



Let's Talk Agriculture

HAVE YOUR SAY ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

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English

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French

Kīspin ki nitawihtīn ē nīhīyawihk ōma ācimōwin, tipwāsinān.

Cree

Tłı̨chǫ yati k'èè. Dı wegodı newq dè, gots'o gonede.

Tłı̨chǫ

ʔerı̨htl'ís Dëne Sųłiné yati t'a huts'elkér xa beyáyatı theʔq ʔat'e, nuwe ts'ën yólti.

Chipewyan

Edı gondı dehgáh got'je zhatié k'èè edatl'eh enahddhę nide naxets'ę edahłi.

South Slavey

K'áhshó got'je xədə k'e hederi ʔedjhtl'ę yeriniwę nídé dúle.

North Slavey

Jii gwandak izhii ginjik vat'atr'ijahch'uu zhit yinohthan jı', diits'at ginohkhii.

Gwich'in

Uvanittuaq ilitchurisukupku Inuvialuktun, ququaqluta.

Inuvialuktun

Ćı̨dł ɁɁɁɁbΔc ɬɬɬɬɬɬɬc ΔoɁɁɁɁɁɁɁɁc, ɬɬɬɁɁɁɁɁɁɁc ɬɬɬɁɁɁɁɁɁɁc.

Inuktitut

Hapkua titiqqat pijumagupkit Inuinnaqtun, uvaptinnut hivajarlutit.

Inuinnaqtun

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Introduction (and Background)

The Government of Northwest Territories' (GNWT) Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment (ITI) is committed to increasing food security through locally produced, harvested, and affordable food. To support this goal, the GNWT and the Government of Canada worked together to fund the Canadian Agricultural Partnership program (later referred to as "the Partnership" program).

The Partnership is the fourth in a series of partnership agreements established to foster meaningful cross-jurisdictional partnerships to foster the growth of the agriculture and agri-food sector in the Canada. In the Northwest Territories (NWT), the Partnership objectives are realized through a suite of programs designed specifically for the sustainable development of our agriculture and agri-food sector. Resourcing for implementation of the Partnership in the NWT is split between Government of Canada and the GNWT, with each government contributing 60% and 40% of the required costs, respectively.

The Partnership is a five-year agreement worth \$1.12 million, running from April 2018 through to March 2023. Over the past five years, funding for the Partnership has supported new and established producers and processors, community and Indigenous governments, research bodies and non-governmental organizations with a wide range of training, business, infrastructure and market development, and agri-environmental planning opportunities.

To inform the drafting of the next five-year partnership agreement, ITI solicited reflections and perspectives from those involved in the NWT agriculture and agri-food sector. Between February – June 2022, individuals from all over the NWT provided feedback on the Partnership program through completion of an online survey on the Engage-ITI platform: <https://www.engage-iti.ca/canadian-agricultural-partnership>.

This “What We Heard” report is a summary of themes that emerged from the survey. Responses generated through the survey have been used to develop the next partnership agreement between the Government of Canada and the GNWT, which will take effect April 1st, 2023, and run through to March 2028.

The primary themes that emerged from the survey include:

- ***Awareness:*** One of the main challenges to the implementation of the Partnership program is a lack of awareness. Contributing to this, respondents suggested that the current application guidelines are too lengthy and complicated, and that it was unclear what segment of the NWT’s agriculture sector the Partnership was intended to support. Implementation of the next partnership agreement should prioritize clear communication of program objectives and target recipients, effective public outreach, and a simpler application process.
- ***Usefulness of the Partnership program to producers:*** Throughout the survey results, a range of perspectives were communicated on the extent to which the Partnership adequately supported agricultural producers. Most respondents agreed that they would like more assistance in operational and maintenance costs. Some have also mentioned that they would like funding that covers the purchase of equipment.
- ***Food security:*** The GNWT is committed to improving food security. While the overall objective of the Partnership program is to increase productivity in the agriculture sector, food security is not mentioned in the current policy framework. Respondents have mentioned throughout the survey that they would like funding for individual and community gardening as an incentive to improve local food security. Participants would like the issue of food security more prominently placed in the implementation of the next partnership program.
- ***Research:*** Participants have pointed out the need for accessible research and information on food-growing practices to assist NWT producers in adapting their techniques and growing practices to the NWT’s climate. While the Partnership includes an Agriculture and Agri-Research Fund which requires recipients to share their results with the public, respondents suggest that there should be more outreach for this program – both for applicants (to apply) and the public (in order to easily access research findings).

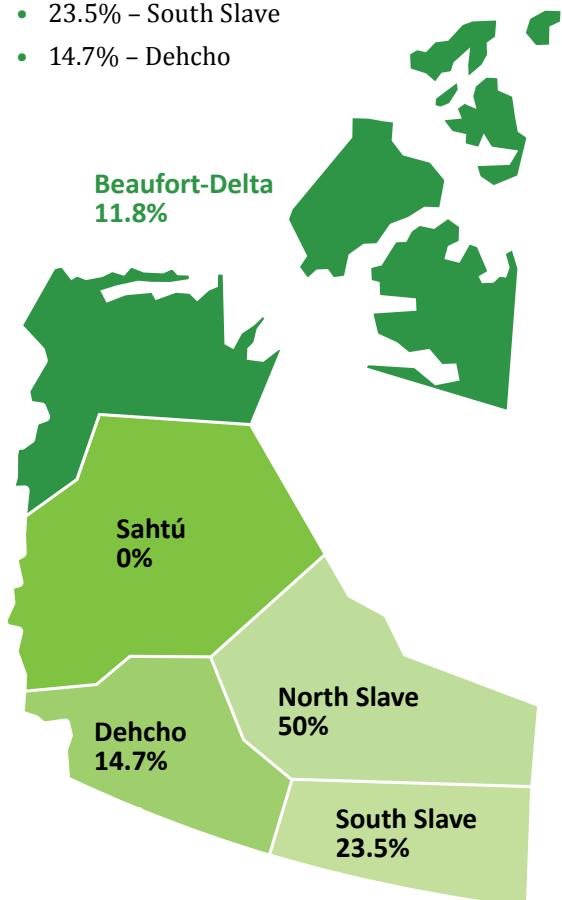
Survey Approach

The GNWT is now working with the Government of Canada on the next five-year agriculture and agri-food partnership agreement, which will take effect April 2023. An online survey was used as an engagement tool to inform the design of the next partnership agreement. The survey used a variety of techniques to pose questions on a range of topics.

Between February and June 2022, 130 visitors to the ITI-Engage platform were made aware of the survey. In total, there were 34 survey respondents.

By regions:

- 50% – North Slave
- 11.8% – Beaufort-Delta
- 23.5% – South Slave
- 14.7% – Dehcho



Total written submissions

(see the full list of questions in Appendix A):

- Question 5 (*please describe any barriers...*): 28 submissions
- Question 7 (*are there any other changes...*): 19 submissions
- Question 10 (*are there any other priority areas...*): 23 submissions
- Question 11 (*any other comments...*): 19 submissions

The questions and responses from the survey were organized in a spreadsheet, with each question receiving their own column. The written submission responses were analyzed and sorted by the overall theme. The overall themes were chosen based on the frequency of the topics or issues were mentioned in the written submission responses.

The priorities identified in the ranking and rating questions were selected by calculating the average rank of each proposed category and selecting the top priorities based on the criteria given by the question.

Results

Awareness of the Canadian Agriculture Partnership

All respondents were asked to indicate what Partnership programs they are aware of (see Q2 in Appendix 1). 67.6% of participants are aware of the Partnership program. In general, respondents were aware of the Partnership, however most were not aware of all 8 opportunities that the Partnership offers.

Out of 34 survey respondents, only 11 (32.4%) were recipients of Partnership funding (see Q3 below).

Respondents who do receive Partnership funding are from the following programs:

1. Agriculture and Food Processing Development Program (8 recipients)
2. Food Safety Program (4 recipients)
3. Agriculture Training Program (3 recipients)
4. Market Development Program (2 recipients)
5. Small-scale Foods Program (1 recipient)

In addition, 3 respondents identified as recipients with did not know what program(s) they receive funding from.

Other participants were asked why they did not receive funding from the Partnership (see Q4). The majority of respondents indicated that they were not aware of the program or that they did not need funding support.

The results suggests that there could be more work done to market this program, in addition to making simpler guidelines.

Opportunities to Improve the Partnership

When asked to describe challenges associated with current implementation of the Partnership (see Q5), respondents identified the following themes:

Fiscal year timeframe constraints: Some respondents noted that the timeline for funding is difficult to ensure the work planned can be completed in the season before winter and noted how two-year projects would provide more practical timeframe for many agricultural projects.

Accessibility: A lack of awareness of the Partnership program is one of the main issues indicated by individuals. There is a lack of outreach/marketing to make producers aware of this program. In addition to lack of awareness, participants have also noted that the application process is lengthy and too complicated to understand. One participant has also noted how the program processes are overwhelming for someone who is looking to break into the agriculture industry.

Lack of clarity within the guidelines has also introduced misconceptions regarding applicant eligibility – with some respondents thinking that they needed to be at a certain “size” of business to be able to apply for the Partnership program or that they needed to be a greenhouse producer to access funding. The minimum requirement for having 1 acre of property is also a barrier for some producers, and only reinforces the perception that a producer needs to be a certain level of production to be able to apply.

Access to land: Some respondents indicated that land is not easily accessible and would like ITI to collaborate with other departments to make the process of acquiring land more accessible for producers.

Lack of funds to cover operational costs: There is a lack of funding that covers the costs of operational needs (ex. Cost of electricity, water, soil, and wages for employees). One individual indicated that funding from the Partnership programs does not make a big impact for larger scale producers, since the costs of operational needs grows as the scale of production grows. They would like the GNWT to offer energy rebates for heating, fuel, and transportation to assist in operational costs.

Lack of funding for large-scale productions: Producers would like funding for large-scale projects, including funding for specialized equipment.

Lack of funding to support individual food production: Survey takers would like funding that encourages individuals to grow their own food. This is suggested to be done through providing soil, water rebates, providing seeds, and providing educational workshops.

Access to information: There is a lack of access to information that can assist an individual in starting agriculture production. Participants would like information regarding soil testing, permafrost areas, building sturdy greenhouses, and other information that is relevant for producers to know and be able to grow produce effectively and efficiently.

Respondents were asked to rate possible changes to the Partnership on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being “not important” and 5 being “most important” (see Q6). While respondents generally approve of the proposed changes (giving each category an average rating of “3 – Somewhat important” and above), they are in high agreement that having “*more flexible amounts and categories*” is an important change for the Partnership programs (with over 96% of participants giving this change a “5” or “4”).

The top three proposed changes:

1. *“More flexible amounts and categories”*
(Average rating: 4.46)
2. *“More flexible eligibility criteria”*
(Average rating: 4.21)
3. *“More relevant timing of funding in consideration of seasonal requirements”*
(Average rating: 4.12)

Respondents were also asked to propose changes to the Partnership (see Q7), resulting in the following suggestions:

- Allowing multi-year funding that aligns with the schedules of producers.
- Access to information (either through community outreach, information sessions or through simpler application guidelines).
- More robust definition of “sweat equity” and how it can contribute to “*at least 10% of cost value to a given project*.”
- Funding to hire workers and cover typical operational costs.
- Creating a program related to food security.
- Increasing research efforts.
- Sharing information regarding agriculture projects throughout the NWT (ex. Information regarding CAP projects throughout the NWT, accessible information from research projects).
- Fostering collaboration by introducing an NWT-wide network where producers can share methods of growing food and building business capacity.
- Assistance in filling out applications.
- Increasing the maximum amounts in funding.

Priority Areas for Funding Support and NWT Agriculture Strategy Targets

When asked to rate the area of highest priority for funding support (Q8), respondents generally agreed that all of the proposed funding areas were more than “somewhat important”, giving an average rating for all the proposed categories a “3.79”.

The top three areas that were highly rated (with 5 as the “most important”) by respondents were:

1. *“Farm infrastructure and land development”* (average rating: 4.18)
2. *“Food processing and value-adding”* (average rating: 4.07)
3. *“Community projects and food security”* and *“Environmental sustainability on farms”* (tied-average rating: 3.89)

Respondents were asked to rank NWT Agriculture Strategy targets, with “1” being the most important and “5” being the least (Q9). Respondents have ranked each strategy target by the following order:

1. *“Increase the number of agricultural producers”* (average rank: 2.27)
2. *“Improve public access to locally produced food”* (average rank: 2.37)
3. *“Increase the number of agriculture and agri-food businesses”* (average rank: 2.57)
4. *“Improve the viability and profitability of agricultural and agri-food businesses”* (average rank: 2.76)

In general, respondents indicated that every strategy target is equally important but are slightly more concerned in increasing the access and availability of agricultural goods and producers, rather than increasing profit.

Priorities for the Next Partnership Agreement

When asked for other priority areas that were not mentioned in the survey (Q10), participants pointed out various areas that the next partnership agreement for agriculture and agri-food could focus on:

- *Funding for research:* Participants would like accessible research and expertise in their local communities. This would inform local producers about the soil and growing conditions, along with gardening practices- which is beneficial for small communities especially in the arctic communities.
- *Community gardens:* Respondents would like funding for community gardens through training/courses on simple gardening projects- to overall introduce and support community gardening.
- *Market diversification:* One individual pointed out the lack of diversity in the products being sold. This respondent more *“support to grow (a) variety of products”*. Another individual suggested funding that is targeted specifically for cannabis producers.

Further Reflections from Survey Respondents

When asked for any comments regarding the next policy framework for the Partnership program (Q11), a range of recommendations were made. Overall, survey respondents are in support of a Partnership program that tackles food insecurity and allows for flexibility. Respondents would like to see the Partnership program support the growth of local producers, individual growers, and community gardens, and allow flexibility in the usage of funds (Ex. Being able to access additional funding at the end of the fiscal year).

Throughout the survey, respondents shared their concerns regarding food security in the NWT- with some respondents suggesting that the Partnership should introduce funding to target these concerns. Respondents indicated that funding for community scale and individual scale efforts should be supported through the Partnership, in addition to a program that is directly concerned with increasing food security. Introducing such programs can incentivize people to grow their own produce and tackle food insecurity from their own homes.

Climate change and sustainability is another concern for respondents. One respondent supports funding that encourages sustainability for local producers, such as compost programs.

Multiple respondents noted that the Partnership should look at producers of different capacity sizes. One respondent urged the Partnership program and ITI to *“look at grassroots, community scale initiatives that contributed to food security and healthy living.”* Survey respondents would also like the funding limit to be increased per recipient (for each individual/business/non-profit). One respondent suggested that the GNWT should negotiate increased federal funding and inviting federal funders to view projects that have been supported with funding from the Partnership.

Ideas

In the 'brainstormer' section of the online survey, open idea categories were listed to collect public comments about the different key topics. To add ideas, respondents were required to register and sign in which involved submitting an email, creating a password, choosing a screen name as well as agreeing to the Engagement HQ Terms of Use and Privacy Policy (<https://www.engage-iti.ca/terms> and <https://www.engage-iti.ca/privacy>). While this process makes online commenters accountable for their input, it also is a barrier for some and may have contributed to the limited number of responses.

Improving Access to Local Foods in the NWT

Survey respondents were asked to give their experience in how to improve the access to local foods from the NWT and increasing the number of agricultural producers.

Out of two respondents, one stated that they would like to see "*support for distribution*". This respondent has stated that high shipping costs are a barrier to small producers in accessing markets outside of their local community. Introducing a distribution center or providing connections to food distribution suppliers will assist in keeping costs down for small-scale producers.

Another respondent has suggested "*decentralizing and localizing food production*". This respondent suggests using regulation and policy to identify and introduce the framework of popular agriculture productions, and apply them to each NWT community. The respondent states that this framework would reduce costs of distribution, develop the economy of local communities, and reduce NWT's reliance of out-territory resources.

Increasing the Number of Agricultural Producers

Seven respondents provided ideas to improve the number of producers with the following suggestions:

- Using local peat bogs to introduce commercial cranberry production.
- Introducing whitefish aquaculture.
- Introducing a farm bank that assists in loans for equipment and land purchases with low-interest loans that are for the purpose of agriculture industry growth.
- Developing community greenhouses where farmers can rent a space, collaborate, and is open year-round.
- Introducing an NWT seed bank (a repository of seeds from various species).
- Land access guidelines: There should be information and contacts provided regarding what land can be accessed in the NWT, the process of acquiring land, and specific information about the land that a prospective producer should be aware of, prior to starting agricultural production.
- Funding for large agriculture projects in the NWT such as (but not limited to) the building of greenhouses, funding for equipment and processing facilities).

Next Steps/Conclusion

Building a resilient and diverse NWT food system, strengthening relationships with community and Indigenous governments, increasing participation in the agriculture and agri-food sectors, and revitalizing traditional and local food systems are priorities emerging nationally and are supported by the GNWT.

The agriculture and agrifood sector of the NWT is diverse, ranging from small community gardens to commercial greenhouses. The sector is an

important contributor to local food security, and the GNWT is committed to the growth of this sector through increasing capacity, efficiency, and encouraging entrepreneurship. In preparing to implement the new Sustainable Agriculture Partnership (S-CAP) in the NWT, the information and ideas generated by this survey will be considered in the refinement of new sector support programs and funding opportunities.

APPENDIX A: Online Survey Questions

1. What region of the NWT do you live?

- Beaufort Delta
- Sahtú
- North Slave
- South Slave
- Dehcho

2. Are you aware of the Canadian Agricultural Partnership (the Partnership) funding programs? Mark all that apply.

- Market Development Program
- Agriculture Training Program
- Agriculture and Food Processing Development Program
- Agriculture and Agri-food Research Program
- Food Safety Program
- Agriculture and the Environment Program
- Agriculture Awareness Program
- Small-scale Foods Program (Take-a-Kid Gardening Program, Community-based Introduction to Agriculture, Promotion, Purchase and Use of Local Foods)
- I'm not aware of any CAP funding programs

3. Have you ever received funding from a Canadian Agricultural Partnership (the Partnership) funding program? Mark all that apply.

- Market Development Program
- Agriculture Training Program
- Agriculture and Food Processing Development Program

• Agriculture and Agri-food Research Program

- Food Safety Program
- Agriculture and the Environment Program
- Agriculture Awareness Program
- Small-scale Foods Program (Take-a-Kid Gardening Program, Community-based Introduction to Agriculture, Promotion, Purchase and Use of Local Foods)
- Yes, I received funding, but I do not know what program I received funding from
- I am not a recipient of any CAP funding programs

4. If you answered no to receiving funding from the Partnership, why not? Mark all that apply.

- Not aware of the program
- Not eligible based on the eligibility criteria
- Process was confusing or difficult
- Doesn't fit my needs
- Application was denied
- I don't need funding support
- Other (please specify)

5. In your experience, please describe any barriers that you have encountered that are not addressed in the current Partnership program?

6. What changes would help the Partnership programs for the next policy? On a scale of 1 – 5 with 1 being 'not important' and 5 being 'most important', rate the following:

- Clear and streamlined program guide
- More flexible eligibility criteria
- More flexible amounts and categories
- More communication and advertising of programs
- Easier process of application and reporting
- More relevant timing of funding in consideration of seasonal requirements

7. Are there any other changes that would help the Partnership programs that you feel are important?

8. What areas are of highest priority for funding support? On a scale of 1 – 5 with 1 being 'not important' and 5 being 'most important', rate the following:

- Training, education, and extension services
- Market development and marketing
- Farm infrastructure and land development
- Food processing and value-adding
- Food safety infrastructure and training
- Community projects and food security
- Environmental sustainability on farms
- Research and technology

9. With 1 being most important, rank the priority of the following strategy targets that would strengthen the NWT agriculture sector. If you have any comments, suggestions, or ideas about these strategy topics, please leave them on the Have Your Say page.

10. Are there any other priority areas for funding support you feel are important?

11. Any other comments about the next policy framework for the Canadian Agriculture Partnership program?

IDEAS

In your experience, what would help the most with improving access for the public to food produced in the NWT?

In your experience, what would help the most with increasing the number of agricultural producers?

In your experience, what would help the most with increasing the number of agricultural businesses?

In your experience, what would help the most with improving the viability and profitability of agricultural businesses?

In your experience, what would help the most with supporting more Indigenous producers?

Do you have any suggestions for the communication of CAP programs?

