

NWT Cumulative Impact Monitoring Program (CIMP) and Audit –

*An Environmental Monitoring Program and Audit
for the NWT*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY -

Revised Draft Five-Year Work Plan

March 16, 2005

*Prepared by the
NWT CIMP and Audit Working Group*

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1.0 Purpose of the CIMP and Audit Work Plan

The Northwest Territories (NWT) Cumulative Impact Monitoring Program (CIMP) and Audit are initiatives designed to meet the requirements of the Gwich'in, Sahtu, and Tłı̄chǫ land claim agreements, and of the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act* (MVRMA), to support informed resource management decisions throughout the NWT. When fully implemented, the NWT CIMP will provide resources to help fill gaps in current environmental monitoring, report on the state of the NWT environment and the cumulative impacts of land and water uses and deposits of waste, and encourage community-based monitoring and capacity-building. The NWT Environmental Audit will, at least once every five years, independently evaluate the state of the NWT environment, the effectiveness of the NWT CIMP, the effectiveness of land and water regulation in the NWT, and make recommendations to improve resource and environmental management.

The development of the NWT Cumulative Impact Monitoring Program and Audit has been guided by a Working Group since 1999, composed members or observers of regional Aboriginal, federal and territorial government representatives including the Gwich'in, Sahtu, Tłı̄chǫ and Deh Cho First Nations, the North Slave Metis Alliance, NWT Metis Nation, Inuvialuit, Government of the Northwest Territories and the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Environment Canada and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. Akaitcho Treaty 8 was an active member of the WG until 2003, when it withdrew citing opposition to the MVRMA; however, they continue to receive all Working Group correspondence.

This document provides a five-year work plan for implementing the NWT CIMP and Audit in the fiscal years 2005-2006 through 2009-2010¹. The Work Plan outlines the rationale and objectives for the NWT CIMP and Audit, the tasks to be undertaken to implement the objectives, and the projected costs of these tasks. Based on this Work Plan, and on behalf of the Working Group, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND) will request funding from the federal Treasury Board to implement the NWT CIMP and Audit. While this Work Plan addresses the initial five-year period, the Federal government's obligations regarding the NWT CIMP and Audit extend in perpetuity, and ongoing long-term funding will be necessary.

The NWT CIMP and Audit will apply to the entire NWT, including the Mackenzie Valley as defined in the MVRMA and the Inuvialuit Settlement Region. The sole area of exclusion is Wood Buffalo National Park, which falls under the jurisdiction of Parks Canada.

¹ The Work Plan reflects the outcome of consultation, review and discussion of drafts of several earlier documents prepared by the NWT CIMP Working Group, including earlier drafts of the work plan and budget (February 2002, September 2003), a draft implementation framework for the NWT CIMP and Audit (June 2002), draft terms of reference for the Audit and a background paper on the Audit process (November, 2002 and November 2003), and the final Terms of Reference for the NWT Audit (April 2004).

2.0 What is the NWT CIMP?

The NWT CIMP will develop and implement plans for monitoring the cumulative impact of land and water uses in the NWT. The program will support projects that fill gaps in existing monitoring, and will report on the state of the NWT biophysical and socio-economic environment. The NWT CIMP will be coordinated with existing monitoring and research activities, and will include traditional knowledge and western science. Communities will be involved throughout - in the design, implementation, interpretation, and reporting of the monitoring program.

Preliminary *objectives* for the NWT CIMP include the following:

1. To identify and monitor uses of land and water, and sources of cumulative impacts
2. To identify and fill priority monitoring gaps
3. To determine and report on trends in environmental quality
4. To coordinate with a number of organizations conducting or using cumulative impact research or monitoring in the NWT
5. To meet obligations under land claim agreements and the MVRMA
6. To provide information that will contribute to the NWT Environmental Audit
7. To provide information to co-management bodies, government and others for use in making their decisions about environmental and resource management (e.g., land use planning, research, project screening/environmental assessment, regulation and enforcement)
8. To build capacity, particularly in NWT communities and regional organizations, to better enable full and effective participation in environmental monitoring processes and activities
9. To contribute to the NWT Cumulative Effects Assessment and Management (CEAM) Strategy and Framework

The need for the NWT CIMP to be coordinated with other monitoring programs and initiatives in the NWT has emerged as a fundamental element of program design. By focusing program resources on filling priority gaps, while working with other organizations, the NWT CIMP will make the most efficient use of available human and financial resources. In order to meet this requirement, the NWT CIMP will need to establish strong linkages with other monitoring activities and initiatives, involving regular communication, consultation, and information sharing. It is expected that these linkages will be mutually beneficial; the NWT CIMP being able to provide assistance to existing monitoring activities, and in turn, existing monitoring will contribute information to the analysis and reporting conducted as part of the NWT CIMP.

2.1 Valued Components

The Working Group has adopted a 'Valued Component' (VC) approach to determining what should be monitored. In plain language, the term VC refers to "elements of the environment that people think are important." The Working Group has identified the following priority VCs, based on a 1998 Inuvik workshop, regional and community consultations, and Working Group meetings:

- Caribou
- Moose

- Land Mammals
- Marine Life (mammals and fish)
- Birds (land and marine)
- Water and Sediment Quality
- Water Quantity
- Air Quality
- Snow, Ground Ice, Permafrost
- Fish Habitat, Population, Harvest
- Fish Quality
- Vegetation
- Climate and Climate Change
- Human Health and Community Wellness

The monitoring of VCs will include both traditional knowledge as well as scientific approaches. Contaminants and biodiversity are elements that will need to be considered for many of these VCs.

With the assistance of the Working Group, government and co-management board staff and some community members, DIAND prepared a draft Preliminary State of Knowledge Report² for the VCs. The report contains a draft State of Knowledge Summary for each VC³ which includes:

- Status (baseline conditions) and trends
- Possible indicators
- Existing monitoring
- Gaps in knowledge and monitoring
- Recommendations to fill the gaps
- Sample monitoring projects

2.2 NWT CIMP – Work Plan Tasks

Task 1: Operation of the RA/ NWT CIMP and Audit Working Group

Until DIAND establishes a permanent Responsible Authority (RA), the Minister of DIAND, in partnership with the NWT CIMP and Audit Working Group, will continue to coordinate the activities for the NWT CIMP. The Working Group/RA will be responsible for planning and implementing the monitoring program, facilitating communications and consultations, and holding an annual general meeting of the Working Group. A Secretariat will be provided to support the Working Group, and ultimately the RA, in the implementation of the NWT CIMP.

Task 2: Development of a Permanent Responsible Authority

During the initial five-year planning period (2005-2010), DIAND, in partnership with the CIMP and Audit Working Group, will work to develop terms of reference for a permanent Responsible Authority for the program.

² The document “A Preliminary State of Knowledge of Valued Components” was originally compiled in February 2002; this document has been updated to February 2005.

³ A draft state of knowledge summary for marine fish is being developed by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and will be added to the Preliminary State of Knowledge Report when available.

Task 3: Establishment and Operation of Valued Component Advisory Groups

The Working Group/RA may appoint external advisory groups and retain independent experts to help with planning and review as it relates to monitoring priority Valued Components within the regions of the NWT.

Task 4: Monitoring and Research Programs

This task consists of two components:

- Development of cumulative impact monitoring plans
- Review/support of monitoring / research projects

Cumulative Impact Monitoring Plans

The WG/RA will develop and implement Five-Year Cumulative Impact Monitoring Plans for the NWT. These plans will coordinate the effective and efficient collection, analysis and dissemination of scientific data, TK, and other information for the purposes of cumulative impact monitoring. The plans will address elements of the monitoring program that can be addressed by existing monitoring activities conducted by others, as well as identify the gaps that will be filled by the NWT CIMP itself. Some flexibility will be required to accommodate changing priorities, capacities and projects of partner organizations and programs.

Throughout the development of the NWT CIMP, the Working Group has noted the importance of having community-based monitoring programs, and the need to build capacity in the communities as well as in regional organizations involved in monitoring. The implementation of the NWT CIMP will include measures to increase community and regional capacity with respect to both traditional knowledge and science. The RA will promote the inclusion of capacity-building measures in monitoring and research projects supported by the NWT CIMP, and will incorporate capacity-building as appropriate in consultation, communication, and education activities.

The draft State of Knowledge summaries (Section 2.1, above) will form the basis of the RA's first Five-Year Cumulative Impact Monitoring Plan for the NWT. The Five-Year Cumulative Impact Monitoring Plans will take into account:

- Land and water uses and deposits of waste – the sources of cumulative impacts
- The issues of concern to communities
- Priority gaps in existing monitoring information
- The need to coordinate on a continuing basis with other programs and initiatives to determine how best to fill the gaps.

Review/Support of Monitoring / Research Projects

The core activity of the WG/RA will be reviewing and supporting new or existing monitoring activities that fill the priority gaps identified in the Five-Year Cumulative Impact Monitoring Plan. In developing the Five-Year Cumulative Impact Monitoring Plan, the WG/RA will develop criteria for identifying monitoring activities eligible to receive funding from the NWT CIMP. Potential criteria identified by Working Group representatives to date include capacity-building and the meaningful involvement of community members; respect for and use of both scientific and traditional knowledge; the sharing of results with communities, resource management decision-makers, the public, and other interested parties; and the encouragement of partnership projects supported by several organizations. Although the focus of the NWT CIMP is on monitoring activities, the WG/RA may also choose to conduct or sponsor research that contributes to fulfilling the NWT CIMP objectives.

Task 5: Workshops and Training

Throughout the development of the NWT CIMP, the Working Group has noted the importance of having a community-based monitoring program, and the need to build capacity in the communities as well as in regional organizations involved in monitoring. Capacity-building measures can include but are not limited to training, education, and ensuring adequate numbers and continuity of staff.

The WG/RA will provide funding and other support to new or existing projects and programs that build capacity related to monitoring, particularly at the community and regional level. The approach to involving communities will need to reflect the unique circumstances in each region.

Task 6: Information Management, Synthesis and Reporting

Information Management and Synthesis

The NWT CIMP will provide for information management and sharing through an NWT-wide network. A range of types of information (e.g., metadata, geospatial data, monitoring and research information, reports/publications; including both traditional knowledge and scientific information) will contribute to the NWT CIMP. The WG/RA will maintain the NWT CIMP website (<http://www.nwtcimp.ca/>) as part of a broader strategy for communication and education and as part of the information sharing system, while accommodating the needs of those without internet access.

Reporting

The WG/RA will report on its activities and findings in a variety of formats, languages and venues to address the needs of different audiences. The WG/RA and Secretariat will communicate regularly with community and regional organizations, with advice from WG/RA members. In addition, the projects supported by the NWT CIMP will be required, at a minimum, to report results to the communities in the regions in which they operate.

3.0 What is the NWT Environmental Audit?

The independent audit is to be conducted at least once every five years; the first audit is being conducted in 2004-2005.

The independent environmental audit will evaluate and review:

- The state (health) of the environment - trends in environmental quality, contributing factors, and the significance of trends;
- The effectiveness of the NWT CIMP;
- The effectiveness of the NWT's integrated environmental and resource management systems
- The response to any recommendations of previous environmental audits.

Specific objectives identified for the Audit include:

- To report on trends in environmental quality in the NWT, the factors contributing to the trends, and their significance
- To provide a critical evaluation of the effectiveness of the NWT CIMP
- To provide a critical evaluation of the effectiveness of environmental management processes in the NWT and the organizations responsible for cumulative impact assessment and management (e.g., the co-management bodies, federal and territorial

- government departments)
- To assess the extent to which the recommendations of previous environmental audits have been addressed
- To meet obligations under land claim agreements and the MVRMA
- To provide independent and constructive advice to co-management bodies, government and others to support their work, based on the findings of the audit. These findings may relate to trends in environmental quality, the NWT CIMP, the evaluation of the effectiveness of environmental management processes in the NWT, or a review of responses to previous audits
- To contribute to the NWTCEAM Strategy and Framework

3.1 NWT Environmental Audit – Work Plan Tasks

Task 7: Follow-up to the Initial Audit

Following the completion of the initial audit, DIAND and the Working Group/CIMP Coordinators (subsequently the WG/RA/Secretariat) will need to follow-up on the recommendations / findings of the audit. This may include meetings with government organizations (Aboriginal, federal and territorial), co-management bodies, communities, ENGOs, industry and other stakeholders to talk about the audit, the implications of its findings, and 'lessons learned'. (Years 1 & 2)

Task 8: Preparation for the Second Audit

DIAND, as RA, will plan the second Audit (and subsequent audits) as per the requirements of Section 148(2) of the MVRMA. The process used for the initial audit will likely serve as the starting point for setting the Terms of Reference for the second audit.

Task 9: Conducting the Second Audit

The second NWT Environmental Audit will be conducted in Year 4 (2008-2009). A two-phase approach similar to that for the initial audit may be used. In this case the first phase would involve the preparation of an Audit Plan while the second phase would be the completion of the Environmental Audit following the direction and procedures outlined in the Audit Plan.

Task 10: Follow-up to the Second Audit

Following the completion of the second audit, the WG/RA/Secretariat will need to follow-up on the recommendations / findings of the audit. This task will be completed as per the requirements of Section 148(2) of the MVRMA.

4.0 NWT CIMP and Audit Budgets

Approximately \$3.1 million per year for Years 1 through 3, \$3.7 million for Year 4 (Audit Year) and \$3.1 million for Year 5 is needed for implementation of the NWT CIMP (total of \$16.2 million for the entire NWT; work to date has focused on designing the program). DIAND (and subsequently the RA) will transfer much of this budget as 'grants and contributions' to regional and community or other eligible organizations to conduct monitoring and related capacity-building programs.

A total of \$1.1 million is needed for Audit purposes during this five-year budget cycle. This total includes \$75,000 for Year 1 and \$50,000 in Year 2 for follow-up to the initial Audit; \$250,000 in

Year 3 for preparatory activities for the second Audit; \$625,000 in Year 4 to conduct the second Audit; and \$100,000 in Year 5 for follow-up to the second Audit.