

GOVERNMENT OF NUNAVUT

Tunngasugitti, and Welcome to Nunavut!

Building on Our Strengths: Infrastructure

Canada's newest territory encompasses nearly two million square kilometres, with nearly 29,000 residents living in 26 communities ranging in population from five to almost 6,000. Vast distances, a small but growing population, the high cost of materials and labour, and extreme climate make the provision of adequate infrastructure one of Nunavut's greatest challenges. The Government is currently pursuing federal assistance for a number of key infrastructure projects and other initiatives that will address that challenge, and provide a firm foundation for self-reliance and social and economic development.

Roads

One of the first things a visitor to Nunavut will notice is the absence of roads. Within communities, most roads are unpaved. The Government is exploring potential linkages to southern Canada. Under consideration are an all weather road from the central Kivalliq region in Nunavut to Manitoba, as well as the Bathurst Inlet road and port project to access the mineral rich area of the western Kitikmeot region.

Ports

Although Nunavut has the longest shoreline of any province or territory in Canada, and all but one of its communities are on the coast, Nunavut has little marine infrastructure. This hinders the Territory's ability to expand its economy, participate in a rich fishery, and strengthen its self-reliance. The Government is seeking federal funding in order to enhance commercial fishing, tourism, and mining opportunities through investment in marine infrastructure.

Airports

In the absence of roads and marine infrastructure, air links are Nunavut's lifeline. Although each community has an airstrip, smaller communities are limited in the number and size of aircraft they can accommodate. With assistance from Canada, Nunavut is investing in airport infrastructure at community airports and exploring options for expanding the capacity of the Iqaluit airport, a key gateway to the Territory.



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Water/Sewage Treatment/Waste Management

Clean water and effective waste management are essential for any healthy community. Most Nunavut communities rely on trucked water and sewage. Where waste management facilities exist, they are usually inadequate. The Government's Five Year Capital construction plan reflects these priorities.

Communities maintain open-pit garbage sites where waste is burned. An important goal for the Government of Nunavut is the establishment of safer, healthier water and waste management practices throughout the Territory, based on technologies that are effective in permafrost and Arctic conditions.

High-speed Communications Networks

Nunavut relies exclusively on satellite networks for its bandwidth needs. This is many times more expensive than land-based, fibre optic or microwave relay bandwidth. The high cost of operating satellite-based services means that Nunavummiut do not have affordable access to broadband. The social and economic development of Nunavut depends on a reliable, affordable high-speed telecommunications network that makes communications – reliable email capable of transferring large files between users, video-conferencing, and interactive applications – possible. The Government is already using innovative approaches in the use of high-speed communications. The Telehealth system is one example. By 2005, the Government intends to have broadband access available in all Nunavut communities.

Energy

Nunavut is completely dependent on imported oil for its diesel power generation. Every drop of oil is brought in by ship or by air and stored in tanks over the winter months when the ocean freezes.



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The Government pays for this energy use both as a consumer and as a supplier of subsidies. Eighteen percent of the Government's budget was spent on energy in 2001. This is expected to increase to 20 percent of the budget by 2005.

"Ikuma II," released in 2002, sets out several measures for controlling costs, reducing usage, and promoting greater self-sufficiency in energy. These include the creation of the Qulliq Energy Corporation and two subsidiaries producing electricity and delivering fuel to communities. A new Minister of Energy has been appointed with the mandate to oversee the rationalization and effectiveness of energy consumption within the territory. Finally, the Government is also exploring the development of energy alternatives to reduce Nunavut's overall dependency on oil.

The "Ikuma I" report in 2000 led to the creation of a Crown corporation to manage electricity generation.

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