



NWT INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES ACTION PLAN

A Shared Responsibility

2018 - 2025

PLAN D'ACTION SUR LES LANGUES AUTOCHTONES DU GTNO

Une responsabilité partagée

2018 - 2025

Le présent document contient
la traduction française du sommaire

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

If you would like this information in another official language, call us.

English

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French

kīspin ki nitawihṭīn ē nīhīyawihk ōma ācimōwin, tipwāsinān.

nēhiyawēwin

Tłıchq̓ yatı k'èè. Dı wegodı newq̓ dè, gots'o gonede.

Tłıchq̓

ʔerihṭı́is Dēne Sų́iné yatı t'a huts'elkēr xa beyáyatı theᑭ̃ ᑭat'e, nuwe ts'ēn yóṭı.

Dēne Sų́iné

Edı gondı dehgáh got'ıe zhatıé k'éé edatı́éh enahddhę nıde naxets'é edahı́ı.

Dene Zhatıé

K'áhshó got'ıne xədə k'é hederı ʔedıḥṭı́é yerıııwę nıde dúle.

Dene Kədə

Jii gwandak izhii ginjik vat'atr'ıjāḥch'uu zhit yinoḥthan jı́, diits'at ginohkhii.

Dinjii Zhu' Ginjik

Uvanittuaq ilitchurisukupku Inuvialuktun, ququaqluta.

Inuvialuktun

ᑕᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ ᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ ᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ ᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ ᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ

Inuktitut

Hapkua titiqqat pijumagupkit Inuinnaqtun, uvaptinnut hivajarlutit.

Inuinnaqtun

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Foreward

Extension of the NWT Indigenous Languages Action Plan

The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) has extended the NWT Indigenous Languages Action Plan to 2024-2025.

The Action Plan has been in place since 2018 and was set to be renewed in 2022-2023. Extending the plan by two years allows the government to align the renewed plan, set to be released 2024-2025, with funding received from Canadian Heritage and more time to complete remaining actions and deliverables.

The Action Plan lays out the best approach for the GNWT to reach its goals for Indigenous language revitalization and providing access to public services in all nine of the Northwest Territories (NWT) Official Indigenous languages.

The GNWT is working with Indigenous people and governments on the protection, revitalization, preservation, and strengthening of Indigenous languages in the NWT. A renewed action plan with the funding to support it will allow for the government to continue to strengthen Indigenous languages in the NWT and its commitment to developing of a new generation of Indigenous language speakers.

As the government moves forward with completing the actions set forth in the plan, the NWT moves closer to reaching the shared vision of an NWT where Indigenous languages are supported, respected, and thriving as languages of communication by all people.

Over the last four years, all but one action of the plan has been initiated, completed, or are on-going, which have helped evolve how Indigenous languages are supported in the NWT. The outstanding action item, Action 2.3, to develop a promotional campaign on the *Official Languages Act* and access to Indigenous language services in the NWT, cannot be completed until several other action items that are currently underway are completed.

To see the progress that has been made on the Action Plan, visit www.ece.gov.nt.ca/ILES.



Avant-propos

Prolongation du plan d'action sur les langues autochtones des TNO

Le gouvernement des Territoires du Nord-Ouest (GTNO) a prolongé le plan d'action sur les langues autochtones des TNO jusqu'à 2024-2025.

Le plan d'action est en vigueur depuis 2018 et devait être renouvelé en 2022-2023. La prolongation du Plan de deux ans permet au gouvernement d'harmoniser sa nouvelle version, qui doit être publiée en 2024-2025, avec le financement reçu de Patrimoine canadien et d'exécuter les mesures et les produits livrables restants.

Le plan d'action définit la meilleure façon pour le GTNO d'atteindre ses objectifs de revitalisation des langues autochtones et d'accès aux services publics dans les neuf langues autochtones officielles des Territoires du Nord-Ouest (TNO).

Le GTNO travaille avec les peuples et les gouvernements autochtones à la protection, à la revitalisation, à la préservation et au renforcement des langues autochtones aux TNO. Un plan d'action renouvelé avec un financement approprié à l'appui nous permettra de continuer à renforcer les langues autochtones aux TNO et notre engagement à former une nouvelle génération de locuteurs de langues autochtones.

Alors que le gouvernement met en œuvre les mesures énoncées dans le plan, les TNO se rapprochent de la réalisation de l'ambition commune d'un territoire où les langues autochtones sont soutenues et respectées, et sont utilisées comme langues de communication par tous.

Au cours des quatre dernières années, toutes les mesures du plan, sauf une, ont été lancées, achevées ou sont en cours, ce qui a contribué à faire évoluer la façon dont les langues autochtones sont soutenues aux TNO. La mesure en suspens, la mesure 2.3, qui consiste à élaborer une campagne de promotion de la Loi sur les langues officielles et de l'accès aux services en langues autochtones aux TNO, ne peut être achevée avant que plusieurs autres mesures en cours ne soient terminées.

Pour voir les progrès réalisés dans le cadre du plan d'action, consultez le www.ece.gov.nt.ca/fr/SELA.

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Setting the Context

Revitalizing languages is an enormous task. Individuals, families and Indigenous language communities, along with Indigenous governments, the Government of Northwest Territories (GNWT), non-government organizations (NGOs), early childhood programs, schools, postsecondary institutions and other language partners must share the responsibility of supporting and getting involved in language revitalization efforts.

In 2017, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) updated the 2010 *NWT Aboriginal Languages Plan: A Shared Responsibility* to accurately reflect the changes that have taken place since 2010, while better capturing the years of advice and recommendations gathered from northerners and territorial committees. The result was the release of the *NWT Aboriginal Languages Framework: A Shared Responsibility (Framework)*.

The updated *Framework* sets out a clear direction for the NWT to revitalize Indigenous languages and improve access to services in Indigenous languages. To accompany the *Framework*, this 4-year *NWT Indigenous Languages Action Plan: A Shared Responsibility (Action Plan)* has been developed to lay out the best approach on how to follow that direction.

Combined, the *Framework* and *Action Plan* support the 18th Legislative Assembly's strategic priority on education, training and youth development:

The 18th Legislative Assembly will foster lifelong learning, skills development, training, and employability by increasing cultural programming and education, revitalizing Aboriginal languages and promoting use of all official languages.

There are a number of other initiatives led by the Department of ECE that work hand in hand to support this strategic priority, such as the 2015 *GNWT Culture and Heritage Strategic Framework*, which envisions a strong, adaptive and forward-thinking territory whose people are healthy and capable, rooted in their heritage, and vibrant in their diverse cultural practices. It is said that language is the key to and the heart of culture, and as cultures change, so too do their languages. Similarly, as languages change, or are lost, so too are entire cultures.

The Department of ECE has also released three education frameworks:

- *Right from the Start: A Framework for Early Childhood Development (Early Childhood)*;
- *Education Renewal and Innovation Framework: Directions for Change (Education Renewal)*; and
- *Skills 4 Success: 10-Year Strategic Framework (Skills 4 Success)*.

These frameworks challenge all NWT residents and partners to rethink how they approach education from early childhood through to school and on to postsecondary opportunities.

The *Early Childhood* and *Education Renewal* frameworks set out a path to support the development of capable Northerners. One key part of this is to recognize the importance of Indigenous languages and culture in learning and development from an early age. Both frameworks highlight the need for culture-based education and Indigenous language programming.

The *Education Renewal* framework makes the important connection between residential schools and the loss of language. A strong, healthy and respectful relationship between the school and community is essential for the development of capable northern students. Both school and community need to foster this relationship. In many NWT communities, through the legacy of the residential schools system, the relationship between the school and the community has been either damaged or broken. Creating understanding is an important first step to strengthen the relationship between school and community.

Skills 4 Success recognizes that the skills, knowledge and talents of NWT residents are the driving force behind the economy and sustainable communities. Higher education is fundamental to individual health and welfare, social

wellbeing, and developing local economies. So too is language integral to healthy communities, individual self-esteem, and the growth and development of people.

The GNWT recognizes the shift in terminology from “Aboriginal” to “Indigenous”. This *Action Plan* uses the preferred term “Indigenous” to collectively refer to First Nations, Inuit and Métis people of the NWT. The term “Aboriginal” is also used, but only when it is part of an official name or title.

The NWT Official Languages Act recognizes eleven (11) languages: Chipewyan (Dëne Sųłiné Yatıé), Cree (nēhiyawēwin), English, French, Gwich’in, Inuinnaqtun, Inuktitut, Inuvialuktun, North Slavey (Dene Kədǎ), South Slavey (Dene Zhatıé), and Tłıchǫ (Tłıchǫ Yatıı).

MOVING FROM Framework to Action Plan



This *Action Plan* builds off the 2017 *Framework* which set forth a shared vision and two overarching goals for NWT Indigenous languages. In addition, three priorities were identified for each of the two goals and, together, they provide six distinct priority areas which help to identify the most important work the GNWT can do to fully realize the shared vision of the *Framework*.

SHARED VISION

An NWT where Indigenous languages are supported, respected and thriving as languages of communication by all people.

SHARED GOALS

Language Revitalization:

All people in the NWT maintain the strength of Indigenous languages as a means of communication and as a connection to culture.

Language Access:

All people in the NWT are able to use and benefit from high-quality public services in all official Indigenous languages.

PRIORITIES		LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION	LANGUAGE ACCESS
POLICY	Policy helps explain how visions and goals can be turned into reality. Policy influences and affects the way people use languages, and can ensure that future generations have ongoing supports to create an environment where people can learn, communicate and celebrate their language.	Establish a comprehensive plan to emphasize Indigenous language protection, revitalization and modernization.	Establish a comprehensive plan to address access to services in Indigenous languages.
ADVOCACY	There is an ongoing need to raise awareness across the NWT about Indigenous languages. People need accurate and up-to-date information to affect change and to promote Indigenous languages. Residents, leaders and government employees are all responsible for promoting, protecting and revitalizing Indigenous languages.	Acknowledge and affirm the importance of Indigenous languages in the NWT.	Acknowledge and uphold the legal obligations to Indigenous languages across all levels of government.
PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES	The success of Indigenous languages in the NWT depends on the ability of residents to communicate and contribute in their language. Delivering programs and developing resources will equip NWT residents with the skills, knowledge and confidence to support and strengthen the NWT's Indigenous languages.	Develop community capacity in Indigenous language revitalization.	Develop the resources and capacity to deliver services in Indigenous languages.



MEASURING SUCCESSES

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is a tool that can be used to measure the success of goals and understand how to improve. In 2015-2016, the GNWT, Regional Indigenous Language Coordinators and other community language representatives collaborated to develop an M&E Plan for community-based Indigenous language revitalization efforts taking place across the NWT. The M&E Plan incorporated five Essential Elements for language revitalization, which are depicted in the image on page 7.

In this *Action Plan*, Measuring Successes uses the five Essential Elements established in 2015 for successful language projects. Essential Elements incorporate a holistic approach to understanding and achieving healthy languages.

Measuring Successes guides the collection of information and helps report on the accomplishments of this *Action Plan* using a common understanding of languages. ECE will report on the progress of the goals through the *Official Languages Annual Report*. Additionally, status reports will be completed at the end of the current *Action Plan*, and will inform future Indigenous languages action plans.

This *Action Plan* includes actions and deliverables for each priority, and measures of success for each goal.

- **Actions** are the broad areas of work that the GNWT will do in support of the six priority areas.
- **Deliverables** are smaller projects or tasks that are required to fulfill the commitments.
- **Measures of Success** are statements which are used to show the progress the GNWT is making toward reaching each goal.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS



OUR Shared Vision

We believe in...

Góhđlı Ndeh k'éh godı dene zhatie t'áh gots'endeh
la azhı mets'eh k'éh elets'ats'endi, elets'edechá
gots'eh k'ëndaa azhı dene k'éeé gots'endeh.

An NWT where Indigenous languages are supported, respected
and thriving as languages of communication by all people.

NWTmi taamna Indigenous
uqausiq ikayuqtuaq,
ilisimayuatlu asulu taimagaa,
uqausiit inuit tamapta.

**e' NWT tante iyiniw isipekiskwehk ayaw
nātamākēwin, kihceyihtakwan mina metoni
miyopayowin, asici isipekiskwehk kahkiyaw
iyiniw wihtamātowin.**

**Ejı NWT sıı areyoné
dene kedə t'a łets'e
nats'ede gha gıııı.**

**NWT Dıne Sııı Yatı hazıı
wets'adats'edi, wenats'ıhtà eyıts'ı
yatı nātso xè goyatı wet'à hazıı ełexè
gots'ede ha wets'ıhdzà.**

NWT gwizhit
nitsoo
dinjii zhuh
kat yiinjit
nıfigichilee
ts'at nih khah
gugwatsih.

Des Territoires du Nord-Ouest où les langues autochtones sont appuyées, respectées et
florissantes en tant que moyen de communication pour tous.

**ıEdza Nēne k'éýá dēne yatıe besudı-u
bek'edaredı-u tth'ı horēlyı dēne yet'árét'ı.**

Nunatsiarmi nunaqainnaqtunut uqausituqarijangin ikajuqsuqtauvaglutik, ikpigijauttiaratarlutik ammalu atuqtauvallianiqsaulutik, uqausituqauninginnut, tukisiumaqaattautivangnirmut inuqutiginni tamainni.

Góhdlı Ndeh k'éh godı dene zhatie t'áh
gots'endeh la azhq mets'eh k'éh elets'ats'endi,
elets'edechá gots'eh k'éndaa azhq dene k'ée
gots'endeh.

Ejı NWT sıl areyoné
dene kedá t'a lets'e
nats'ede gha gıııı.

Des Territoires du Nord-Ouest où les langues autochtones sont appuyées, respectées et florissantes en tant que moyen de communication pour tous.

NWT gwizhit nitsoo dinjii
zhuh kat yijnjit niigichilee
ts'at nih khah gugwatsih.

NWTmi taamna Indigenous uqausiq ikayuqtuaq,
ilisimayuatlu asulu taimagaa, uqausiit inuit tamapta.

Nunatiami Uqauhiit Nanminiit
ikayuqtauhimayut, piqpagiyauplutiklu,
hakugikhutiklu, inuit tamaita
uqauhiriplugu atuqhugulu.

NWT Dıne Sııl Yatı hazhq
wets'àdats'edi, wenàts'ihtà eyıts'ı
yatı nàtso xè goyatı wet'à hazhq
elexè gots'ede ha wets'ihdzà.

e' NWT tante iyiniw
isipekiskwehk ayaw
nātamākēwin,
kihceyihtakwan
mina metoni
miyopayowin,
asici isipekiskwehk
kahkiyaw iyiniw
wihtamātowin.

Nunatiami Uqauhiit Nanminiit ikayuqtauhimayut,
piqpagiyauplutiklu, hakugikhutiklu, inuit tamaita
uqauhiriplugu atuqhugulu.

An NWT where
Indigenous
languages are
supported,
respected and
thriving as
languages of
communication by
all people.

GOAL 1: Language Revitalization

Language revitalization efforts aim to slow down, stop or reverse the decline of a language, as well as educate, empower and mobilize communities.

While there are many similar causes that contribute to language loss across communities of the NWT, every community is unique. Depending on the strength of a language and the political, social and economic situation, different approaches to language revitalization must be considered. This means that blanket statements cannot be made about how revitalization should be carried out.

The goal of revitalization speaks to the need for all people in the NWT to maintain the strength of Indigenous languages as a means of communication and as a connection to culture. Everyone must share this responsibility, including Indigenous and non-Indigenous residents, those who were born here, and those who are new to the NWT.

Measures of Success for Language Revitalization

- a. Increase the presence and visibility of Indigenous languages in communities.
- b. People see value in knowing how to speak and write their language.
- c. People see the relevance of learning and using their language.
- d. Expand the use and scope of language in communities.

POLICY:

Establish a comprehensive plan to emphasize Indigenous language protection, revitalization and modernization

ACTION 1.1

Manage Federal and Territorial funding for Indigenous languages.

Deliverables

- Fund Indigenous governments to implement their Regional Indigenous Language Plans.
- Support Regional Indigenous Language Coordinators in the implementation of their Regional Indigenous Language Plans.
- Review and implement Regional Indigenous Language Plan funding structure.
- Negotiate multi-year funding agreements with the Government of Canada

ACTION 1.2

Recognize and affirm the need for language protection, revitalization and maintenance for all NWT Indigenous languages.

Deliverables

- Research how other jurisdictions commit to Indigenous language revitalization.
- Implement measures to protect, revitalize and maintain languages based on research and promising practices.

ADVOCACY:

Acknowledge and affirm the importance of Indigenous languages in the NWT

ACTION 1.3

Use surveys to better understand language proficiency and people's attitudes towards Indigenous languages in the NWT.

Deliverable

- Update the language indicators collected in the NWT Bureau of Statistic's NWT Community Survey.

ACTION 1.4

Launch a campaign that promotes the importance of Indigenous language use and increases respect for Indigenous languages throughout the NWT.

Deliverables

- Communicate Indigenous language revitalization news and updates through online and other media.
- Recognize and celebrate Indigenous Languages Month.
- Target youth and young families when promoting Indigenous language use and revitalization.

ACTION 1.5

Establish guidelines around the inclusion of Indigenous languages in GNWT communications.

Deliverable

- Create a toolkit for GNWT employees and leadership to showcase Indigenous languages in correspondence communications.

ACTION 1.6

Recognize and celebrate outstanding leadership and contributions in Indigenous language revitalization.

Deliverable

- Establish an NWT wide award program for Indigenous language use and revitalization.

PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES:

Develop community capacity in Indigenous language revitalization

ACTION 1.7

Support NWT communities and organizations to create and offer effective Indigenous language learning and revitalization initiatives.

Deliverables

- Create targeted funding opportunities to support communities with innovative and effective Indigenous language revitalization projects.
- Create targeted funding opportunities for strategic language initiatives that have a territorial reach.

ACTION 1.8

Offer language revitalization training opportunities to Indigenous language partners.

Deliverables

- Provide opportunities for language partners to take Community Linguist Certificate courses through the Canadian Indigenous Languages and Literacy Development Institute (CILLDI).
- Offer opportunities for language partners to attend Indigenous language and revitalization conferences.

ACTION 1.9

Support and host meetings and gatherings for Indigenous Language champions, advocates and partners to share promising practices, build relationships and network with each other.

Deliverables

- Host regular Indigenous language symposia.
- Support the NWT Literacy Council's annual Indigenous Languages Network Gathering.

ACTION 1.10

Support the production of diverse forms of Indigenous language media, including radio, web content and magazines.

Deliverables

- Support the Native Communication Society and the Inuit Communications Society for Indigenous language broadcasting and media production.
- Support community radio stations in program development, broadcaster and production training, and equipment repairs and upgrades.

To see the progress that has been made on the Action Plan, visit www.ece.gov.nt.ca/ILES.



GOAL 2: Language Access

Every NWT resident has the right to access the same high quality public services. In the NWT, the *Official Languages Act* names nine official Indigenous languages, alongside English and French. Currently, there are many services that are not readily available or difficult to access for speakers of the NWT's official Indigenous languages.

The goal of language access speaks to the need for all people to be able to use and benefit from high quality public services in all official languages, including Indigenous languages. Public services include things like health care, justice, legislative proceedings, education and public hearings.

Measures of Success for Language Access

- a. Increase the presence and visibility of Indigenous languages in public services.
- b. Public employees see the relevance of providing Indigenous language services.
- c. Expand availability of Indigenous language services across government departments.
- d. Expand availability of Indigenous language instruction and programs across NWT schools and early childhood programs.

POLICY:

Establish a comprehensive plan to address access to services in Indigenous languages

ACTION 2.1

Update official languages regulations, policy and guidelines to improve access to public services in Indigenous languages.

Deliverables

- Research Indigenous languages service legislation and policies in other jurisdictions.
- Review existing *Official Languages Policy* and *Official Languages Guidelines* including active offer, designated areas, area of significant demand and signage.

ADVOCACY:

Acknowledge and uphold the legal obligations to Indigenous languages across all levels of government

ACTION 2.2

Educate GNWT employees on their role in providing Indigenous languages services as laid out in the *Official Languages Guidelines*.

Deliverables

- Circulate promising practices for written and verbal communication in Indigenous languages for GNWT employees.
- Celebrate and recognize GNWT employees who use Indigenous languages at work through the bilingual employee recognition campaign.

ACTION 2.3

Develop a promotional campaign on the *Official Languages Act* and access to Indigenous language services in the NWT.

Deliverable

- Use radio, social media and newsprint to inform NWT residents on language rights.

PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES:

Develop the resources and capacity to deliver services in Indigenous languages

ACTION 2.4

Support and offer training on interpretation and translation to new and existing NWT interpreters and translators.

Deliverables

- Offer training on interpretation and translation, including entry-level training and specialized training for health, social services and justice.
- Develop partnership with organizations, such as the Association of Translators and Interpreters of Alberta, for training and accreditation of NWT interpreters and translators.
- Update the Interpreters and Translators list, including dialects and credentials.

ACTION 2.5

Support GNWT Departments to be able to offer improved public services in Indigenous languages as outlined in the *Official Languages Guidelines*.

Deliverables

- Develop interdepartmental committee of Official Indigenous Language Coordinators.
- Develop a professional development program that allows for GNWT employees to access Indigenous language classes.
- Develop training for GNWT employees so they know their role in official Indigenous language services.
- Assist GNWT employees to implement *Official Languages Guidelines*.

ACTION 2.6

Expand and improve Indigenous language programs in NWT schools and early childhood programs.

Deliverables

- Support NWT schools and early childhood programs to offer Indigenous language instruction and programs.
- Support Education Bodies to provide professional development in the NWT for Indigenous language instructors.
- Offer Indigenous language instructor training program pathways for early childhood, school and adult education.
- Recruit and retain Indigenous language instructors for NWT schools.

ACTION 2.7

Renew the *Aboriginal Languages and Culture Based Education Directive*.

Deliverable

- Develop a funding model, policy, procedures and a handbook to support Indigenous languages and cultures in schools.

To see the progress that has been made on the Action Plan, visit www.ece.gov.nt.ca/ILES.



Conclusion

The future of our languages depends on our dedication to promote, protect and revitalize Indigenous languages. This responsibility is shared by individuals, families and Indigenous language communities from across the NWT. Partners, language champions, Elders and community members continue to show immense passion and commitment to keeping NWT Indigenous languages alive. From people who want to learn their language, to those who desire to pass their language to the next generation, everyone in the NWT has a role to play.

This *Action Plan* lays out the best approach for what the GNWT can do to reach the goals of language revitalization and language access. As the GNWT moves forward with completing the actions set forth, the NWT moves closer to reaching the shared vision of an NWT where Indigenous languages are supported, respected and thriving as languages of communication by all people.

“Relearning your languages is not easy; it has to be a passion. It has to be something that you care so much about that you’ll do anything to get it. It is a lot of work. Our work is cut out for us – each and every one of us. Each and every one of you has that responsibility.”

SARAH JEROME, FORMER NWT LANGUAGES
COMMISSIONER AND LANGUAGE CHAMPION

Mahsi Kinanāskomitin Haj'
Thank You Mársi Merci Thank You
Haj' Kinanāskomitin Quana
Quyanainni Mahsi Quyanainni
Quana Thank You
Kinanāskomitin
Haj' Merci
Thank You

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Page 4 Winter sun, Angela Gzowski Photography

Page 6 Fireweed, Tessa Macintosh Photography

Page 13 Elder speaking Tłıchǫ to youth at a cultural class in Behchokǫ, Tessa Macintosh Photography

Page 17 Translation booths at the Tłıchǫ Assembly in Gamètı, Tessa Macintosh Photography