

Gender-based analysis plus

Section 1: institutional GBA Plus governance and capacity

Governance

Polar Knowledge Canada integrates a GBA Plus lens to its decision-making process with a particular focus on supporting Inuit employment and procurement. This approach aligns with the agency's mandate and demonstrates its commitment to Article 23 of the *Nunavut Agreement*.

Additionally, Polar Knowledge Canada applies a GBA Plus lens across all Treasury Board submissions, budget proposals, Cabinet documents, and in policy development and program implementation.

Capacity

Polar Knowledge Canada collects disaggregated data on projects supported by its Transfer Payment Programs. This information is gathered from funding recipients through surveys, which enable the agency to assess the impacts and results of its funding. The gender-disaggregated data collected through these surveys includes reported instances of participation in projects by the following groups: Northern-based individuals, Indigenous Peoples, early career researchers, technicians and support staff, and youth.

It is important to note that Polar Knowledge Canada does not track individual participants. Instead, the agency tracks instances of participation, as reported by funding recipients in their project surveys. This approach allows for an understanding of representation across key groups while maintaining participant anonymity.

Human resources (full-time equivalents) dedicated to GBA Plus

Polar Knowledge Canada does not have any employees dedicated to GBA Plus. As such, there are no full-time equivalents assigned to activities such as reviewing GBA Plus content, organizing training or awareness events, acting as a GBA Plus Champion or Focal Point, or conducting related research. However, these tasks are carried out on an as-needed basis by current staff. Additionally, when reviewing funding recipients, the agency considers broader employment equity, diversity and inclusion elements.

Section 2: gender and diversity impacts, by program

Core responsibility: Polar Science and Knowledge

Program name: Knowledge Management and Engagement

Program goals: This program coordinates funded research and in-kind support to enhance and address knowledge gaps in Northern and Indigenous communities. The program establishes systems for capturing and sharing collective knowledge on regional, rural information through collaboration, and engagement activities with stakeholders.

Target population: Northern-based individuals, Indigenous Peoples, Early Career Researchers, Technicians and Support Staff, and youth

Distribution of benefits

	Group
By gender	Third group: broadly gender-balanced
By age group	First group: primarily benefits youth, children or future generations

Specific demographic groups to be monitored

Northern communities

Research and related activities in the polar regions involve significantly higher logistical, staffing, and travel cost compared to southern regions. Northern-based organizations often face additional challenges, such as limited staff capacity and experience with grant writing.

To help address these barriers, Polar Knowledge Canada’s Knowledge Management and Engagement offers a streamlined grant application process specifically designed for northern-based organizations. This simplified process enhances access to funding research and other initiatives, supporting greater participation from northern communities.

Regional distribution of grants across Polar Knowledge Canada’s mandate area is improving particularly with the opening of an office in Whitehorse. However, further attention is needed to strengthen outreach and supports in regions such as Yukon and Nunatsiavut.

Indigenous Peoples

Indigenous and traditional knowledge across the North is disappearing as older generations of Elders and Knowledge Keepers are lost. To help preserve this vital knowledge, Polar Knowledge Canada’s Knowledge Management and Engagement team provides grants to research institutions and northern-based Indigenous organizations to conduct interviews and document Indigenous knowledge related to the land, wildlife and the environment. However, participation in these activities is not without challenges. Key barriers include the cost of conducting interviews and translation, as well as language accessibility. Addressing these barriers is essential to ensuring that Indigenous Knowledge can be meaningfully documented and shared with future generations.

Indigenous Youth

High school graduation rates across the 3 territories remain below the national average graduation levels in the 10 provinces. To help address this, Polar Knowledge Canada’s Knowledge Management and Engagement team provides in-kind operational support and grants to Northerner-led summer camps in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

These camps aim to foster Indigenous youths’ interest in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) careers while incorporating traditional learning methods. Youth participants

engage in hands-on activities and learn from Elders, supporting the intergenerational transfer of knowledge in culturally meaningful ways.

Key program impacts* on gender and diversity

Through the Polar Regional Grants Program, numerous research projects led by Northerners or Northern organizations have been supported. These locally driven initiatives are better positioned to align research questions with regional priorities, build capacity and ensure the socio-economic benefit of research remain within the North.

In addition, many of the supported projects provide opportunities for youth engagement, contributing to long-term capacity building and knowledge transfer within Northern communities.

Key program impact statistics:

Statistic	Observed results*	Data source	Comment
Percentage of POLAR-funded projects led by Northerners	69%	Polar Regional Grant administrative data	
Gender distribution of Indigenous participation in POLAR projects	Women: Not available Men: Not available	Polar Knowledge Canada annual project survey	Due to changes to the annual project survey, this data was not collected in 2024-25.
Percentage of POLAR-funded projects that involve youth	92%	Polar Regional Grant administrative data	

*2024–25 or most recent

Other key program impacts

Indigenous youth who participated in the Tundra Science and Culture Camp reported gaining new ideas for future career paths, along with a deeper understanding about wildlife, geology, and archaeology. These experiences help inspire interest in science while reinforcing cultural knowledge.

In a separate initiative, Indigenous groups in the Northwest Territories were interviewed to document their traditional knowledge on berry harvesting. Participants highlighted that this activity fosters a strong connection provided to the land and supplemented food availability from local sources as food costs continue to rise.

Supplementary information sources

Indigenous Knowledge of Berries in the Northwest Territories:

<https://arcticnet.ca/project/indigenous-knowledge-of-berries-in-the-northwest-territories/>

GBA Plus data collection plan

GBA Plus data is collected annually through a project results survey, submitted by externally funded grant recipients. Additionally, a repository to track engagement activities is currently in development, which will enhance the agency's ability to gather and manage this data more effectively.

Program name: Science and Technology

Program goals: This program aims to anchor a strong research presence in Canada's Arctic. It focuses on science, monitoring, and technology development and transfer.

Target population: Northern-based individuals, Indigenous Peoples, and youth

Distribution of benefits

	Group
By gender	Third group: broadly gender-balanced
By age group	First group: primarily benefits youth, children or future generations

Specific demographic groups to be monitored

Northern communities

With limited degree-granting post-secondary institutions located in the Northern territories, investments for Northern research are predominantly made through academic institutions in the provinces. Polar Knowledge Canada is providing opportunities for Northerner participation and leadership in research. Training opportunities for Northerners are increasing workforce capacity in the research sector, but women are under-represented.

Indigenous Peoples

Indigenous knowledge and worldviews are underrepresented in research fields. Polar Knowledge Canada is creating opportunities for Indigenous Peoples and their knowledge to participate in many facets of research, including informing research design. However, Indigenous women are still under-represented in this domain.

Women in the research sector

Women have traditionally been underrepresented in academic and research sectors broadly, and in particular Arctic research. Polar Knowledge Canada has nearly achieved gender parity in both project leadership and support and technical roles. Female early career researchers outnumber their male peers 2 to 1. Polar Knowledge Canada has achieved relative gender parity in youth engagement.

Key program impacts* on gender and diversity

Key program impact statistics:

Statistic	Observed results*	Data source	Comment
Percentage of POLAR-led and supported Arctic projects that involve Northerners	19% of contributions 50% of grants	Polar Knowledge Canada annual project survey	None of the 34 Universities under the Northern Scientific Training Program (NSTP) are led by Northerners. Of the 299 projects within the NSTP program, 16 are northern led, for a percentage of 5.4%.
Gender distribution of Early Career Researchers involved in POLAR projects	Women: Not available Men: Not available	Polar Knowledge Canada annual project survey	Due to changes to the annual project survey, this data was not collected in 2024-25.
Gender distribution of recipients of training and employment initiatives	Women: Not available Men: Not available	Polar Knowledge Canada annual project survey	Due to changes to the annual project survey, this data was not collected in 2024-25.
Gender distribution of youth participants	Women: Not available Men: Not available	Polar Knowledge Canada annual project survey	Due to changes to the annual project survey, this data was not collected in 2024-25.

*2024–25 or most recent

Other key program impacts

Not available

GBA Plus data collection plan

Annual project results surveys are distributed to project leads for both internally led projects and for externally funded projects.

Definitions

Scales

Gender scale

- First group: predominantly men (80% or more men)
- Second group: 60% to 79% men
- Third group: broadly gender-balanced
- Fourth group: 60% to 79% women
- Fifth group: predominantly women (80% or more women)

Income -level scale

- First group: strongly benefits low-income individuals (strongly progressive)
- Second group: somewhat benefits low-income individuals (somewhat progressive-)
- Third group: no significant distributional impacts
- Fourth group: somewhat benefits high-income individuals (somewhat regressive-)
- Fifth group: strongly benefits high-income individuals (strongly regressive)

Age -group scale

- First group: primarily benefits youth, children or future generations
- Second group: no significant intergenerational impacts or impacts on generations between youths and seniors
- Third group: primarily benefits seniors or the baby boom generation

Details on transfer payment programs

Transfer payments to support the advancement of Northern science and technology

Start date: June 2015

End date: Ongoing

Type of transfer payment: Grant and contribution

Type of appropriation: Estimates

Fiscal year for terms and conditions: 2015-16

Link to departmental results:

- Canada's polar science and technology research is publicly available and being applied
- Canada's Arctic science includes Indigenous and local knowledge
- Canada fosters domestic and international knowledge exchange and partnerships in polar science and technology
- The next generation of Canadian polar researchers is developed

Link to the department's program inventory: Science and Technology

Purpose and objectives of transfer payment program: The purpose of this Transfer Payment Program is to provide an integrated suite of grants and contributions that support Canadian Arctic science and technology for Polar Knowledge Canada. The contribution programs support project proposals that will help address specific aspects of Polar Knowledge Canada's mandate, while the grant programs support student researchers, recognize significant achievement, and coordinate northern scientific university-related activities.

The provision of support to the advancement of Northern science and technology is essential to deliver on Polar Knowledge Canada's mandated themes and the objective of Article 23 of the *Nunavut Agreement* "to increase Inuit participation in government employment in the Nunavut Settlement Area to a representative level. It is recognized that the achievement of this objective will require initiatives by Inuit and by Government." To this end, Polar Knowledge Canada regularly uses multi-stakeholder review committees to engage Indigenous Peoples/groups and Northerners on the review of funding proposals.

Results achieved: In 2024-25, Polar Knowledge Canada provided 76 new transfer payments — 26 contribution agreements and 50 grant agreements—totaling \$4,504,922. The total value of these new agreements will be \$6,911,108⁴ over the next 3 years, which will support the expected results under this transfer payment program. 50% of contributions and 16% of grants for Arctic or Northern research projects were led by an institute, government, or community organization located in the Arctic or Northern Canada.

Through this funding, Polar Knowledge Canada supported Indigenous organizations, students and academia, and Northern communities and governments. Projects focused on ecosystem and wildlife research, science capacity building through contributions, and education and training opportunities with grants and scholarships.

Findings of audits completed in 2024-25: As part of Polar Knowledge Canada's ongoing oversight and accountability measures, an audit was conducted on a statistical random sample on funding recipients to assess compliance with reporting requirements and financial accountability. This audit included three recipients:

- Government of Yukon, Department of Environment – No concerns were identified from this audit.
- Queen's University – The University was engaged to ensure the timely submission of reporting documents.
- Teslin Tlingit Council – This Indigenous recipient was selected at random. No concerns were identified from this audit, and the project is considered low risk.

All three audits were completed with no limitations in scope. The results for each recipient are as follows:

- Government of Yukon, Department of Environment – The audit confirmed that adequate financial controls were in place. However, it recommended that the recipient ensure all reports are submitted in accordance with the agreement requirements. Specifically, adhering to the reporting timelines outlined in the agreement.
- Queen's University – The audit identified the need for improved accuracy in financial reporting. It was recommended that the principal investigator utilize the tools developed by the university's Research Accounting Department to enhance the accuracy of financial information submitted. This recommendation has since been addressed.
- Teslin Tlingit Council – The audit revealed no concerns. A clean audit was issued, and no recommendations were identified.

Findings of evaluations completed in 2024-25: No evaluations were completed in 2024-25.

Engagement of applicants and recipients in 2024-25: Applicants were engaged through targeted and open solicitations. Polar Knowledge Canada has a variety of engagement initiatives, including but not limited to in-person meetings, webinars, phone calls, and emails, which are used as part of the regular competition cycle. This provides ongoing opportunities for applicants and recipients to seek and receive information, and to offer feedback on service delivery.

Polar Knowledge Canada monitors recipient compliance with the terms of active funding agreements through review of financial and project progress reports that are submitted in accordance with the approved project reporting plan. Polar Knowledge Canada seeks to promote collaboration between the agency and recipients.

Financial information (dollars)

Type of transfer payment	2022–23 actual spending	2023–24 actual spending	2024–25 planned spending	2024–25 total authorities available for use	2024–25 actual spending (authorities used)	Variance (2024–25 actual minus 2024–25 planned)
Total grants	1,348,453	1,356,000	1,356,000	1,356,000	1,356,000	0
Total contributions	6,039,690	5,990,216	6,040,000	6,318,681	6,318,681	278,681
Total other transfer payments	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total program	7,388,143	7,346,216	7,396,000	7,674,681	7,674,681	278,681

Explanation of variances

There is no significant variance between the actual versus planned spending.

Transfer payments to support research and activities relating to the polar regions

Start date: June 2015

End date: Ongoing

Type of transfer payment: Grant

Type of appropriation: Estimates

Fiscal year for terms and conditions: 2015-16

Link to departmental results:

- Canada's polar science and technology research is publicly available and being applied
- Canada's Arctic science includes Indigenous and local knowledge
- Canada fosters domestic and international knowledge exchange and partnerships in polar science and technology
- The next generation of Canadian polar researchers is developed

Link to the department's program inventory: Knowledge Management and Engagement

Purpose and objectives of transfer payment program: The program aims to strengthen awareness and understanding of Arctic and Antarctic research, increase coordination and collaboration among the polar research community, and strengthen the next generation of polar researchers and highly qualified personnel, especially northern youth.

Results achieved: In 2024-25 Polar Knowledge Canada provided 14 transfer payments totalling \$400,000 in support of the expected results under this transfer payment program.

Through this program, Polar Knowledge Canada strengthened Canada's leadership in circumpolar research by funding and providing support for Canadian researchers, early career researchers, and Indigenous and Traditional knowledge holders. The research funded by the program focused on climate change research, permafrost thaw, landscape scale carbon transport, storage and release, among others. In addition, the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) was supported for the delivery of a youth focussed 10-day Tundra Science and Culture Camp at the Daring Lake Tundra Experimental Research Station north of Yellowknife along with staff from GNWT Environment and Climate Change and Tlicho elders. This camp focused on Tlicho traditional skills, activities such as meat and fish drying, human history, geoscience, wildlife biology, tundra plants, permafrost, and aquatic life.

Polar Knowledge Canada's transfer payment programs complement the agency's own knowledge management and mobilization, outreach, and capacity-building activities to further key objectives and support polar science, research, and knowledge results.

Findings of audits completed in 2024-25: No audits were completed in 2024-25.

Findings of evaluations completed in 2024-25: No evaluations were completed in 2024-25.

Engagement of applicants and recipients in 2024-25: Applicants were engaged through the Polar Knowledge Canada website’s information on research funding opportunities, as well as through Northern engagement outreach and open solicitations among Northern and Indigenous communities, Territorial Governments, and academic research organizations, among others. Polar Knowledge Canada uses a variety of engagement initiatives throughout the competition cycle, including but not limited to website postings, in-person meetings, webinars, phone calls, and emails. This provides ongoing opportunities for applicants and recipients to seek and receive information, and to offer feedback on service delivery.

Polar Knowledge Canada monitors recipient compliance with the terms of active funding agreements through review of financial and project progress reports that are submitted in accordance with the approved project reporting plan. Polar Knowledge Canada seeks to promote collaboration between the agency and recipients.

Financial information (dollars)

Type of transfer payment	2022–23 actual spending	2023–24 actual spending	2024–25 planned spending	2024–25 total authorities available for use	2024–25 actual spending (authorities used)	Variance (2024–25 actual minus 2024–25 planned)
Total grants	395,179	400,000	400,000	400,000	400,000	0
Total contributions	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total other transfer payments	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total program	395,179	400,000	400,000	400,000	400,000	0

Explanation of variances

There is no significant variance between the planned and actual spending for 2024-25.

Response to parliamentary committees and external audits

Response to parliamentary committees

In 2024-25, the following Parliamentary Committee reports required a response:

Fall 2024: [Government Response to the Eleventh Report of the Standing Committee on Science and Research](#)

In June 2024, the Standing Committee on Science and Research tabled its 11th report entitled: [Incorporating Indigenous Knowledge and Science in Canadian Research and Policy Development](#). Of the 15 recommendations, Polar Knowledge Canada was implicated in 4:

- Recommendation 2 regarding review of funding criteria to ensure that all research projects affecting Indigenous populations in Canada have established relationships with the relevant communities and received their consent and support for the project prior to approving funding.
- Recommendation 3 requesting that the Government of Canada examine the representation of Indigenous knowledge holders on their review panels and work with Indigenous communities to support the appropriate evaluation of applications for funding that affect Indigenous communities.
- Recommendation 4 regarding review of funding criteria to ensure that all projects affecting Indigenous communities in Canada have sufficient timelines to ensure the ongoing participation of the affected communities and encourage participation across all stages of the project.
- Recommendation 9 requesting that the Government of Canada, in collaboration with Indigenous governments, organizations and communities, explore the ways in which Indigenous data sovereignty and collective rights can be better supported in Canadian policy and law.

In its thematic response, the Government outlined the programs and initiatives in place that responds to issues raised in the report, noting that Polar Knowledge Canada is committed to Indigenous-responsive calls and funding application review processes, actively evaluates criteria to facilitate relational-based outcomes, and engages with systems change considerations to foster meaningful engagement with Indigenous partners. The response also notes that Polar Knowledge Canada, in partnership with the Nunavut General Monitoring Plan, has developed research guidelines, including a definition of data, that incorporates all ways of knowing.