

Data Management and Local Knowledge: Building Networks to Support Community-based Ecosystemic and Socio-Economic Monitoring in Nunavut Canada

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Article 12.7.6 of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (NLCA) requires that government and the Nunavut Planning Commission cooperate to develop and implement a plan for monitoring the current and cumulative long-term environmental impacts of development in Nunavut. This plan is referred to as the Nunavut General Monitoring Plan (NGMP).

NGMP will provide for the collection, analysis and dissemination of information regarding the state and health of the eco-systemic and socio-economic environment in the Nunavut Settlement Area. NGMP will contribute towards the establishment of baseline data and the continued collection of data required to monitor environmental changes over time.

NGMP is a partnership governed by the NGMP Steering Committee which is composed of Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI), the Government of Nunavut (GN), the Nunavut Planning Commission (NPC) and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada/Government of Canada (INAC/GoC). The NGMP Steering Committee is supported by the NGMP Secretariat, Partner Advisory and Expert Advisory Groups.

Nunavut general monitoring information will be managed and shared via the NGMP Information Management System (IMS) and periodic reports. The NGMP IMS/Portal will provide a one-window, web-based portal to qualitative and quantitative information on Nunavut's environment at a local, regional and territorial level. The IMS will include a searchable metadatabase/repository for data. Outreach/engagement and reporting functions will acknowledge user skills and have a multi-lingual user interface. Key information will need to be available in a variety of formats, and in all Nunavut official languages.

NGMP will take a creative and coordinated partnership approach to monitoring in Nunavut. General monitoring should have regard for community, regional, territorial, national and international contexts, including both qualitative (i.e. Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit) and quantitative information. Information that is collected must be accurate, reliable and available in formats that are useful and culturally appropriate for the full range of users. The NGMP will be part of the decision-support system to inform sound decisions, policies, and to take effective action in realizing the Territory's goals. NGMP participants (users and information providers) include:

- Inuit
- Institutions of Public Government
- Nunavut General Monitoring Plan**
- Government
- Inuit organizations
- Regional wildlife organizations/local Hunter and Trapper Organizations
- Communities/municipalities
- Non-governmental organizations
- Industry, other business interests, economic development organizations
- Academia
- General public/Canadian citizens

As the NGMP IMIT system is currently in the early stages of development, NGMP is interested in learning and sharing information regarding data management; particularly as it relates to local and IQ/traditional knowledge given the significance of this data in the Nunavut context. In Nunavut, IQ/traditional knowledge is frequently held and transmitted orally, and there are various efforts/initiatives to capture and digitize this information in various forms. Currently, a great deal of traditional knowledge is held closely by community members and not widely accessible to inform and support development decisions. At the same time, community credibility of data collected and made accessible through NGMP is paramount to meaningful monitoring. To be credible, Nunavummiut will need to be able to "see themselves" in the data.

As NGMP is a collaborative initiative, the NGMP IMIT system will be dependent upon the input and coordination of multiple parties. The NGMP Secretariat and Steering Committee will play key functions in fulfilling the role of establishing these networks for sharing information. These networks, from the ground up, will be vital to ensuring the credibility and transmission of the monitoring information to inform and support Nunavut's development over time.