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of Canada

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Building a Strong Arctic Together

Arctic Policy Framework Discussion Guide

Canada 

English

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Canada's Arctic Policy Framework: Discussion guide

The discussion questions are also available in [Inuktitut](#).

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Introduction

"The simple fact is that Arctic strategies throughout my lifetime have rarely matched or addressed the magnitude of the basic gaps between what exists in the Arctic and what other Canadians take for granted. Closing these gaps is what northerners, across the Arctic, wanted to speak to me about as an urgent priority."

Mary Simon, Interim report on the Shared Arctic Leadership Model

Objective

To achieve a new Arctic Policy Framework resulting in a more coordinated effort by all levels of government, Indigenous groups, industry and other stakeholders to identify issues and possible solutions to meet the challenges and harness emerging opportunities in the Arctic.

Overview

Canada is an Arctic nation. As the second-largest Arctic state, our Arctic is an integral part of who we are as a country and the role we play in the wider world. The Canadian Arctic is a vast and diverse region that is home to more than 200,000 people representing Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. The history of the region, and of the Indigenous peoples who have lived there since time immemorial, is one of interdependence, resilience, and achievement in the

face of change. Over the past 150 years, the Canadian Arctic has become increasingly diverse, accessible and self-determined.

The last 50 years have been especially transformative. Innovative ways to increase the self-determination of Arctic residents and regional governments have been adopted, including the settlement of modern land claims, the negotiation of self-government arrangements, the devolution of federal jurisdictions and the creation of a new territory (Nunavut) to name just a few major accomplishments.

On August 5, 2016, Indigenous and Northern Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett announced the appointment of Mary Simon as the Minister's Special Representative responsible for leading an engagement and providing advice on a new approach to shared leadership in Canada's Arctic. As a distinguished former diplomat and life-long Inuit leader, Ms. Simon brought the experience and expertise needed to advise the Government of Canada on the most pressing issues facing the Arctic.

Ms. Simon's reports found that Canada's Arctic is facing a period of transformative change but is also burdened by longstanding social and economic challenges. Today, the rapid acceleration of climate change is dramatically affecting the daily lives of Arctic Canadians as well as the region's ecosystems and infrastructure. The Canadian Arctic, she observed, is "shouldering a disproportionate level of impacts because the Arctic is warming at twice the global average rate. I heard repeated accounts of the impact of a warming Arctic on food security, infrastructure, housing, and safety on the land and sea."

At the same time, Ms. Simon emphasized that despite major strides over the past decades in advancing self-determination and self-government, persistent social and economic problems remain in Canada's Arctic. Why, she asked, "does the Arctic continue to exhibit among the worst national social indicators for basic wellness? ... Why, with all the hard-earned tools of empowerment, do many individuals not feel empowered and healthy?"

Ms. Simon submitted her [interim report](#) in October 2016 and her [final report](#) in March 2017. They are available on the Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada [website](#), and copies can also be obtained by writing to ArctiqueEnsemble-ArcticTogether@canada.ca. Her work is an important step in planning for the sustainable social and economic development of Canada's Arctic.

In December 2016, Prime Minister Trudeau announced a number of initiatives to embrace opportunities and confront challenges in the changing Arctic including a new Arctic Policy

Framework to be co-developed with Indigenous, territorial and provincial partners that will replace *Canada's Northern Strategy* and the *Statement on Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy*.

The objective of this framework is to provide overarching direction to the Government of Canada's priorities, activities and investments in the Arctic, with a horizon of 2030. The framework will:

- be informed by the priorities of our partners
- identify possible areas for joint/complementary action to achieve shared goals
- take into account the distinctive needs/opportunities of each region to ensure the full potential of the Arctic is realized

The Pan-Territorial Vision for Sustainable Development, released in August 2017 by the Northern Premiers, will be foundational to the Arctic Policy Framework, including its underlying principles which reinforce the importance of resource development, economic diversification, improved infrastructure and innovation in building strong territorial economies and increasing self-reliance. Strengthened and diversified economies are central to sustainable community wellness and to Indigenous self-determination. Fostering healthy, vibrant and prosperous communities will require local skill-development investments, which will be imperative to economic diversification and establishing more self-reliant communities. Infrastructure such as highways, harbours, ports, airports, viable energy alternatives and connections to hydroelectric grids are critical for economic diversification and reducing the costs of living for residents. Each of the territorial governments have strong and productive relationships with their local Indigenous governments and organizations. Their participation is vital to the economic development of the territories, and in supporting community wellness.

We are eager to hear from Canada's Arctic residents, and from all Canadians, about their aspirations for the Arctic. This guide provides a starting point for ideas and conversations that will lead to a new Arctic Policy Framework for Canada.

Structure

This guide is organized into six themes, which may evolve through discussions with our partners and other stakeholders:

- comprehensive Arctic infrastructure
- strong Arctic people and communities
- strong, sustainable and diversified Arctic economies

- Arctic science and Indigenous knowledge
- protecting the environment and preserving Arctic biodiversity
- the Arctic in a global context

Each section begins with some quick facts, followed by context and objectives that are intended to inform discussion either on the questions provided or more broadly on the themes.

Co-developing an Arctic Policy Framework

"I feel it is important at this point to remind ourselves of the long history of visions, action plans, strategies and initiatives being devised 'for the North' and not 'with the North' ... A new Arctic Policy Framework starts with an inclusive, mutually respectful and trustful process that establishes (and keeps to) principles of partnership."

Mary Simon, A new Shared Arctic Leadership Model

During the coming months, the Government of Canada will work collaboratively with national and regional Indigenous organizations, Indigenous treaty partners and governments, the Governments of Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Manitoba, Quebec, and Newfoundland and Labrador to develop a long-term vision for the Canadian Arctic and Canada's role in the circumpolar Arctic. The intent is to ensure that Arctic residents and governments are at the forefront of policy decisions affecting the future of the Canadian Arctic and Canada's role in the circumpolar Arctic.

The Government of Canada recognizes the extensive work that has already been undertaken by our key partners in developing the priorities for their respective regions. This process will build upon rather than replace this important work. The framework will reflect the unique opportunities and challenges within different regions, while respecting jurisdictional responsibilities and treaty rights. As the territorial premiers noted in their statement of August 31, 2017, the framework has an important role to play "in developing both strong northern communities and developing viable and diversified northern economies."

This new approach to policy development is accompanied by a broader geographic scope of application. While nearly all former federal strategies have focused largely on the territorial North, the framework currently under development will apply to:

- Yukon
- Northwest Territories
- Nunavut
- Inuit Nunangat
- the Nunatsiavut region in Labrador
- the territory of Nunavik in Quebec
- northern Manitoba, including Churchill

The framework will incorporate ideas and input from a variety of sources, including written submissions as well as oral submissions received during regional roundtable sessions with a view to informing the overarching direction of the Government of Canada's priorities, activities and investments in the Arctic.

Discussion question

- What can be done to support a strong, prosperous and sustainable Canadian Arctic?

Themes for discussion

Comprehensive Arctic infrastructure

"No matter who I talked with, the topic of closing infrastructure gaps was often at, or close to, the top of the list to improve socio-economic conditions. The Arctic is unlike any other region of Canada in its infrastructure needs because of its geography and sheer expanse."

Mary Simon, A new Shared Arctic Leadership Model

Issue statement

- Comprehensive network of Arctic infrastructure that not only meets the social, economic, environmental and safety/security needs of Arctic residents and businesses, but will also allow Arctic communities to thrive

Quick facts

- Lack of transportation and shared energy infrastructure has a direct and costly impact on both the cost of living and cost of doing business in the Arctic.

- Communities in Nunavut and Nunavik rely exclusively on satellite for access to broadband services. There is a lack of connectivity in other areas of the Arctic and high internet costs also contribute to the high costs of living.
- Most Arctic communities are not accessible year round by modes of transportation other than air.
- There has been a steady increase in vessel traffic within Canadian Arctic waters.
- Nearly two-thirds of Arctic communities rely exclusively on diesel generators for heat and power.
- Approximately 95% of goods in the Arctic are carried by ships, including the re-supply of essential goods to Arctic communities. Rail plays a vital role in the northern regions of several provinces, including communities such as Churchill, Manitoba.
- Climate change impacts on permafrost, water and climate conditions cause damage to existing infrastructure across the Canadian Arctic, posing additional challenges to addressing the infrastructure gap.

Background

The harsh environment, changing weather patterns, short construction/shipping season, lack of building resources and small tax base create significant challenges and risks to building and maintaining infrastructure in the Canadian Arctic. As a result, Canada's Arctic has a significant infrastructure deficit – one that is posing significant challenges to socio-economic growth, emergency management, resource development and the fundamental safety and quality of life of Arctic residents.

Integrated and modern transportation infrastructure is a lifeline for all communities. In the Arctic, community wellness and economic development are limited by the lack of transportation infrastructure. This deficit makes it difficult, time-consuming, and expensive to move people and goods in and out of Arctic communities. Investment in resilient Arctic infrastructure, such as roads, fibre optic cables, airstrips and low impact shipping corridors, will be foundational pieces generating sustainable economic opportunities locally, nationally and internationally. These investments will help to lower the cost of living and operating businesses, and promote the growth of the middle class, in Arctic communities. Other Arctic nations have successfully leveraged public/private partnerships to generate much needed infrastructure, in particular transportation infrastructure. The opportunity to explore innovative approaches to public/private partnerships in the Canadian Arctic aligns with the Government of Canada's Public/Private Partnerships objectives.

Climate change is also accelerating threats to existing infrastructure. Thawing permafrost is directly impacting the integrity of building foundations, roads, runways, pipelines and coastal infrastructure. Considering climate change in infrastructure investments, including retrofits and upgrades, and investing in traditional and natural adaptation solutions will help build resilience, reduce disaster risks and save costs over the long term.

A number of investments have been made in recent years but further targeted infrastructure investments have the potential to contribute to socio-economic development in the region. For example:

- enhancing transportation infrastructure would reduce the cost of living, create better access to and between communities, and foster opportunities to strengthen and diversify the economy
- improving housing and other social infrastructure would improve the well-being of Arctic residents and communities
- improving connectivity would help bridge the digital divide and provide new/enhanced opportunities for Arctic residents to access tele-health, e-health and e-learning services and increase their potential to be engaged in the digital economy and support economic development
- improving energy infrastructure would significantly decrease costs for governments/businesses and reduce the overall cost of living for Arctic residents
- development of infrastructure standards to help plan, design, build and upgrade infrastructure adapted to climate change impacts

Proposed outcomes

- improved transportation networks
- reliable and accessible emergency response infrastructure
- enhanced telecommunications/broadband connectivity
- improved access to and diversification of housing options
- improved community infrastructure that is adapted to climate change impacts through enhanced planning and design
- improved infrastructure for weather, water and climate forecasting, ice services and alerting
- restored/enhanced living, natural infrastructure

Discussion question

- What are the key infrastructure priorities for your region?

Strong Arctic people and communities

"A significant number of conversations I had with leaders and other stakeholders circled back to a central premise: healthy, educated people are fundamental to a vision for sustainable development ... and fundamental to realizing the potential of land claims agreements, devolution and self-government agreements."

Mary Simon, A new Shared Arctic Leadership Model

Issue statement

- Strong, healthy and prosperous Arctic people and communities

Quick facts

- The Arctic is undergoing rapid social and environmental change.
- The population in Canada's Arctic is young and growing.
- The unemployment rate amongst Arctic residents is higher than the Canadian average and has at times exceeded 50% in some remote Arctic communities.
- Indigenous Northerners experience disproportionately high rates of crowded living conditions.
- Arctic residents experience much higher levels of criminal victimization and spousal violence than their southern counterparts.
- Indigenous Northerners experience suicide rates that are significantly higher than those experienced by Canadians nationally. The suicide rates among Inuit, for example, are among the highest in the world.
- Rates of communicable and chronic disease, including tuberculosis, are significantly higher for Northern Indigenous people than for Canadian-born non-Indigenous people.
- The incarceration rate in the Arctic is significantly higher than the national average.
- Access to health services remains challenging in the Arctic due to the remoteness of many communities.
- Canada is the only circumpolar nation without a university physically located in the Arctic.

Background

Arctic communities are close-knit, mutually supportive and strong in Indigenous cultures and practices and distinctively Northern ways of life. These communities, however, also face

significant health and social challenges, of which many are historically, geographically and systemically-based.

Many Arctic Canadians are burdened by a legacy of colonialism, including impacts from the Indian Residential School system, the Inuit High Arctic relocation and other sources of intergenerational trauma. Arctic Canadians and their communities face a range of further barriers to well-being, including housing shortages; poor physical/mental health with high rates of communicable diseases and suicide; food insecurity; limited access to high quality early learning and child care opportunities; and, lower educational outcomes and employment opportunities than elsewhere in Canada.

As noted by Ms. Simon in her final report, “the road to healthy, empowered citizens in the Arctic begins and ends with education. . . education policy in the Arctic must be culturally relevant, adaptive, and flexible.” Over the past 40 years, governments and school boards in the Arctic have made progress in fostering north-south educational partnerships and creating made-in-the-Arctic/culturally-appropriate curricula that support Indigenous languages and cultures. But more is needed to ensure that Arctic residents can acquire the skills they need to fully participate in, and benefit from, the growing and increasingly diversified Arctic economy.

The Canadian Arctic is also particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. While Canada's temperature increases are outpacing the global average, temperatures are rising even faster in Canada's Arctic and northern areas. Many Arctic residents, especially Indigenous Peoples, have a strong connection to the land, water, and air. This connection serves as a source of strength, understanding, and resilience. At the same time, however, it also increases Arctic Canadians' sensitivity to climate change impacts.

There is much work to be done to address the underlying conditions that cumulatively impact the well-being of Arctic people and communities. Investing in people, families and communities, and improving access to quality services, will help address the socio-economic and cultural disparities experienced by Arctic people and communities. Indigenous-led actions, with the support of government and other partners, will play an important role in successful efforts to enhance health, economies, languages and cultures in Arctic communities.

Leveraging responsible economic development to drive skills development, employment opportunities, participation in the economy, early learning and child care and improvements to community infrastructure, including safe, energy efficient, climate resilient and culturally appropriate housing, will be critical components to building strong Arctic communities. Further, addressing chronic health and wellness related issues such as high rates of suicide, high rates of tuberculosis and food insecurity will also be essential.

The Government of Canada recognizes that local decision-making is an essential component of supporting strong Arctic communities. Devolution agreements transferring federal jurisdictions to the territorial governments have already been negotiated and implemented in Yukon (2003) and the Northwest Territories (2014). Similar negotiations are currently underway with the Government of Nunavut and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated. The Government of Canada has also negotiated a number of modern treaties and self-government agreements with Inuit, First Nation and Métis peoples in the Canadian Arctic.

Proposed outcomes

- increased support for physical, mental and social well-being
- increased food security in Arctic communities
- lower suicide rates among Arctic residents
- Support improved transportation efficiencies that facilitate reduced cost of living in northern communities
- increased employment opportunities and economic development, including investments in infrastructure, to support healthy communities
- preservation, revitalization and enhancement of Indigenous languages and cultures
- increased access to, and participation in, early learning and child care and life-long learning opportunities
- enhanced emergency preparedness
- improved crime prevention and enhanced community safety
- completing devolution in Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut

Discussion question

- What key actions could increase well-being within Arctic communities?

Strong, sustainable and diversified Arctic economies

"Arctic leaders see the Government of Canada as a partner in finalizing and implementing treaties and land claims, but they want this work completed in a measured and thoughtful way that does not compromise the opportunities related to sustainable development. To achieve this, Arctic leaders must be involved in crafting major decisions."

Mary Simon, A new Shared Arctic Leadership Model

"...Arctic peoples and their representative organizations and governments are far more preoccupied with issues related to supporting strong families, communities and building robust economies."

Mary Simon, Interim report on the Shared Arctic Leadership Model

Issue statement

- Strong, sustainable and diversified Arctic economies that support a broad range of outcomes including: individual and community well-being; resilient ecosystems; innovative technologies; and global economies and trade

Quick facts

- The natural resource sector continues to be an important economic driver in the Arctic region, providing greater access to high paying employment, skills development, educational opportunities as well as joint ventures and small/medium business development than any other economic sector in the Arctic.
- The Arctic economy is expected to improve, with important sub-regional differences, over the 2017-2024 period in part due to the improved outlook for the mineral sector. Economic growth potential can also be found in construction, tourism, cultural and traditional industries, shipping, leveraging technologies, and commercial fisheries.
- Many of the raw materials needed to fuel the global green economy and innovation in the renewable energy sector, such as gold, copper, lithium, cobalt and bismuth are found in the Canadian Arctic.

Background

Several factors influence economic development in the Arctic region, including:

- the vastness/remoteness and harsh climate of the region which is disproportionately affected by climate change impacts (increase operating costs)
- the small/widely dispersed population of the region (limits labour force availability)
- lower educational levels among Arctic residents (impedes the ability of Arctic residents to participate in the workforce)

- limited transportation/energy/connectivity infrastructure (constrains access to markets and increases operating costs)
- gaps in emergency response capacity for incidents involving human life or requiring environmental protection (increases risks in business operations)
- economic development programs with short funding cycles and matching fund requirements (impedes local/long-term initiatives)

There are, however, many opportunities that can be leveraged to foster sustainable socio-economic growth in the Arctic region including:

- an abundance of natural resources which support a diverse range of sectors including mining, tourism, and fisheries
- new economic opportunities stemming from the impacts of climate change which are stimulating economic diversification in the Arctic (such as the potential for increased Arctic shipping, growth of tourism)
- modern land claims which provide a strong basis for Indigenous-led initiatives.

There are also opportunities to leverage infrastructure investments and innovative technologies developed by the private sector to benefit communities. Increasing linkages between Arctic, southern and international businesses will also help reduce capacity gaps and enhance opportunities to develop new markets.

Building strong, sustainable and diversified Arctic economies will require the development and retention of trained Arctic residents to fill the vast array of emerging jobs in the Canadian Arctic which currently relies heavily on a southern fly-in/fly-out workforce. It will also need to support the creation of supplies locally to reduce reliance on products that need to be brought in from the south.

Proposed outcomes

- sustainable renewable and non-renewable resource development
- growth of a diverse range of sectors
- growth of Arctic/Indigenous-led businesses and partnership opportunities
- increased employment opportunities for Arctic residents
- infrastructure investments to support economic growth, skills development and job creation
- implementation of safe, low-impact shipping corridors
- expanded trade and investment opportunities across the Arctic and with southern markets
- development of leading-edge Arctic innovation and technologies

Discussion question

- What can be done to advance sustainable economic development, diversify the Arctic economy, build capacity/expertise and increase the participation of Arctic residents in local economies, grow small-to-medium Arctic businesses and enhance partnerships?

Arctic science and Indigenous knowledge

"The next step in the evolution of scientific practice in the Arctic is linking community-driven Arctic research priorities with national policy development to ensure scientific investments benefit communities and answer key questions facing the Arctic. I firmly believe that the foundation of effective decision-making is good information. In the Arctic, that means being committed to placing equal value on Indigenous knowledge and western science. The new Arctic Policy Framework presents an opportunity to take this to its next level."

Mary Simon, A new Shared Arctic Leadership Model

Issue statement

- Develop new knowledge about the Arctic based on both western science and Indigenous knowledge to improve evidence-based decision making and respond to local needs; support Northern and Indigenous communities' participation in all aspects of the research process; and, ensure Canadian leadership in national and international Arctic scientific initiatives and partnerships

Quick facts

- The new Canadian High Arctic Research Station campus in Cambridge Bay (Nunavut) the Churchill Marine Observatory (Manitoba) and the Institut nordique du Québec, among others, will provide year-round, world-class hubs for science and technology, and serve as major nodes within the existing network of research facilities across the Arctic.
- The Government of Canada supports scientific research across Canada's Arctic through Polar Knowledge Canada, other federal departments/agencies, and research grants to academic institutions through federal Granting Councils.
- There are many existing research projects led by northern-based organizations that build on their knowledge of the Arctic, such as the Cold Climate Innovation Yukon Research Centre at Yukon College that supports projects related to clean technology development

specifically for the northern context. Beyond existing initiatives, there are many more opportunities to further strengthen research capacity in the North.

Background

Western science and Indigenous knowledge have an important role to play in better understanding, responding to and facilitating social, economic, environmental and cultural changes and advancements in the Arctic region (such as physical and mental health, food security, emergency response, sustainable resource management, cold-climate technologies, infrastructure development, transportation, environmental management and climate change monitoring/prediction).

The fragile Canadian Arctic environment is experiencing unprecedented change from the impacts of climate change and other drivers. A better understanding of Arctic ecosystems, and the impacts of climate change on Arctic communities, is needed to inform evidence-based decision making and address emerging issues. Specialized research that includes Indigenous knowledge is required. Strengthened science capacity in the Arctic through science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education, capacity-building, skills development and state-of-the-art research/monitoring infrastructure will help support both evidence-based decision-making and strong Arctic communities.

Indigenous and non-Indigenous Northerners have also indicated a desire for participation and a greater voice in determining what kind of research priorities governments and other funding bodies support, as well as greater participation and leadership in all aspects of the research process and research agenda, as part of their greater objective towards self-determination. Northerners are eager to ensure that the research being carried out in their backyard is relevant to their lives and their needs.

As a leader in Arctic research, Canada is well positioned to promote and develop new knowledge based on both western science and Indigenous knowledge. Strong partnerships already exist at multiple levels - from individual research projects through multi-stakeholder collaborations. It is essential to ensure that Arctic residents are involved in all stages of the research process including defining research priorities, developing research objectives, conducting and analyzing the research, and disseminating the results to ensure the knowledge generated is informed by, relevant to, and accessible by those living in the Arctic. The keys to establishing shared research goals and ensuring the effective use of Indigenous knowledge are relationships based on equality, mutual respect, and a common commitment to the creation of new knowledge.

Proposed outcomes

- improved understanding of Canada's Arctic and the ongoing changes in the region, based on Indigenous knowledge and western science
- informed Arctic policies/decision-making with coordinated research and program/service delivery
- improved access to post-secondary education and research opportunities for Arctic residents
- innovation in the integration of western science and Indigenous knowledge, and in the use of different forms of knowledge in decision-making
- support for the development, diversification and long-term sustainability of the Canadian Arctic economy through investments in new Arctic technologies and the adoption of innovative Arctic solutions
- support for the effective stewardship of Canada's Arctic lands, waters, and natural resources
- improved climate change-related risk management by new approaches to construction, safeguarding investments and strengthening emergency planning, response, and recovery
- enhanced regional expertise and capacity through access to STEM education and other forms of skills development, creating opportunities for Arctic residents to contribute meaningfully to research conducted in the Arctic
- increased access to and sharing of scientific data about the Arctic
- enhanced monitoring of environmental and climate change through community-based action and the integration of Indigenous knowledge and western science

Discussion question

- How can Canada respond more effectively to local knowledge needs, increase the capacity of Arctic residents to participate in Arctic research initiatives, collaborate with territorial and provincial institutions and better integrate Indigenous knowledge into decision-making?

Protecting the environment and conserving Arctic biodiversity

"There is a deep body of local knowledge, applied science and experience in the Arctic on the value of these conservation initiatives that can lead policy and practices going forward. There is also a great deal of emerging thinking and practice linking the protection of the environment with the wellness, resilience and adaptability of northern communities."

Issue statement

- Long-term protection of the Arctic environment, conservation of Arctic biodiversity, sustainable development of natural resources, and robust growth of the Arctic economy by supporting resilient ecosystems through conservation/protection, taking action to monitor/address climate change and ensuring adequate knowledge to inform sound decisions.

Quick facts

- Climate change is driving wide-scale change in the Arctic, and is impacting the lives of Arctic Canadians.
- Energy usage accounts for 96% of greenhouse gas emissions in the territorial North of which approximately two-thirds is for transportation yet the territorial North accounts for less than 1% of Canada's total greenhouse gas emissions.
- The North is a global leader in conservation efforts. Nunavut, for instance, has already conserved over 10% of its lands and waters (nearly 350,000 square kilometres).
- The Tallurutiup Imanga/Lancaster Sound National Marine Conservation Area encompasses more than 131,000 square kilometres (nearly twice the size of Nova Scotia), making it the largest marine conservation area in Canada.
- Canada's oceans are home to an immense web of marine life, generate half the oxygen we breathe, act as thermostats to regulate the Earth's temperature and support a wide variety of ecosystems as well as local, regional and global economies.
- The Canadian Coast Guard is the lead federal agency when responding to ship-sourced marine pollution/mystery spills in the Canadian Arctic.
- Environmental management is a shared responsibility that requires close coordination amongst all levels of government.

Background

The Arctic landscape, and its flora and fauna, are essential to the economic, cultural, social, and ceremonial activities which sustain Arctic communities. The environment and biodiversity play an important role in reducing the social, economic, and environmental vulnerabilities related to climate change. Yet the Arctic landscape, which is highly sensitive to climate change, is

undergoing a period of intense change impacting social structures, economic development, ecosystems and the built environment. Sustainable management, conservation, and restoration of ecosystems, along with the implementation of targeted natural adaptation solutions can be an effective way to protect Arctic communities and help them adapt to climate change.

As the availability of resources found in the Arctic shift due to changing climate and other factors, governments will have to ensure that policies keep pace. Negative environmental impacts on Arctic ecosystems often result from activities that originate outside of the Arctic and the full impacts of climate change are dynamic and challenging to predict. Action taken to support adaptation and ecosystem resilience to current and future climate impacts in vulnerable regions will help Arctic communities, economies and ecosystems endure and thrive in a changing climate.

Arctic communities and particularly Indigenous peoples have a long history of, and deep understanding about adapting, to changes in climate and the land. Indigenous and local knowledge can contribute to the development of new and innovative solutions that support Arctic resilience and benefit the environment and Arctic biodiversity. Through the co-management arrangements set out in modern land claim agreements, Indigenous peoples are working in full partnership with federal, territorial and provincial governments on a variety of environmental management issues, including environmental assessments, land use planning and resource management. Devolution has also supported new opportunities for Arctic residents to work together to responsibly and sustainably manage land, water and natural resources in Yukon and the Northwest Territories for the benefit of current and future generations.

Canada has also demonstrated its commitment to ensuring the economy and environment go hand in hand through key collaborative initiatives such as the [Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change](#) and the [Oceans Protection Plan](#).

Proposed outcomes

- reducing the Arctic's reliance on diesel through accelerating/intensifying efforts to improve the energy efficiency of diesel generating units; demonstrating/installing hybrid or renewable energy systems; and, connecting communities to electricity grids
- advancing ecosystem resilience as an adaptation solution, and integrating climate change considerations into natural resource management and biodiversity conservation
- tracking climate change impacts on biodiversity
- taking action to adapt to current and future climate impacts will help protect against climate change risks, build resilience and, reduce costs
- supporting environmental emergency response

- monitoring and maintaining healthy populations of species and ensuring healthy terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems
- long-term sustainability and sustainable development of natural resources
- supporting a strong foundation for a range of economic/employment benefits to Indigenous peoples related to the joint management and sustainable use of protected resources
- support open sharing of information respecting environmental management between all levels of government

Discussion question

- How can Indigenous and local experience/knowledge be incorporated into action on climate change and biodiversity?

The Arctic in a global context

"Another common thread in my discussions with leaders was the importance of a shift in thinking about the Arctic as a remote, marginal and sparsely populated region of Canada, to thinking about the Arctic as a representation of who we are as an Arctic nation, linked to a new era in intercultural relations, global science and sustainable development. The Arctic is generating a heightened level of global interest."

Mary Simon, A new Shared Arctic Leadership Model

Issue statement

- Position Canada to fulfill its role as an Arctic leader and partner to meet the challenges and opportunities facing the Arctic in ways that strengthen the rules-based international order and supports Canada's domestic priorities.

Quick facts

- The circumpolar Arctic is made up of eight Arctic states: Canada, Kingdom of Denmark (for Greenland and Faroe Islands), Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden and the United States of America.

- The Arctic Council is the pre-eminent institution for Arctic cooperation related to sustainable development and environmental protection. It was established in Canada in 1996 with the *Ottawa Declaration*.
- The Indigenous peoples of the circumpolar Arctic are represented in the Arctic Council through the six Permanent Participant organizations (PPs). Three PPs have Canadian representation including the Arctic Athabaskan Council, Gwich'in Council International and the Inuit Circumpolar Council.
- The Government of Canada has invited the governments of Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut to participate in its delegations to Arctic Council meetings and Arctic Council projects. More recently, Quebec, Newfoundland and Labrador and Manitoba are also engaging with Canada in this important international forum.

Background

The circumpolar Arctic is a region marked by a high-level of international cooperation and possesses a robust network of institutions that support governance of the Arctic. This includes the Arctic Council, which brings together Arctic states, Indigenous Permanent Participants and non-Arctic observer entities. The Arctic Council is complemented by other forums, such as United Nations bodies (such as International Maritime Organization) and meetings of the Arctic Ocean coastal States (known as the A5), who are the leads on decision-making related to Arctic shipping and fisheries. There is also an increasing number of international treaties in place that enhance Arctic cooperation on issues such as scientific cooperation and search and rescue. Canada's bilateral relationships with Arctic and non-Arctic states is another vehicle for advancing circumpolar cooperation.

The circumpolar Arctic faces significant challenges including how to adapt to the impacts of rapid environmental change on its people, traditional ways of life, ecosystems and infrastructure, as well as addressing the environmental, safety and security challenges related to increased interest and activity in the Arctic.

There are also many opportunities facing the Arctic region including pursuing new opportunities for sustainable economic development, communicating to the international community the robust network of international institutions in place for the governance of the Arctic, working with international partners and allies to share information more effectively, and improving our awareness of what is happening in the Arctic. There is also emerging interest to explore options for improved mobility of Arctic Indigenous peoples throughout the circumpolar Arctic.

As global attention continues to shift northwards because of opening access to resources and transportation channels, the Canadian Arctic has the potential to play a significant international

leadership role with its co-management systems, self-governance agreements as well as the world-class regulatory regimes that Canadian governments have established to oversee economic and resource development.

Proposed outcomes

- support international work to address common social and cultural concerns and promote opportunities to learn from each other (such as fostering international cooperation to promote and preserve traditional ways of life and Indigenous languages and improve education, health and mental wellness outcomes in Arctic communities)
- support international efforts to develop a diversified, sustainable and dynamic economy across the Arctic (such as boosting foreign trade and investment in Canada's Arctic; expanding pan-Arctic research and development cooperation; facilitating the development of regional infrastructure; and, ensuring safe and environmentally-friendly Arctic shipping to reduce environmental impacts)
- exercise global leadership in the conservation of the Arctic environment (such as leading international efforts to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and short lived climate pollutants; contributing to international efforts to help Arctic communities adapt to climate change; supporting global efforts to monitor, address and prevent pollution that have detrimental impacts on Arctic peoples; and, enhancing international cooperation to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity throughout Arctic ecosystems, including the Arctic Ocean)
- strengthen Canada's role as an Arctic knowledge leader and improve circumpolar scientific cooperation and understanding of Indigenous and local knowledge through improved science diplomacy
- ensure the safety and security of the Canadian and circumpolar Arctic (such as infrastructure that has regional and national importance and bolsters Canadian and circumpolar safety and security, enhancing the Canadian Armed Forces' and Canadian Coast Guard's presence and ability to operate in Canada's Arctic; conducting joint exercises with Arctic allies and partners; and, improving information sharing and awareness of what is happening in the Arctic region)
- clearly define where Canada may exercise jurisdiction in the Arctic (such as Canada's submission on the outer limits of the extended continental shelf, resolving outstanding boundary disputes in due course), supported by accurate and up-to-date map data

Discussion questions

- What domestic interests and priorities should the Government of Canada pursue internationally?

- What do you see as the main challenges and opportunities for Canada's Arctic foreign and defence policy in the next 10-20 years?

How to participate

There are three ways to participate:

1. Send a letter to:
Arctic Policy Framework Secretariat
15 rue Eddy, 14th floor
Gatineau QC K1A 0H4
2. Send an email to: ArctiqueEnsemble-ArcticTogether@canada.ca.
3. Send a tweet using the hashtag #ArcticTogether.

Roundtable sessions with our partners will also be held in each region. Dates and locations will be confirmed with participants.

Thank you for your contributions. They will be consolidated and reflected in a "What We Heard" document that will inform Canada's Arctic Policy Framework.

Related links

Federal government

- [The Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change](#)
- [Oceans Protection Plan](#)
- [Transportation 2030 - A Strategic Plan for the Future of Transportation in Canada](#)
- [Strong, Secure, Engaged: Canada's Defence Policy](#)
- [Canada and the Circumpolar Arctic](#)
- [Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy](#)
- [Inuit Nunangat Declaration On Inuit-Crown Partnership](#)
- [Interim Report on the Shared Arctic Leadership Model by Mary Simon, INAC Minister's Special Representative](#)
- [Final Report on the Shared Arctic Leadership Model by Mary Simon, INAC Minister's Special Representative](#)
- National Aboriginal Economic Development Board: [Recommendations on Northern Infrastructure to Support Economic Development](#) (PDF Version)
- [Canada's Northern Strategy](#)

Territorial governments

- [Government of Nunavut](#)
- [Government of Northwest Territories](#)
- [Government of Yukon](#)
 - [Making Yukoners' lives better](#)
- [A Pan-Northern Approach to Science](#)
- [A Northern Vision: Building a Better North](#)
- [Pan-Territorial Adaptation Strategy](#)
- [Pan-Territorial Vision For Sustainable Development](#) (PDF Version)

Provincial governments

- [Quebec: Plan Nord](#)
- [Manitoba: Northern Economic Development Strategy](#)
- [Manitoba: Look North Strategy](#)
- [Newfoundland and Labrador: Intergovernmental and Indigenous Affairs Secretariat](#)
- [Newfoundland and Labrador: Office of Labrador Affairs](#)

National Indigenous organizations

- [Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami 2016-2019 Strategy and Action Plan](#)
- [Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami National Inuit Suicide Prevention Strategy](#)
- [Inuit Nunangat Declaration On Inuit-Crown Partnership](#)
- [Assembly of First Nations \(AFN\)](#)
- [Assembly of First Nations \(AFN\) - Closing the Gap: 2015 Federal Election Priorities for First Nations and Canada](#)
- [Native Women's Association of Canada \(NWAC\)](#)
- [Pauktuutit \(Inuit Women of Canada\)](#)

Regional Indigenous organizations

- [Inuvialuit Regional Corporation \(IRC\)](#)
- [Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. \(NTI\)](#)
- [Makivik Corporation \(Nunavik\)](#)
- [Nunatsiavut Government](#)
- [The Dene Nation](#)
- [Gwich'in Tribal Council](#)

- [Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated](#)
- [Tłı̄chǫ Government](#)
- [Dehcho First Nations](#)
- [Acho Dene Koe First Nation](#)
- [Kátl'odeeche First Nation](#)
- [North Slave Métis Alliance](#)
- [Akaitcho Territory Government](#)
- [Deninu K'ue First Nation](#)
- [Łutsel K'e Dene First Nation](#)
- [Yellowknives Dene First Nation](#)
- [Smith's Landing First Nation](#)
- [Salt River First Nation](#)
- [Northwest Territory Metis Nation](#)
- [Council of Yukon First Nations](#)
- [Parnasimautik Consultation Report of Nunavik Inuit](#)

Permanent Participants to the Arctic Council with Canadian membership

- [Inuit Circumpolar Council](#)
- [Gwich'in Council International](#)
- [Arctic Athabaskan Council](#)

International Arctic

- [Arctic Council](#)
- [Kingdom of Denmark Strategy for the Arctic 2011 - 2020](#)
- [Finland's Strategy for the Arctic Region 2013](#)
- [Arctic Policy of Iceland](#)
- [Norway's Arctic Strategy](#)
- [Sweden's strategy for the Arctic Region](#) and [Swedish environmental policy for the Arctic](#)
- [Russian Federation Policy for the Arctic to 2020](#)
- [United States Arctic page](#) and [Department of Defense Arctic Strategy](#)
- [Arctic Circle Forum](#)
- [Arctic Frontiers](#)
- [Arctic Futures Symposium](#)
- [Government of Greenland](#)
- [State of Alaska](#)