed by the Federal Government in the North.

In Newfoundland and Labrador, the Women's Policy Office has been actively involved throughout the life of the Northern Strategic Plan with gender based initiatives. Under the plan there is a commitment for an annual Aboriginal Women's Conference, as well as many commitments aimed at impacting the lives of women in Labrador including violence prevention and affordable housing.

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Many of British Columbia's strategies are aimed at the social and economic of under-represented groups in the workforce. Skills for Growth recognizes the populations within British Columbia, whose skills are under-represented in the workforce such as Aboriginal persons, women, persons with disabilities and immigrants and allows students to use practical work experience and other out-of-school activities for graduation credits in fields such additional languages. The strategy looks to increase access to workplace focused English language training so immigrants can work in occupations that match their training and experience. With one-third of all job openings forecasted to be filled by new immigrants over the next 10 years, the plan continues to build upon British Columbia's record as a destination of choice and expand efforts to welcome internationally trained workers and their families.

Given that the Aboriginal population in general faces socio and economic challenges beyond the norm, the Aboriginal population is most likely to benefit from many of the strategies in each jurisdiction as the north's population is largely Aboriginal.



Photo: Prince George Hospital (BC)



Photo: Rosie the Robot (NL)

Government Decision Making

The weight of plans in government decision making depends in part on the cohesiveness of the northern plan in any given jurisdiction. Some regions described their northern strategy as a composite of programs addressing specific needs in their north, such as land use planning, research, or economic development. Others have a larger, overarching framework; Manitoba, Northwest Territories and Newfoundland and Labrador have mature plans, while Québec and Ontario are in the first year of launching 25-year plans. Regardless of the approach, not surprisingly, most jurisdictions

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indicated that their northern plan plays a considerable role in leveraging investments in the North, and in guiding the decisions of government overall. This guidance takes a variety of forms.

Members of the NDMF have set key themes or priorities centrally in their strategies, which are handed down to departments to bear in mind while fulfilling their individual mandates. The most common priorities found across northern Canada are education and training, land use planning, environmental protection, and the diversification of a growing northern economy. Infrastructure investments, and promotion of good governance, were also frequently mentioned by jurisdictions.

Individual departments are expected to use a northern lens when examining issues and setting priorities and this extends into the budget process. In most cases, each region expects each department's budget to allocate resources to fulfill northern needs. This has met with fair success. Manitoba's strategy has been credited with the doubling of capital funding to schools, significant investment in transportation infrastructure, and hydroelectric projects which stress northern benefits. It bears noting, however, that Manitoba's is also a relatively mature strategy. Overall, the surveys suggest that a long-term plan will carry more weight in government decision making.

Correspondingly, in order to ensure that departments' individual work is carried out efficiently in the north, most jurisdictions highlighted the need for collaboration and coordination among departments. Collaboration implies teamwork and equal contributions, whereas coordination implies that one agency plays a lead role, which in turn depends on how much sway that agency has with its colleagues. With a few exceptions (noted below), this coordination seems to be a matter of persuasion and expectation, rather than wielding authority. Furthermore, another common theme was collaboration not only among government agencies, but with external stakeholders and the general public. Involving entities outside of government increases the accountability for northern plans, and therefore presumably increases the weight of the plan in government decision-making.

Although each region might have its own Northern Affairs department or agency, few jurisdictions highlighted this department's work and budget as a strategy in itself.

Two jurisdictions indicated that their northern strategy goes beyond coordination of departments to include some sort of performance review:

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- Newfoundland and Labrador's Northern Strategic Plan for Labrador, created in 2007, works with the Province's other departments/entities for commitments for the Plan. Some departments opt to reference to the Northern Strategic Plan for Labrador when making budget requests. Making these references, and showing positive impact in Labrador, is considered key in obtaining broader support for any initiative. Labrador Affairs Office monitors the activities of other departments, marking them as complete, incomplete or continuous within an accountability framework. Labrador Affairs Office reviews Cabinet submissions to ensure that the northern perspective is addressed, noting whether or not it supports the item.
- Ontario, although it announced the 25-year Northern Growth Plan in March 2011, indicates that two ministries, Infrastructure, and Northern Development and Mines will be tasked with monitoring how colleague ministries and municipalities are implementing the Plan. Furthermore, these two ministries will work with external partners to develop detailed performance indicators to assist in this monitoring and reporting.

In these two examples, one agency not only assists in coordinating northern initiatives across government, but also helps hold colleagues accountable and measures their progress. This goes beyond the internal progress reports that each ministry undoubtedly provides for its own analysis; the progress review is conducted externally to each ministry (although still within government).

Based on the survey responses, four factors contribute to the weight of any jurisdiction's northern plan:

- Continuity and longevity;
- Collaboration internal to government;
- Public/stakeholder input and communication; and,
- Accountability and performance measures.

The greater the degree that these four factors exist for a northern strategy, the more weight it appears to have in government decisions.

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Conclusion

Strategic planning has allowed for more focus and resources to address issues that are unique to the North. It has sought to achieve greater participation in the areas of social and economic development. While not every jurisdiction in the NDMF has one specific strategy, all jurisdictions have plans that focus on the social and economic well-being of the people living in Canada's North and recognize the importance of sustainable development. These plans may have a fixed term, such as Newfoundland and Labrador's Northern Strategic Plan for Labrador or may be renewable such as Québec's Plan Nord. Intergovernmental and interdepartmental cooperation was noted by all NDMF members as key to the success of their plans and strategies.

After reviewing the information provided from NDMF members, a number of lessons learned were identified:

1. Capitalizing on limited financial resources. All jurisdictions are faced with significant demands with limited fiscal capacities. Strategic plans assist departments/entities prioritize funding initiatives for the annual budget process.
2. Strategic plans must not only concentrate on outputs (i.e. xx dollars/ xx commitments) but on outcomes. It is critical to focus on the desired outcomes from the outset in the development of a plan, and/or in the renewal of an existing plan. For instance, is the strategic plan making a difference in health care, transportation, and other socioeconomic initiatives?
3. Engagement:
 - **Internal-** many of the strategic plans in the north require collaboration amongst departments/entities. Often the focus is to get "buy-in" externally; however, significant time and resources are required to ensure proper planning mechanisms are in place internally to conduct horizontal initiatives.
 - **External-** often times in the north there are concerns that governments are not investing in northern priorities. With meaningful consultations that include one-on-one discussions with targeted groups, as well as stakeholders meetings, there is an opportunity for stronger engagement with the public to communicate governments' commitment to the region.
4. Appropriate social and economic data validated from internal statistical data resources is required throughout the lifecycle of the plan. There is a need to establish benchmarks prior to the release of new strategic plans, or for a plans renewal in order to measure outcomes effectively.

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With limited fiscal resources exceeding demand for programs, services and infrastructure, the input of the public and private sector is vital to ensure an equitable share of public resources. There are many lessons to be learned from every jurisdiction's approach to strategic planning, regardless of whether there is one plan or many strategies. Each plan in its own way ensures that future programs and services within the north are effective, and that the north benefits from social and economic initiatives. In addition, the importance of resource development cannot be underscored in the north. Strategic planning allows for development to occur in a manner that maximizes benefits in a respectful manner to Aboriginal peoples and the fragile ecosystems, as well as provide opportunities for Northerners while respecting sustainable development.

Recommendations

1. Finalize the project as it has fulfilled its mandate;
2. Post the final report on the NDMF public site upon ratification by Ministers; and
3. Each NDMF member distribute the report to relevant departments and agencies.

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Annex A

An Evaluation of Strategic Planning in Northern Canada Northern Development Minister's Forum Survey Template

Please complete this profile for your jurisdiction. This template will be used to compile information on strategic planning that will be provided to each jurisdiction for inclusion in the 2011 NDMF briefing books. All data provided will be summarized to reflect the submissions received.

Jurisdiction:

Northern Region:

Contact Information:

Objective:

- To prepare a report on best/promising practices in strategic planning and innovative solutions to Northern issues.
- To demonstrate the importance of broad-based strategic planning to advance social, economic and environmental/sustainability issues in the North.

1. Provide an inventory of the strategic planning framework(s) currently planned or in place for your jurisdiction. Include overall strategic plans for the Territorial Governments and the Federal Northern Plan.
2. What are the objectives of the plan?
3. What are the anticipated sustainable impacts? (ex. 30 years out)
4. What is the timeframe of the plan? Is it renewable?
5. What is the current state of the plan (where on the continuum from planning to a mature state)?
6. What are the themes and sectors that the plan focuses on (i.e. economic development, health, education, Aboriginal, etc.)?

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Annex A

6. What are the themes and sectors that the plan focuses on (i.e. economic development, health, education, Aboriginal, etc.)?
7. Is there legislation or Acts tied to your plan?
8. How are the commitments in the plan monitored?
9. How do you communicate your plan?
10. What can jurisdictions do together?
 - Is it possible to develop Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) to overcome limited resources?
11. What weight does the plan have in government decision-making?
12. How is the plan co-coordinated across Government?
 - Does your ministry have the responsibility for ensuring/encouraging other ministries to fulfill their mandated responsibilities?
13. What internal and external reporting mechanisms are in place?
14. How is the plan financed?
15. What kind of impact has your plan had on gender and language minority communities?
16. How have plans been used to effect change (i.e. Aboriginal Justice Department in Newfoundland and Labrador)?
17. What areas have been successful and what areas not within your plan?
18. What are the lessons learned?
 - How is progress measured (are the initiatives making a difference)?
 - What is the importance of baseline statistical data?
 - What is the consultation process with stakeholders and those affected?
19. Is there is any information that you would like to share that was not elicited by the survey questions?

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Annex B

Links to Strategic Plans

Canada <http://www.northernstrategy.gc.ca/>

Manitoba <http://www.gov.mb.ca/ana/info/nds.html>

Newfoundland and Labrador http://www.laa.gov.nl.ca/laa/northern_strategic_plan/index.html

Northwest Territories [http://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca/_live/documents/content/09-11-05%20 Northerners%20 Working%20Together.PDF](http://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca/_live/documents/content/09-11-05%20Northerners%20Working%20Together.PDF)

Nunavut http://www.gov.nu.ca/files/Tamapta%20Action%20Plan_ENG.pdf

Ontario http://www.placestogrow.ca/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=53&Itemid=65

Québec <http://www.plannord.gouv.qc.ca/> ; <http://www.plannord.gouv.qc.ca/documents/plan- action.pdf>

Yukon <http://www.economicdevelopment.gov.yk.ca/pdf/stratplan.pdf>