



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES FRAMEWORK FOR SPORT, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, AND RECREATION:

What We Heard Report
June 2023

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NORTHWEST TERRITORIES STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR SPORT, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, AND RECREATION WHAT WE HEARD REPORT

Executive Summary

From December 2022 through May 2023, the Government of Northwest Territories' Department of Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA) and the Aboriginal Sport Circle NWT (ASCNWT) hosted a series of engagement sessions to invite feedback from the sport and recreation sector and a broad group of involved organizations on the development of a new Strategic Framework for Sport, Physical Activity, and Recreation (SPAR) in the NWT, as well as the development of a national strategy on Indigenous Sport, Physical Activity, Recreation, and Indigenous Practices.

Twenty-four organizations and fifty-seven community champions were invited to participate in the engagement process, which was led by Debbie DeLancey and Dēneze Nakehk'ō, and forty-nine people attended facilitated meetings or met individually with the consultants to provide input.

This report provides a summary of feedback received on the challenges facing the SPAR sector, as well as examples of what is working well and where NWT is achieving successes. Although many varied and divergent opinions were shared, there was wide agreement on the following themes as priorities for a new GNWT Strategic Framework:

- Celebrate and support local champions and volunteers,
- Build capacity in the sector for recreation leaders, coaches, and officials,
- Privilege Indigenous culture and traditional practices,
- Ensure that programming is accessible for all NWT residents – including but not limited to youth of all ages, seniors and Elders, people with mobility and other challenges, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people,
- Create a transparent, flexible, multi-year funding process that is responsive to community needs and priorities,
- Invest in infrastructure – support the development of new infrastructure, and invest in maintenance of existing infrastructure.

CADRE STRATÉGIQUE POUR LES SPORTS, L'ACTIVITÉ PHYSIQUE ET LES LOISIRS AUX TNO RAPPORT SUR CE QUE NOUS AVONS ENTENDU

Sommaire

De décembre 2022 à mai 2023, le ministère des Affaires municipales et communautaires (MAMC) du gouvernement des Territoires du Nord-Ouest et le Cercle sportif autochtone des TNO ont organisé une série d'échanges avec le public afin de solliciter les commentaires du secteur des sports et des loisirs et d'un vaste groupe d'organismes concernés sur l'établissement d'un nouveau cadre stratégique pour les sports, l'activité physique et les loisirs (SAPL) aux TNO, ainsi que sur l'élaboration d'une stratégie nationale sur le sport, l'activité physique et les loisirs autochtones et les pratiques afférentes.

Vingt-quatre organisations et 57 champions communautaires ont été invités à participer aux échanges dirigés par Debbie DeLancey et Dèneze Nakehk'o. À cette occasion, 49 personnes ont assisté à des rencontres dirigées ou ont rencontré individuellement les consultants pour apporter leur contribution.

Ce rapport présente un résumé des commentaires reçus sur les défis auxquels est confronté le secteur des SAPL, ainsi que des exemples de ce qui fonctionne bien et des réussites des TNO. Bien que de nombreuses opinions variées et divergentes aient été partagées, un large consensus s'est dégagé sur les thèmes suivants en tant que priorités pour un nouveau cadre stratégique du GTNO :

- Célébrer et soutenir les champions et les bénévoles locaux;
- Renforcer les capacités du secteur en matière de dirigeants, d'entraîneurs et d'officiels dans le domaine des loisirs;
- Privilégier la culture autochtone et les pratiques traditionnelles;
- Veiller à ce que la programmation soit accessible à tous les résidents des TNO, y compris, mais sans s'y limiter, aux jeunes de tous âges, aux personnes âgées, aux personnes à mobilité réduite et aux autres personnes ayant des difficultés, ainsi qu'aux personnes 2ELGBTQ+;
- Créer un processus de financement transparent, flexible et pluriannuel qui répond aux besoins et aux priorités des collectivités;
- Investir dans l'entretien des infrastructures existantes tout en soutenant le développement de nouvelles infrastructures.

Introduction and Background

In 2018, the Government of the Northwest Territories amended the *Western Canada Lottery Act*, resulting in changes to the administration of lotteries including moving the Western Canada Lottery Program (WCLP) into the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) Department of Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA), and having MACA directly administer funding for Territorial Sport Organizations (TSOs). A key feature of the revised *Act* is the commitment that NWT lottery profits may be used to support:

- The promotion and delivery of physical activity, sports, and recreation programs.
- The development of coaching;
- The support of high performance athletes; and
- Any other purpose that the Minister deems necessary for the support or advancement of physical activity, sport, and recreation in the Northwest Territories. (Clause 6.1).

(Lottery funds are also used to cover the costs of administering the lottery program, and to make disbursements to the Government of Nunavut.)

While the updated legislation was under development, MACA announced that it would develop an NWT policy statement on sport, recreation, and physical activity. In 2018, a consultant was hired to develop a Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation (SPAR) Framework. The consultant reviewed major national sport, physical activity, and recreation policies, undertook some public engagement, and held meetings with territorial and regional sport and recreation organizations, and produced a draft Framework document in 2020.

Several organizations raised concerns with the draft Framework. In November 2020, four organizations – the Aboriginal Sports Circle NWT, Sport North Federation, NWT Recreation & Parks Association, and Mackenzie Recreation Association – made a presentation to the GNWT’s Standing Committee on Government Operations in which they identified four issues with the draft, as follows:

- It failed to utilize the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action as guiding principles,
- The themes, goals and objectives did not reflect the collaborative work done to date,
- The draft Framework was not seen as having validity to be a guiding document for the sector, and
- Recreation was not accurately reflected.

To address these concerns, the four organizations made the following recommendations:

- Use development processes from previous successful GNWT strategies/frameworks,
- Create a diverse advisory committee,
- Revisit a previous report prepared by the four partner organizations and come to a consensus on themes and goals,
- Determine quality objectives through a multi-day workshop with stakeholders,
- Conduct meaningful community engagement with distinct targets and goals,
- Review engagement results and framework development with stakeholders,
- Committee to sign off on the framework, and
- Design a visually friendly, engaging, and accessible document for all.

In light of the concerns, MACA committed to continuing to work with the SPAR sector organizations to resolve those issues. Further work on the Framework development was delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In the Fall of 2022, MACA engaged Debbie DeLancey and Dēneze Nakehk'ō to help move the project forward by:

- Reviewing concerns raised with the previous draft Framework document,
- Facilitating an engagement process with a broad group of interested organizations and individuals to seek their input, including explicitly exploring how to meaningfully address the TRC Calls to Action,
- Developing a *What We Heard* report based on that input,
- Developing a draft Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation Strategic Framework, and
- Validating that Framework document with key partner organizations.

In the Fall of 2022, the Aboriginal Sport Circle of Canada initiated a project to develop a National Strategy for Indigenous Sport, Physical Activity, Recreation and Traditional Practices. The national organization is working in collaboration with all the provincial and territorial Aboriginal Sport Circles to seek advice and input from interested groups and individuals across Canada to guide the development of this proposed national strategy. Because the timing for engagement and outreach on this project coincided with the timing for MACA's engagement on the SPAR Framework, the ASCNWT and MACA agreed to collaborate and hold one series of meetings in the NWT, rather than inviting people to two sets of meetings to discuss similar topics. Input and feedback from the SPAR Framework engagement process have also been provided to the team working on the national strategy with the Aboriginal Sport Circle of Canada.

The refreshed engagement process kicked off in December 2022 and concluded in May 2023. It took longer than originally anticipated due to the challenges involved in finding meeting dates that would work for a majority of the people and organizations that wanted to participate. Details on the engagement process are outlined in the *Methodology* section below.

MACA, the ASCNWT, and the consultants who worked on this project want to acknowledge everyone who took the time to meet with us and share input. Your passion for and dedication to promoting sport, physical activity, recreation, and traditional Indigenous activities in the NWT is inspiring and makes this a better place to live.

Methodology

A total of sixty-seven organizations were invited to attend full-day facilitated engagement sessions between December 2022 and May 2023. Organizations included Territorial and Regional Organizations providing recreation and sport programs and services across the NWT or several regions (TROs), Indigenous governments, Indigenous non-government organizations, and non-government organizations representing equity-owned sectors of the population.¹ A complete list of organizations invited to participate in the process is attached as Appendix A. All sessions were held in Yellowknife, with financial support provided if required for travel and accommodations.

In addition, MACA and the four TROs developed a list of individuals from across the NWT who have been involved in the sector, based on the knowledge and experience of staff who have worked in the sector. The list included athletes and former athletes, coaches and former coaches, recreation leaders, people involved in fund-raising for local sport and recreation activities, and Indigenous traditional knowledge holders. Fifty-seven individuals representing all regions of the NWT, small and large communities, and with specialized experience in a variety of sport, recreational or traditional activities, were invited to attend an engagement session, and those who accepted were provided with travel and accommodations for the event. Two shorter meeting opportunities were offered to Territorial Sport Organizations. These sessions were held in the evenings, with both a virtual and in-person option, and were timed to precede the SNF Annual General Meeting.

Organizations and individuals who expressed an interest but were unable to attend the scheduled meetings were offered the opportunity to meet with one of the consultants and share their views. One community representative and four TSO representatives were interviewed separately.

The agenda for these discussions were crafted based on the number of participants and duration of the meeting. In general, sessions included a brief background on the MACA and ASC projects, and then a discussion on:

- What is working well in the sector today,
- What success stories can we celebrate,
- What is not working well,
- What are the barriers to participation, and
- What should be included in the SPAR Framework, and the National Strategy on Indigenous Sport, Physical Activity, Recreation and Traditional Practices as we design a shared vision for the future?

Participants were also asked to reflect on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action dealing with sport, and the GNWT's commitment to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and how these should be acknowledged and honoured in the new MACA Framework.

Table 1 below provides a summary of the number of people and organizations invited and the number of people and organizations who participated.

¹ The four major territorial or regional organizations that receive WCLP funding to deliver programs include the Sport North Federation (SNF), NWT Recreation and Parks Association (NWTRPA), Aboriginal Sport Circle NWT (ASCNWT), and the Mackenzie Recreation Association (MRA).

Table 1: Participation in Engagement Sessions (individual interviews are included)

<i>Engagement category</i>	<i>Number of people or organizations invited</i>	<i>Number of organizations participating</i>	<i>Number of individuals participating (not including MACA and ASCNWT staff and consultants)</i>
Territorial and Regional Organizations	4 organizations	4	12
Indigenous governments and organizations	17 organizations	4	6
Non-government organizations representing equity-owned sectors	13 organizations	3	3
Community Champions	57	N/A	16
Territorial sport organizations	33 organizations	13	12
Total number of organizations who participated		24	
Total number of individuals who contributed			49

In addition to engagement with individuals and organizations in the sector, the consultants also met with 15 MACA staff from the Sport, Recreation and Youth division to give them an opportunity to share their experiences and insights from working in the sector.)

What We Heard Brief Summary

It is challenging to provide a succinct summary of what we heard given the broad scope of the proposed Framework, the number of diverse interests and experiences represented at the engagement sessions, and the depth and richness of input that was provided. In this report, we try to find a balance between honouring the voices of everyone who participated and drawing out relevant themes and conclusions to inform the development of the Framework. To do this, we first present an overview of the highlights of each engagement session and then summarize the key themes.

In order to ensure that participants felt comfortable in sharing their views openly during the sessions, we committed to not quoting individuals or attributing opinions to any one person.

Some participants were concerned that their voices and opinions might be lost in the attempt to pull out the key themes from the engagement. We have committed that every individual who participated in this process will have an opportunity to review the report and let us know if they feel we have lost or misrepresented anything in this summary.

Because we have tried to reflect and incorporate all the views shared with us, the feedback summarized below includes some conflicting views.

Territorial and Regional Organizations

A slightly different agenda was used for the discussion with TROs, because they were deeply engaged with the development of the draft SPAR Framework in 2018-2019. Discussion included doing an environmental scan to consider what has changed in the SPAR landscape since that time and focusing on the vision for an updated Framework. TROs saw these discussions as an opportunity to break down silos and build a collaborative vision for active living in the NWT.

Working Well

TRO participants agreed that there is much to celebrate about the state of the physical activity, recreation, and sport sector today. The role of local champions in NWT communities was flagged repeatedly, and it was noted that many graduates of the former Aurora College Recreation Leaders program have become local leaders in their communities. Participants feel there is strong collaboration among partners and with MACA, and appreciated the access they have to MACA officials.

There is increased interest in on-the-land programming and traditional Indigenous cultural activities such as hand games across the NWT, with Indigenous governments taking a new interest in SPAR and playing a leading role in funding and supporting community and regional programs. Indigenous governments and community governments are developing innovative programs at the local level.

Indigenous governments have also taken an active role in supporting youth athletes to travel to events like the Canada Games, the North American Indigenous Games (NAIG), and to participate in other high-performance events. The number of women and girls involved in sport and recreation is increasing, and more organizations are taking positive steps to promote equity, diversity and inclusion in their programs and policies. Some participants expressed that while there is a continued need to focus on reconciliation and decolonization in the sector, the fact that this need is now recognized across the sector represents progress. They noted that NWT is distinct from southern Canada, where there is a distinction between “mainstream” and “Indigenous” sport activities, and that in NWT Indigenous culture and values infuse every aspect of government and civil society.

There is a new focus on the mental health benefits of physical activity and active living as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, and participants saw this as a key foundational principle for the Framework.

Challenges and barriers

TROs flagged volunteer burnout as a major concern and noted there are increasing capacity challenges in the sector across all communities and regions. This manifests in many ways, from finding coaches to finding parents who are willing to accompany youth athletes on trips.

Programs and organizations are experiencing difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff, reflecting a national trend. There is also a perception that community governments are hiring recreation leaders who have little training or experience and that local programming is suffering as a result. Some TROs mentioned that in the past, MACA had a dedicated funding stream for community recreation coordinators, which ensured that community governments used the funding for that purpose. They also regret the loss of the *Aurora College Recreation Leaders Program*.

Inflation is another major barrier and is creating challenges for all organizations. Travel costs, salaries, and operating costs are all increasing while funding remains static, creating pressures for all the TROs. The geography of the NWT with many remote communities facing high travel costs is a barrier to participation.

Another pressure is the administrative burden for TROs and community organizations in having to access numerous funding sources in order to provide a range of sport and recreation programs. This involves writing individual proposals for each program, project, or event, and then writing reports. MACA's reporting process for organizations funded under the WCLP is onerous and not user-friendly, which is an additional frustration.

A major challenge is that sport and recreation infrastructure across the NWT is aging, and in many cases not being maintained. For the most part, responsibility for developing and maintaining these facilities rests with community governments, who must deal with numerous competing priorities when allocating infrastructure budgets. There is little development of new recreation infrastructure, and the high cost of maintenance is increasing with inflation, putting added pressure on community governments. Several stories were shared about community recreation facilities that have sat empty for months or years due to a lack of funding for repairs and upgrading.

TROs recognize that much of the recreation and sport activity in the NWT is focused on Yellowknife, with fewer opportunities and programs in other communities, especially small remote communities. Related to this is a concern that there is too much focus on sport to the detriment of the broader range of recreation opportunities. We lack a uniquely northern definition of "recreation," and this should be a foundational pillar of the Framework – a definition that includes and embraces traditional Indigenous activities.

Not all residents of the NWT have equitable access to SPAR activities. TROs noted that there is a need for templates, resources, and support to encourage and enable organizations to deliver programs for equity-owned populations and feel that there is no active champion for people with mobility issues to increase access to SPAR programs and activities. They noted the value of the training recently developed by the Northern Mosaic Network as a positive step, but the cost of the training is a barrier for many organizations with limited budgets.

Training and certification requirements can be a disincentive for people to become coaches. Training that is grounded in southern program delivery models is often not relevant or culturally appropriate in the NWT. Taking this training requires time and money, and it may be more than what many potential volunteers are willing to consider. There are also barriers at the national level for Indigenous coaches, including the differing Indigenous status validation requirements of southern organizations.

In the context of reconciliation, TROs noted that it would be appropriate to ensure that materials and resources are translated and available in Indigenous languages, but this requires additional funding which is not always available.

Participants noted that there is a mental health crisis in the NWT, and not enough recognition or understanding of the key role that sport, recreation and physical activity play in mental and emotional well-being. There is a need to promote both the concept and the importance of recreation.

Finally, it was noted that while national policies related to issues like safe sport and gender equity are worthwhile, it can be challenging to implement them in the NWT context – for example, requirements for gender equity on boards are hard to meet when no volunteers come forward.

Vision for the Framework

TROs emphasized the importance of a holistic approach and a Framework vision that captures concepts of wellness, inclusion, and community. A goal of the Framework should be for NWT residents to engage in active living and traditional practices throughout their lives, grounded in a solid foundation of physical literacy. All agreed that the acronym “SPAR” is too limited and immediately draws the focus to sport, but the emphasis needs to be on physical activity for life, and on developing healthy individuals who are physically literate. A majority of the sport in NWT is recreational rather than strongly competitive. The Framework needs to be grounded in an understanding that local champions are a key ingredient to a vibrant, successful sector.

Through a facilitated visioning process, TROs identified the following as critical themes for the Framework:

Safe inclusive participation:

- Programs that are truly accessible to all, including providing facilities and equipment for people with mobility challenges, creating safe spaces for 2SLGBTQIA+ people
- Training for leaders in equity, diversity, and inclusion
- All NWT residents have the opportunity to be physically literate
- Physically literate citizens
- Balance inclusivity and participation

Engaged connected people:

- Meet the diverse needs of regions and communities
- Programs that are community-driven
- Sense of belonging
- Create connection within and among communities
- Importance of SPAR is valued by individuals, governments, and organizations

Strong collaborative sector leadership:

- Drive integration and collaboration – integrated community builds recreation/sport/health/justice/arts/culture
- Break down silos between programs
- Increased focus on recreation, physical activity, culture, and tradition, decreased focus on sport
- Promote holistic solutions

Sustainable capacity building:

- Develop and build new leaders and support existing leaders
- Increased training and support for organizations and educators – avoid burnout
- Find creative ways to incentivize and recognize volunteers
- Provide training opportunities

- Ensure a competent, professional SPAR workforce
- Self-sustaining capacity creation

Valuing our cultural landscape:

- Traditional and culture is a cross-cutting theme
- Strong representation of culture and tradition
- Prioritize traditional Indigenous activities and practices
- Traditional Recreational Activity Promoting Success (TRAPS)
- Culturally enriched inclusive SPAR
- Focus on reconciliation, applying the lens of the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the recommendations in the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls as a guide

Northern definition of recreation:

- Public education and awareness about the role that recreation plays in promoting all dimensions of individual and community wellness
- A broad definition that encompasses multiple dimensions
- Recreation is viewed as essential and prioritized by all

Long-term sustained funding:

- Stable, predictable, flexible funding will be foundational.
- Continuous, guaranteed funding agreements
- Long-term vision
- Diverse funding sources

Indigenous Government and Organizations

Working Well

A strong theme was that the sector is well supported in the NWT. There is a lot of funding available from government, northern businesses and other organizations, which are willing to sponsor events and program needs. Many communities are successful at local fund-raising.

Participants also felt that the sector is strong at the community level. In many communities, local organizations and community-based programs collaborate to leverage their resources. One common example of this was the collaboration between community government recreation and wellness staff. Community programming tends to be grounded in a model that takes a holistic approach to wellness and does not make a distinction between health, wellness, culture, and sport or recreation when developing programs.

The role of community champions is critical, and their commitment is evident in the success that NWT youth are having at the national level. NWT medal counts have increased in all sports. But equally important is the role community champions are taking in developing on-the-land programs such as culture camps for families, and promoting traditional activities that provide intergenerational spaces for youth to

connect with Elders and culture. Traditional games tournaments are being held across the NWT and interest is growing.

The growth of hand games and successful tournaments in Behchokò and Délı̄nę were cited as examples. Many communities are focusing on their strengths, relying on local skills and expertise – for example, Tsiigehtchic lacks the facilities that are in larger communities but has strong programming for skiing and snowshoeing. Other communities are using community public infrastructure funding creatively, for example, three Tłı̄chò communities have developed golf courses and youth are becoming involved.

Challenges and barriers

Participants felt strongly that there is not enough focus on reconciliation in SPAR organizations and programs across the NWT. Indigenous people in the NWT, and especially youth, are suffering from the multi-generational impacts of colonization, residential school, and loss of connection to land, and government has a role and an obligation to apply a reconciliation lens to all programs and policies. As did other participants, this group noted the mental health challenges that youth are facing, and there was strong consensus that “The only answer is cultural activities on the land.”

Participants felt that the GNWT does not acknowledge the investment and efforts that Indigenous communities and governments make in sport, recreation, and physical activity. They also noted that there is a disparity between Indigenous governments with resources, who are taking a significant role in promoting programs and events, and Indigenous governments without settled land claims or self-government agreements that do not have access to the same level of resources. Too often, there is simply a lack of trust in GNWT and government programs, as a legacy of colonization and systemic racism.

The lack of local champions was flagged as a concern, and it was noted that far too often, communities rely on transient residents who play a key role in organizing or supporting a sport or recreational activity, only to have the program fail when they leave town. There is a lack of opportunities for coach training and skill development for local champions. Another barrier to local participation that was identified was onerous national requirements for coaching certification, which function as a disincentive to people who want to get involved. Additional barriers are that attending coach training opportunities may require taking time off work and there is no source of funding to cover this, and those who do complete certification may be required to update it every two years.

There was also a perception that the largest share of the funding and resources flows to Yellowknife. Even when organizations have regional representation on their boards, Yellowknife has an advantage because of its large population and it is where there are the most services and facilities. Due to this advantage, a substantial proportion of funding ends up there. There is a lack of equitable Indigenous representation on most SPAR organization boards. Related to this, there is inequity among communities in their access to sport and recreation facilities. Government funding policies do not take into consideration the additional costs associated with delivering programs in small, remote communities.

Some participants felt that while GNWT makes a large investment into NWT participation in multi-sport games, these games only benefit a small proportion of people.

Small communities lack sport and recreation facilities, and gaining access to schools continues to be a challenge in many communities. In smaller communities, there may not be enough youth in an age

category to put together a team. All these factors mean that youth in small communities find it challenging to participate in team sports at higher levels. Participants specifically noted that there is not enough support for Indigenous youth who have the potential to achieve higher performance levels.

Although they felt that there are numerous funding sources available to the sector, this group noted some challenges, including that there is not often effective communication about the available opportunities, and there is competition at the community level for the same funding pots. Community organizations often work in silos and could achieve more by collaborating and leveraging shared resources. Government funding programs are siloed, creating a requirement for communities to access several funding pots which can be a disincentive. Another barrier to accessing funding is the administrative burden required to access numerous funding pots for one program or event, and the need to modify or adapt a program's goals and deliverables to meet the funding criteria of government departments. Communities feel that government develops funding parameters that don't recognize community needs and priorities. This group also felt that their communities and organizations should have more direct access to WCLP funding.

The cost of participation can be a barrier for youth whose families do not have the financial resources to pay for registration fees and equipment. In other cases, youth may lack family support due to families dealing with other issues, including poverty, food insecurity, and trauma. National programs such as KidSport are often not an option because their program criteria do not take into consideration the excessive cost of living in the north, and the fact that a salary level which is adequate for a family in southern Canada may be below the poverty line in remote NWT communities.

Vision for the Framework

A priority for this group was that the Framework must focus on traditional practices and on-the-land programs and reflect a true understanding of the critical link between land-based programming and mental and physical well-being. The healing power of connection to land, language and culture must be foundational in the Framework. To accomplish this, we need funding programs that are simple and responsive, not siloed by the priorities of government departments. Participants pointed to the approach used by the NWT On The Land Collaborative as a best practice – instead of imposing program parameters, the Collaborative encourages communities to design their own projects and submit them for funding.

Participants felt that governments do not truly understand the role that land-based programming can play in healing and wellness. They emphasized that being on the land doing traditional activities reflects the same values as sport – i.e., self-respect, respect for others, self-confidence, and patience. Reconciliation means that government must listen to Indigenous people and communities and not establish program parameters that restrict their ability to support these things. The GNWT is committed to implementing UNDRIP, and Article 31 states explicitly that, “Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions... including...sports and traditional games...”, and putting this into practice is key to reconciliation.

There is an opportunity to integrate traditional and modern practices, values and beliefs moving forward to develop an approach to SPAR that is unique to the NWT. The phrase “Strong Like Two Sports” was coined to describe this. This group also proposed that we need a northern definition of recreation, one that specifically includes Indigenous culture. The Framework should reflect the need to provide equity of access for Indigenous youth from remote communities and to break down barriers to access for small

communities. Safe sport is important and ensuring that youth who participate in organized sport and recreation activities are protected from lateral violence and sexual abuse is a priority.

Accountability is an important aspect to consider, and the ability for organizations to demonstrate that their programs are having an impact. Funding processes should be transparent.

Finally, there needs to be a focus on creating the next generation of local champions, and promoting a passion for sport, physical activity, and recreation in communities.

Non-Government Organizations Representing Underserved Populations

Working Well

Non-government organizations (NGOs) noted that there is a substantial amount of creative and innovative programming in NWT communities that find ways to promote community participation and engagement. The increasing availability of on-the-land programs was seen as a positive example of programming that brings together the focus on recreation, physical activity, and culture, and creates opportunities for a variety of age groups and ability levels. Other benefits of these programs are that youth are more likely to open up when on the land than in a classroom setting, and that being on the land contributes to mental wellness.

NGOs also flagged that there is a lot of financial support for land-based programming, and noted the significant contribution that MACA's youth programs make to youth programming.

A success story is the NWT Seniors' Society's *Working Together With Elders* program, a time-limited federally funded program which has established a coordinator for Elders' programming in eleven communities aimed at decreasing social isolation. Community recreation staff play a key role in promoting programs like *Elders in Motion* in many communities.

The focus on recreation and culture, as opposed to a narrower definition of sport, was seen as a positive strength of many community programs, and an essential element in increasing access for underserved populations.

Challenges and barriers

With respect to youth, schools are an important touchpoint for programs to connect with youth but often the school staff do not have the capacity to collaborate with outside organizations. Without the involvement of schools, youth engagement drops off once youth are no longer in the school system after age 18, and there is a scarcity of programming for the 18–30-year-old group. There is a perception that GNWT could do a more effective job of supporting youth if the funding programs for youth were more integrated; for example, some jurisdictions have created a youth secretariat.

There is a lack of specialized physical activity and recreation programs for seniors and Elders across the NWT. Most communities do not have any system of transportation to enable Elders to get out and about, which adds to the issue of social isolation. Although the *Working Together With Elders* program has had a positive impact on creating opportunities for Elders to connect within their communities, it is a short-term

targeted funding program, and is not likely to continue after the first funding cycle. While the program has had a positive impact in communities, there will be a gap created when the current funding ends.

This group noted that community recreation leaders often focus on sports and pay less attention to other types of programs. The lack of facilities in many communities was also noted as a challenge. On-the-land programs can fill this gap but there is not enough funding available to meet the demand. It was also noted that there is no champion within the GNWT to promote accessibility to facilities and programs for people with mobility issues.

2SLGBTQQIA+ people face a unique set of challenges. There is a general lack of understanding and awareness in government and other organizations about how to genuinely and effectively create equitable spaces. Even the use of language shows a lack of awareness of what is offensive to gender queer people. There is a lack of safe spaces for gender queer people in the sport and recreation sector, for example, some sports require binary gender identification, and some government programs also require reporting on program participation with binary gender categories. Designation of change rooms as “male” and “female” remains a common approach, and this can be complicated for gender-diverse or gay and lesbian people, who may face homophobia. Indigi-queer people often experience lateral violence.

The costs of registration and other participation costs present a barrier for many groups, including young people struggling with mental health issues. One example is the varying costs of attending youth camps in Yellowknife, which can range from \$125 - \$300 per session. Excluding those without the financial resources to pay registration fees creates additional stigma for youth who are already struggling.

Vision for the Framework

The strongest recommendation is that there must be a focus on equity of access for all residents to SPAR activities. This will require an investment of resources, both to promote understanding and awareness and to ensure the availability of facilities, equipment, and programs.

At the ground level, this means ensuring there is programming for youth and seniors in all communities, and that there are safe spaces for youth in all communities. It was noted that there could be better GNWT collaboration and coordination on issues related to youth and seniors, at the headquarters and community level.

Intergenerational connection is an important theme that should be included, and on-the-land programs are an ideal way to achieve this.

Community Representatives

Working Well

Like other participants, these individuals noted that there are many diverse successful programs across the NWT, and many communities have a good range of facilities to support activities. The growing number of inter-community and regional events and partnerships is a positive development. They also noted the availability of numerous sources of funding that can be accessed. The fact that NWT has a dedicated SPAR funding stream through the *Western Canada Lottery Act* was seen as a major strength. They also noted the importance of many successful sponsorship and partnership programs. One example was the *NHL First*

Shift Hockey Program, which has had a positive impact on youth access to registration and equipment in Yellowknife. Another example was the new multi-sport training facility in Yellowknife, which was developed as a partnership among the ASCNWT, NWT Hockey and Softball NWT, and is providing a much-needed service in the community.

The presence of amazing community champions across the NWT was flagged as a key success factor, as was the widespread availability of coach training that is offered both online and in person by the TROs, which is easy to access and inexpensive. This group also felt that there are strong networks and active communication across the NWT within the sector.

The work of ASCNWT was noted as being particularly important in supporting local programs and expanding access to traditional games across the NWT. Indigenous governments are also contributing, hiring local coaches, sponsoring events, and supporting local athletes to attend territorial and national events. One example of partnership is in Ulukhaktok, where the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation invested to convert an aging curling rink into a multi-use facility, and the Hamlet is investing in fitness equipment. On-the-land programs were flagged as an important opportunity to promote recreation and physical activity grounded in Indigenous culture. One example is Délı̄ne, where the Délı̄ne Got'ine Government sponsors land-based programming for the entire community throughout the summer.

Specific MACA programs that were singled out as being effective were the *High Performance Athlete Grant*, and the *Active After Schools* program which supports initiatives like Hay River's *Lights on Program* and makes equipment available in many communities. One key feature of the *High Performance Athlete Grant* is that it provides an opportunity for NWT elite athletes to give back by acting as role models for youth, which many considered to be an important motivational tool.

It was also noted that MACA's reporting processes for Contribution Agreements are simple and user-friendly.

When it comes to sport, participants highlighted the vital role that parents and families play in helping youth to participate. Parents often become involved as coaches or officials to support a sport that their kids are involved in. Many families in smaller communities will drive their children to larger centres to give them the opportunity to play with a team, participate in training, or experience a facility that is not available in their home community. In many communities, MACA funding enables activities to be offered free of charge to youth participants, which results in more participation.

Youth athletes are supported by a network of clubs and dedicated volunteers, and many choose to give back by coaching younger kids as is the case with NWT Figure Skating, or sitting on boards as youth representatives which is a practice of Volleyball NWT. Some communities are seeing the emergence of homegrown leaders as these youth move to become coaches and take on other roles.

Challenges and Barriers

Volunteer burn-out and a shortage of local champions were seen as major challenges, and participants felt these had become worse since the Covid-19 pandemic. There is a perception that youth are less motivated since the pandemic, and more used to spending time on screens than getting out and being active. Perhaps related to volunteer burnout is a lack of programs for adults and seniors in many communities - participants noted that when you do not have adult programs, you do not have access to a

pool of coaches and officials for youth programs in the same sport. There is a strong reliance on local champions from outside the community, creating a gap when they move on. Some participants noted that the lack of fitness training facilities in communities can be a barrier to the recruitment and retention of teachers and other professionals who might otherwise stay in communities longer.

The increasing requirements for training and certification for coaches and officials create a disincentive for parents and volunteers to get involved. There is a need to balance the benefits of coach training, i.e., enabling volunteers to improve their ability to help athletes, with the burden of demanding ongoing training and certification of people who are already busy.

There are not enough Indigenous coaches in most communities, and more effort needs to be made to build this capacity. Participants also felt that there is not sufficient government investment in developing recreation leaders and coordinators and supporting communities to fund these positions. It was noted that most communities have only one position for recreation, and it is challenging for one position to do everything from writing funding proposals, to organizing and running events and coordinating logistics. Added to this is the administrative burden of accessing funding, including writing and reporting on numerous proposals for one event – although participants appreciated the simplicity of MACA's reporting requirements.

Like others, this group identified infrastructure challenges, including lack of funding to develop infrastructure, lack of funding and support to maintain existing infrastructure, and the impacts of inflation on operations and maintenance. Many felt that community governments do not consider recreation programs to be a priority, and there is a lack of sufficient investment at the local level. Local leadership in some communities does not support the SPAR sector, and even when they do, they have many competing priorities to consider with limited budgets. Another infrastructure challenge is the lack of standardized facilities across the NWT. This can create a barrier for athletes who train for a sport in one size gym and then find themselves competing in a different-sized facility.

The costs of transportation and travel are a huge barrier. Even for communities with road access, there is only one rental bus available in the NWT and costs to bring buses in from Alberta are prohibitive. Air travel is expensive and increasing, as are costs associated with accommodations and meals. This makes it increasingly difficult for local program organizers to support youth participation in regional and intra-territorial events. Another inflationary pressure is associated with risk management issues, specifically the rising costs of insurance. There is a perceived lack of financial support and equitable access for athletes from smaller communities, most of whom are Indigenous, who have the potential to achieve at a high-performance level but lack access to facilities, programs, and financial resources for travel. Many are faced with the difficult choice of leaving their home community to pursue their sport, or not following their dream.

Lack of support from, and active engagement with, local schools is a challenge in many communities. Access to school facilities has been a long-standing challenge, and while the use of school-community agreements has improved the situation in some places, Covid-19 shutdowns were a real setback. Participants felt that school districts do not place enough emphasis on the importance of physical education and that due to other pressures on teachers, fewer teachers are offering extra-curricular programs than was the case in the past.

Lack of collaboration and coordination among groups who deliver SPAR programs results in competition for the same pots of funding at the community level. Scheduling is also an issue – communities are busy places with lots of activity and when organizations do not communicate, it leads to scheduling conflicts.

Many communities strive to create and maintain safe spaces for youth in public facilities. Some recreation facilities are not youth-oriented and may have issues with drug and alcohol use. Communities and sponsors make efforts to implement zero tolerance policies, but enforcement is a challenge. In Fort Smith, the walkway between the high school and the recreation centre has been closed, which creates an unwelcoming environment for youth.

Participants felt that TSOs are not well connected to communities outside Yellowknife, and many do not travel regularly to communities. When elite role models do visit smaller communities, they may not understand or appreciate the community context – for example, kids in smaller communities may never have seen the sport that the athlete participates in.

Population size in small communities is a barrier to playing team sports, since there may not be enough youth in an age group to make up a team. This is a barrier to community youth having the opportunity to participate in national games and have that broader experience.

Finally, the cost of participation is seen as a barrier for many families. Costs of living in small communities are high, employment is often scarce, and families are challenged to find the time, energy, and funding to support their kids to participate in activities. There is a perception that national programs like Jumpstart and KidSport do not work in the NWT context as their funding criteria are based on southern cost of living.

Vision for the Framework

Overall, the goal of the Framework should be to develop NWT residents who embrace active healthy lifestyles.

Sustainable, long-term funding is critical, and it needs to be responsive to the variation in cost of living among regions in the NWT. This concept was described as “multi-year and multi-tiered.” More funding for infrastructure development and maintenance is also critical for communities and TSOs to be able to continue to provide recreation facilities. Some participants noted that providing Indigenous youth with adequate facilities for sport and reconciliation should be considered a key component of reconciliation, and GNWT should advocate with Canada for more investment.

Some suggested that flexibility in funding would enable communities to develop their own priorities and allow for the integration of cultural activities in an appropriate way.

Another strong priority was building local champions. The Framework should explore incentives for coaching and volunteering, promote the availability of full-time multi-sport coaches, and create pathways for youth who are involved in programs to become the leaders of tomorrow. Developing more Indigenous coaches is also a priority. There should be a focus on developing volunteers and promoting grassroots activities.

Community representatives want to see better supports for athletes from small communities who have the potential to compete at higher levels, and there should be continued solid support for high performance athletes – not only financial, but mental and emotional.

Through a visioning process, this group identified the following as themes for the Framework:

Strengthening relationships through collaboration and communication:

- Stronger collaboration among GNWT departments, between GNWT and Indigenous governments, and among community-level leaders
- Multi-disciplinary approach to program development
- Collaboration with businesses, sponsors, and other partners
- Promotion, education, awareness

Empowering and incentivizing coaches and volunteers:

- More Indigenous volunteer coaches
- More paid full-time Indigenous coaches
- Finding ways to incentivize volunteers, e.g., working with governments and businesses to provide paid leave for time off to participate in events
- Professional development

Investing in community athletes through opportunities in sport and recreation:

- Find ways to identify and develop Indigenous athletes and increase their participation
- Support high performance athletes
- Increase opportunities for small communities to participate in territorial and national games
- Create connections within and between communities

Investing in the future through equitable and ample funding:

- Funding adjusted for cost-of-living differentials cross NWT
- Less policy and red tape, streamlined funding processes
- Flexibility to reflect community priorities

Provide sufficient investment in sport and recreation infrastructure:

- Funding for infrastructure development and maintenance
- Keep facilities up to date
- Regional facilities

Prioritize and incorporate traditional practices and culture:

- Include traditional knowledge and practices in programming
- Recognize the expertise of Indigenous knowledge holders in traditional practices and on-the-land programming
- Understand and acknowledge the contributions of Indigenous governments
- Make cultural training and sensitivity training widely available
- Use the TRC and UNDRIP as lenses

Territorial Sport Organizations

Working Well

TSO representatives emphasized how much they appreciate the move to three-year funding arrangements with MACA, and also noted MACA's flexibility in allowing them to change proposed activities during the Covid-19 pandemic. Having multi-year funding provides many TSOs with the ability to plan beyond a one-year horizon, including recruiting and retaining staff. Several TSOs felt that the recent switch to having MACA fund them directly is an improvement and reduces their administrative burden. MACA's *RYSE* and *Local Sports Leaders* programs were mentioned by several TSOs as being helpful.

Several TSOs mentioned that they appreciate the strong support from ASCNWT, specifically with coach training, making connections with communities, and supporting equipment purchases for communities. Support from SNF was also noted, both for coach training and for coordination of major games. Some TSOs are taking creative approaches to coaching and official development, for example, Broomball NWT's "train-the-trainer" approach.

Many TSOs expressed that they have been able to craft successful partnerships with communities, for example, Snowboarding NWT has worked with the Village of Fort Simpson and the Łíídlıı Kúę First Nation to develop facilities and programming in that community. There are active sport clubs in many communities, and TSOs have encountered strong community support for their programming which leads to widespread participation. TSOs also noted that there is a supportive business community in the NWT that they can turn to for sponsorship.

TSOs emphasized the key role that volunteers play in every aspect of sport and recreation in the NWT. Just one of many examples offered is the role that the "Guerilla Groomers" play in Yellowknife, where a group of volunteers set cross-country ski trails around the city for the enjoyment of all residents.

Challenges and barriers

One major issue flagged was volunteer burnout: volunteers are exhausted, and coaches do not want to do administrative work, but most volunteers end up wearing many hats – including coaching, raising funds, and logistics - because there is simply no one else to do it. The turnover of local champions in communities causes instability when people move on, and often there are no volunteers to fill the gap. This is also an issue when local volunteers "age out" and no one is there to replace them.

TSOs are also feeling the impact of inflation, with budgets capped and costs rising. For some, the current funding is not enough to extend to hiring staff. For those with staff, it is difficult to recruit and retain when the cost of living has gone up, but salaries have not grown. Insurance costs are also rising – although most TSOs obtain insurance through their national sport organization, this is driving fee increases. Several TSOs expressed that if they had more staff capacity, they would be able to focus more on fund-raising and leverage additional funding – but the administrative burden associated with proposal writing and reporting places a demand on staff time.

The prohibitive costs of travel and accommodation are also a barrier to participation in inter-community, regional, territorial, and national events. This has always been the case but is becoming worse with

inflation. Risk management requirements, such as not being allowed to billet youth in private homes, are driving costs and also making it more challenging to find volunteers. This makes it difficult to bring together participants from across the NWT.

The lack of facilities outside Yellowknife was also noted as a barrier, as was the perception that community governments do not prioritize investments in recreation facilities, whether developing new infrastructure or ongoing maintenance. Different communities place differing priorities on supporting recreation, for example, some local ski clubs receive funding from community governments and others do not. Some TSOs find it difficult to make connections with community recreation programs, and several noted that SNF could play a more active role in supporting this.

There is an inequity between sports that are able to access public infrastructure – school gyms and community-owned recreation facilities – and those who are required to develop their own infrastructure, e.g., cross-country skiing, which requires buildings and trail setting equipment, and snowboarding, which has developed hills in some communities. The lack of funding programs for small capital and infrastructure development puts the latter category of sports at a financial disadvantage. It was also noted that in some jurisdictions, community governments play a larger role – for example, some cities develop and maintain networks of cross-country ski trails.

Even for those sports that are able to use public infrastructure, there are challenges as there is often competition for access. Some sports experienced a drop in membership when access was restricted during Covid and will have to build back their membership. TSOs also noted a drop in retention rates among youth, particularly girls and women.

While several TSOs praised MACA's *RYSE* program as a success that helps them host events in small communities, some feel that it is administratively cumbersome, and that the amount of funding available is not sufficient for hosting events in communities outside Yellowknife. The 70% cap on what *RYSE* will cover makes it difficult to find the balance of the funding required for an event.

Several TSOs noted that there is a shortage of female and Indigenous coaches across NWT.

TSOs' discussion of challenges and barriers focused largely on funding support and processes. Although pleased with the multi-year funding approach, TSOs are frustrated by several features of MACA's funding process, including:

- The process is static. There is no opportunity to increase funding – not only because the overall budget remains the same, but because MACA's process for the 2023-2026 contribution agreements did not allow any requests for increased funding. This presents a barrier to TSOs whose membership and/or activities are growing.
- Many TSOs feel that the funding process lacks transparency and accountability. TSO funding amounts are set at historical averages, with no apparent link to performance or achievements. TSOs also expressed that there is no accountability for TSOs who are not performing well – their funding is not tied to reporting and remains stable. Funding does not appear to be tied to how well TSOs reflect national and territorial policies and priorities in their activities.
- MACA's reporting process for WCLP funding is not user-friendly and is creating an elevated level of frustration for TSOs. Some noted that the reporting tools simply do not work.

- Template funding policies do not work when there is so much diversity among sports, including factors like operating costs, liability requirements, infrastructure requirements, and potential for membership and participation. For example, individual sports report membership numbers differently, some based on participation and some on fee payments, and this can skew reporting.
- There is a perceived funding inequity between the TROs and TSOs. Some TSOs feel that SNF receives a large amount of funding relative to the services that it provides and feel that there should be a reset to ensure more funding flows directly to TSOs.

Several TSOs indicated that there is a missed opportunity to achieve efficiencies and reduce the administrative burden if there were an effective way for them to share administrative costs and processes. For example, sharing services like bookkeeping, accounting, payroll, marketing, and communications, and even proposal writing and reporting could provide support and potentially allow more funds to be used for direct programming. In a similar vein, some TSOs noted the burden of maintaining registration under the NWT Societies Act and volunteer boards for so many small organizations as a challenge, especially when it is so hard to recruit volunteer board members; and speculated that there might be opportunities for collaboration in this area as well.

Vision for the Framework

All TSO participants emphasized the importance of focusing on grassroots, community-level programming, and the need to ensure that there are opportunities for all NWT youth to participate in fun, non-competitive recreational sport programming. The Framework is seen as an opportunity to highlight the enjoyment of being physically active and developing a passion for physical literacy through life, rather than promoting competitive sports. At the same time, we need to celebrate our high-performance role models to help motivate youth. Many spoke to the critical role that the sector plays as a social determinant of health, supporting not only physical well-being but mental and emotional well-being. Some spoke of the role that the sector can play in an effective suicide prevention approach.

Other themes included the need for a widespread focus on developing physical literacy for all NWT kids, and the importance of supporting and recognizing local champions. Another highlight was the need for develop more local leaders and champions, and ensuring that there are qualified, full-time recreation coordinators in all communities. Infrastructure development should be a priority, with more innovation at the design stage to provide multi-purpose facilities in smaller communities – and TSOs can provide input into this.

TSOs emphasized the concept of equity and taking meaningful steps to ensure that programming is available and accessible for all residents of the NWT.

All TSO participants expressed that there is room for improvement in sector administration. They want to see an efficient, streamlined SPAR structure. Many ideas were brought forward about how an umbrella organization, or TSOs themselves, can achieve this through initiatives like sharing administrative functions, developing shared platforms for financial and marketing functions, and improving communications and coordination among TSOs and communities.

TSOs support including indicators related to safe sport and concussion protocols in their funding requirements and reporting but noted that cost is a barrier to implementing training and other protocols.

Some TSOs can access well-developed, effective safe sport policies from their national organizations while others lack access to these resources.

Funding was a strong theme for TSO participants, who feel that there is room to improve MACA's funding process starting with a focus on accountability and transparency. TSO participants noted the need for clear criteria for accessing WCLP funding, linked to the policy framework; and organizations need to be held accountable for meeting those criteria. Also noted was the need to be flexible and recognize that not all sports are the same. Many would like to see some kind of a special purpose fund to address unique challenges and opportunities that are not covered by current funding programs.

Conclusions and Next Steps

Everyone who participated in this engagement process brought to the table their passion for the importance of the sector, their desire to build a Framework that helps to shape the future, and their creative ideas. They shared information, insights, and ideas – and because there was no universal agreement on what is working and what needs to change, it has been challenging to summarize all of the input provided. Instead, this report summarizes feedback into universal themes that can help to shape the Framework.

Priorities that were highlighted in every engagement session included:

- Celebrate and support local champions and volunteers;
- Build capacity in the sector for recreation leaders, coaches, and officials;
- Prioritize Indigenous culture and traditional practices;
- Ensure that programming is accessible for all NWT residents – including but not limited to youth of all ages, seniors and Elders, people with mobility and other challenges, and 2SLGBTQQA+;
- Create a transparent, flexible, multi-year funding process that is responsive to community needs and priorities; and
- Invest in infrastructure – support the development of new infrastructure and invest in maintenance of existing infrastructure.

In addition to these universal themes, the following priorities were raised in most of the engagement discussions:

- Recognize the critical role that the sector plays in individual and community well-being, and embrace access to sport, physical activity, and recreation opportunities as a social determinant of health;
- Develop a uniquely northern definition of recreation;
- Apply a reconciliation and decolonization lens to all sector activities, finding ways to take meaningful action and respecting the principles of UNDRIP;
- Prioritize investment in grass-roots activities that reach all communities;
- Prioritize and increase investment in on-the-land programming;
- Prioritize intergenerational connections; and
- Ensure that the funding policies include clear accountability and are linked to the Framework.

Next Steps

Everyone who participated in the engagement sessions will be provided with a copy of this report and invited to flag any gaps or inaccuracies.

The themes and priorities outlined above will provide a foundation for the development of the new SPAR Framework, which will guide GNWT action and investment in the sector. The feedback on current funding policies and processes will be considered as MACA updates its funding agreements and accountability requirements.

Proposing actions was not part of the terms of reference for this phase of the project, but during the discussions, many people brought forward creative ideas for innovative approaches – including ideas on how to incentivize volunteers, support and mentorship for coaches, equitable funding arrangements, and innovative programs. In order to ensure these ideas are not lost, they are attached as Appendix C. Including them here does not mean that we are advocating any particular proposals, and these ideas may not be incorporated into new funding approaches, but they reflect the depth of discussions the engagement sessions and the shared commitment by participants to finding solutions.

APPENDIX A: LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS INVITED TO PARTICIPATE

Territorial and Regional SPAR sector organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal Sport Circle NWT • Mackenzie Recreation • NWT Recreation and Parks Association • Sport North Federation
Indigenous Governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acho Dene Koe First Nation and Fort Liard Métis Local #67 • Akaitcho Territory Government • Dehcho First Nations • Délı̨nę Got'ı̨nę Government • Gwich'in Tribal Council • Inuvialuit Regional Corporation • Kátł'odeeche First Nation • Northwest Territory Métis Nation • Sahtú Secretariat Incorporated • Salt River First Nation • Tłı̨chǫ Government
Indigenous Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arctic Indigenous Wellness Foundation • Dene Nahjo • Dene Nation • Native Women's Association • NT/NU Council of Friendship Centres • Western Arctic Youth Coalition
Non-Government Organizations representing underserved populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alzheimer's Society of NWT • Black Advocacy Coalition • Foster Family Coalition • FOXY/SMASH • Hay River Committee for Persons with Disabilities • Inclusion NWT • MS Society of NWT • Northern Mosaic Network • NWT Autism Society • NWT Disabilities Council • NWT Senior's Society • NWT Association of Communities • YWCA NWT
Territorial Sport Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 55+ Senior Games Association • Arctic Sports & Dene Games • Athletics NWT • Aurora Horse Association • Badminton NT • Basketball NWT • Broomball NWT

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cross Country Skiing NWT• Golf NT• Hockey NWT• NWT 5 Pin Bowlers' Association NWT Athletics• NWT Amateur Wrestling Association• NWT Biathlon Association• NWT Curling Association• NWT Dog Sledding Association• NWT Federation of Shooting Sports• NWT Figure Skating• NWT Gymnastics• NWT Judo Association• NWT Karate• NWT Kayaking Association• NWT School Athletic Association• NWT Snowboard• NWT Soccer• NWT Softball• NWT Squash• NWT Swimming• Special Olympics• Speed Skating NWT• Table Tennis North• Taekwondo NWT• Tennis NWT• Volleyball NWT
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APPENDIX B: LIST OF PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

Territorial and Regional Organizations

- Aboriginal Sports Circle NWT
- Mackenzie Recreation Association
- NWT Recreation and Parks Association
- Sport North Federation

Indigenous Governments and Organizations

- Northwest Territory Métis Nation
- NWT Native Women's Association
- NTNU Friendship Centres

Non-government Organizations representing underserved populations

- FOXY/SMASH
- Northern Mosaic Network
- NWT Seniors Society

Community Representatives

- ***15 individuals attended representing athletes, coaches, or community leaders***

Territorial Sport Organizations

- Cross Country NWT
- Hockey NWT
- NWT Athletics
- NWT Basketball and NWT Volleyball
- NWT Broomball
- NWT Judo Association
- NWT Softball and NWT Curling
- NWT Snowboard
- NWT Speedskating
- Table Tennis North
- Squash NWT

APPENDIX C: IDEAS FOR SOLUTIONS

This list is not exhaustive and ranges from small improvements to big ideas.

Building capacity

- Bring back the Recreation Leaders' Program as Aurora College moves to become a polytechnical university
- Support and mentor coaches through a territorial association
- Develop succession plans for local champions and coaches – work with youth leaders
- Develop a database of people who have trained as coaches
- Require high performance athletes who have been supported by MACA funding to “give back” by working with youth in communities, but provide training and orientation to make it effective
- Research and share best practices for increasing equitable participation on boards
- Better coordination of coach training
- Use ECE's *Mentor-Apprentice Program* as a model for building local champions
- More local programs to support and welcome front-line workers, to encourage them to get involved and to stick around
- Adapt national coaching certification programs to be more appropriate to NWT communities

Incentivizing volunteerism

- Explore expanding paid leave for coaches and officials with GNWT and other employers
- Establish a funding program to support coaches and officials taking unpaid leave to participate in events
- Explore the potential for tax breaks for volunteers
- Establish a process to recognize community efforts to promote SPAR activities

Cost of travel

- GNWT advocate with Canada for cheaper air travel
- GNWT advocate with airlines for more support
- GNWT develop a travel support funding program for regional and territorial events that involves a “base plus” approach, i.e., a base amount available to all and a top-up based on community or regional cost of living

Promote grass-roots programming

- MACA and/or TSOs support communities to conduct a local assessment to identify strengths and opportunities, i.e., what sport and recreation activities are most likely to be successful based on community geography, population, history, culture and tradition, and facilities. A similar approach could be used to develop regional plans.
- Require funding recipients to report on who participated in funded programs, by category (e.g., youth, Elders) to assess reach and impact
- Develop a database of what sports are played in what communities

Funding

- MACA move to more of a block funding approach, eliminate the many small pots and let communities and regions identify priorities
- Separate TSO funding policies and processes for different categories of sport (e.g., team sports vs. individual sports)
- Promote sport tourism – we may not have the facilities for major games, but every TSO holds Board and other meetings every year and these could be hosted in NWT

Infrastructure

- Establish a small fund, similar to the GNWT's *NGO Stabilization Fund*, which would allow TSOs to develop and/or maintain needed infrastructure (e.g., ski trail groomers)

Increasing regional and Indigenous involvement

- MACA consider implementing requirements to demonstrate regional and/or Indigenous board membership as a condition of funding

Promote Indigenous cultural traditions

- Include Elders in all youth activities, including travel to regional, territorial, and national events
- Create Indigenous sport leagues in Yellowknife

Safe sport

- Require Safe Sport certification for coaching at community level
- Incorporate more Indigenous traditional practices into regional and territorial events, e.g., hand games or drum dances during the evenings