



NWT CUMULATIVE IMPACT MONITORING PROGRAM 2026-2030 FORECAST

APRIL 2026

Government of
Northwest Territories



Background

The Northwest Territories Cumulative Impact Monitoring Program (NWT CIMP) is a source of cumulative impact monitoring and research. Cumulative impact monitoring is required by Gwich'in, Sahtú and Tłıchǫ land claim agreements and the federal *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act* (MVRMA). A Steering Committee provides guidance to the program, with representatives from Indigenous, federal and territorial governments and co-management decision makers.

NWT CIMP supports regulatory decision-makers to better understand cumulative impacts, with a growing focus on combining results across multiple projects. NWT CIMP defines cumulative impacts as *combined effects that human activities and natural processes have on our environment*. NWT CIMP currently focuses its monitoring and research efforts on three valued components (VCs) of critical importance to northerners: **caribou, water and fish**. There are specific monitoring [Blueprints](#) for each VC. They each reflect decision-makers' priorities for cumulative impact monitoring and research and includes guidance from subject-matter experts and the NWT CIMP Steering Committee. [Traditional Knowledge Monitoring ideas](#) are also available. NWT CIMP considers Traditional Knowledge and science equally valuable.

The [NWT CIMP Cumulative Impact Monitoring Framework \(CIMF\)](#) is the program's operational guide to develop science monitoring and research. It can predict cumulative impacts and support effective resource management decision-making in the NWT. The CIMF outlines NWT CIMP's approach to detect and understand cumulative impacts in the NWT in collaboration with other programs with a responsibility for the VCs. With a territory encompassing 1.14 million square kilometers, and a population of about 45 thousand people, limitations in capacity and funding require that NWT CIMP focus on developing a predictive understanding of the cumulative impacts.

Our work through 2026–2030 focuses on the program's four key activity areas:

- 1) Monitoring and research priorities;
- 2) Cumulative impact monitoring, research and analysis;
- 3) Communication and outreach; and to
- 4) Facilitate the [NWT Environmental Audit](#).

For more information, please visit our [website](#) or contact nwtcimp@gov.nt.ca

Key Activity Areas

The overarching work that NWT CIMP will conduct from 2026 through 2030 is based on the program's key activity areas.

1. Monitoring and Research Priorities

Meaningful partnerships and collaborations are needed to identify and address our partners' key monitoring and research priorities and information gaps related to the VCs (caribou, water and fish). Highlighted work items include:

- *Maintaining and improving relationships with co-management boards by facilitating regular discussions on cumulative impact information needed to inform ongoing decision-making;*
- *Assessing the current list of VCs with the [Steering Committee](#) to determine if changes are required;*
- *Revising the monitoring [Blueprints](#) for VCs (caribou, water and fish) and the [Traditional Knowledge Monitoring Ideas](#)¹;*
- *Identifying priority topics for potential directed funding calls to expand on the success of the Collaborative Barren-ground Caribou Initiative (CBGCI; 2023–2026), and Road Development Impacts funding calls (2026–2029)²; and*
- *Soliciting and incorporating feedback on all aspects of the program³.*

2. Cumulative Impact Monitoring, Research and Analysis

NWT CIMP will conduct, coordinate and fund cumulative impact monitoring and research and analyze results to inform northern resource management decision-making. Highlighted work items include:

- *Conducting monitoring and research on high priority cumulative impact questions;*
- *Providing technical support for Indigenous and community-led cumulative impact research, monitoring, analysis and reporting;*
- *Advising and supporting researchers and project leads who work in the NWT, encouraging collaborations and use of standard methods*
- *Conduct/provide literature reviews on high priority cumulative impact questions*
- *Analyzing new and existing data (e.g., quantitative, qualitative, spatial) to better understand cumulative impacts to caribou, water and fish;*
- *Developing predictions of cumulative impacts to caribou, water and fish.*
- *Using the monitoring Blueprints and Traditional Knowledge Monitoring Ideas to prioritize and distribute funding through [NWT CIMP's annual funding call](#);*
- *Initiating directed funding calls on high priority cumulative impact questions;*
- *Coordinating and encouraging collaboration across projects funded through directed calls;*
- *Synthesizing results from directed funding calls to describe the cumulative impacts⁴;*

¹ NWT CIMP's commitment to [2025 Audit Recommendation 2020-4-6](#)

² NWT CIMP's commitment to [2025 Audit Recommendation 2025-2-5](#)

³ NWT CIMP's commitment to [2025 Audit Recommendation 2020-4-3, 2025-02-03](#)

⁴ NWT CIMP's commitment to [2025 Audit Recommendation 2025-2-4](#)

3. Communication and Outreach

NWT CIMP recognizes the importance of discussing monitoring and research results among researchers and sharing information with communities, decision-makers and the public. NWT CIMP shares results in different ways depending on the audience. It also fosters opportunities for researchers to collaborate with others. Highlighted work items include:

- *Meeting with co-management boards to share relevant results and support further consideration of cumulative impacts when developing water licenses and land use permits⁵.*
- *Contributing to high priority environmental assessment and regulatory processes;*
- *Providing reporting and results in both plain and scientific language⁶. Examples include:*
 - *plain-language project reporting, such as [NWT Environmental Research Bulletins \(NERBs\)](#), summary videos, community presentations, maps and posters*
 - *technical reporting, such as peer-reviewed publications in academic journals and technical reports*
 - *Annual Results [Workshops](#) (presentations and summary report)*
- *Sharing cumulative impact information and project results through the [NWT Discovery Portal](#) and/or the NWT CIMP website;*
- *Upgrading and maintaining the NWT Discovery Portal, including looking at alternatives to improve usability, ensure continuity and facilitate collaborative knowledge-sharing⁷;*
- *Promoting publicly accessible data-sharing (e.g., [Mackenzie DataStream](#));*
- *Sharing and promoting standardized methods and data management with researchers and co-management boards, where appropriate.*

4. Facilitate the NWT Environmental Audit

The [NWT Environmental Audit](#) is an obligation under the federal MVRMA that NWT CIMP facilitates. The Audit independently reviews the effectiveness of the regulatory regime and monitoring of cumulative impacts every five years; 2025 is the latest Audit. Highlighted work items include:

- *Tracking the GNWT's progress implementing commitments made in the 2025 Audit;*
- *Developing the Terms of Reference for the 2030 Audit with the Audit Steering Committee including identifying the key components of the environment to be examined and working to improve the Audit process;*
- *Contract the independent Auditor to complete the 2030 Audit; and*
- *Coordinate the GNWT's participation in the Audit process.*

⁵ NWT CIMP's commitment to [2025 Audit Recommendation 2025-2-1](#)

⁶ NWT CIMP's commitment to [2025 Audit Recommendation 2025-2-4](#)

⁷ NWT CIMP's commitment to [2025 Audit Recommendation 2025-1-6](#)