

Centre for the North.



The success of Canada's Northern, remote, and Indigenous communities is widely recognized as critical to Canada's economic growth and social cohesion. The issues these communities face are complex and sometimes conflictual, but meaningful progress in this area would significantly contribute to reconciliation and our objectives as a country.

The Centre for the North (CFN) is a collaborative research initiative that brings together senior leaders from Indigenous groups, the public and private sectors, and academia to pool resources and develop a research agenda that addresses Northern and Indigenous policy issues. Through the CFN, The Conference Board of Canada fills knowledge gaps that challenge decision-making and policy development within three priority areas: infrastructure development and maintenance; Indigenous youth; and governance.



The Conference Board
of Canada

Le Conference Board
du Canada

The Conference Board of Canada launched the Centre for the North in 2009. It has since grown into a respected voice and trusted convener, providing a safe space for constructive dialogue on the issues confronting Northern and remote Canada. The Centre identifies solutions to key challenges that confront organizations across a range of sectors.

Centre for the North members have a vested interest in building a prosperous, healthy future for Canada's remote regions and communities. Members and invited guests meet behind closed doors twice a year to review research findings, plan future research, learn from experts, and network with peers. Meetings take place across the country in partnership with local public, private, and Indigenous organizations, providing a unique opportunity for learning about key topics through a regional lens.

Key Objectives

- To further our knowledge and discourse on pivotal policy issues that concern Indigenous, private, and public stakeholders, and the country as a whole.
- To develop and broadly disseminate independent, evidence-based research that informs decision-making on critical issues associated with remote regions and communities.
- To provide a safe space for thought leaders and stakeholders to pursue their shared objectives through discussion and pooled financial resources.

Who Should Join the Conversation?

The Centre for the North is for senior corporate, Indigenous, public sector, NGO, and academic leaders with a vested interest in the policies, challenges, and opportunities that pertain to Northern and remote Canada. Members want to build trusted relationships that will help create a prosperous and healthy future for Canada's remote regions and communities.

Exclusive Benefits

- Be part of the only national research Centre in the country devoted to remote-region and community issues, and keep your finger on the pulse of key developments and conversations.
- Pool and leverage your organization's investment with the other members of the Centre to obtain a greater return than you would on your own.
- Direct a portion of your investment toward areas of the Centre's research program that are priorities for you and your organization.
- Participate in two meetings a year and gain access to leading-edge information, as well as the knowledge, perspectives, and best practices of experts and your peers.
- Develop, guide, and review research by sitting on project advisory committees, and receive publications before they are officially released.
- Stay engaged between meetings through webinars, roundtables, bulletins, and social media.

“The Centre for the North's broad-based public policy research is a valuable tool in addressing a range of Indigenous and Northern issues. We appreciate opportunities to share experiences with other Northern policy-makers at the Centre's professionally run meetings.”

Shaleen Woodward, Acting Deputy Minister, Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations,
Government of the Northwest Territories



Looking Forward

Three major themes have emerged as priority areas for stakeholders and the members of the Centre that require further discussion, thought, research, and recommendations.

Infrastructure in Remote Canada

Underdeveloped infrastructure is a significant contributor to poor socio-economic outcomes and presents serious obstacles for natural resource projects and economic development more generally. The following topics have been identified as priorities areas:

- availability and quality of housing
- energy infrastructure and security
- transportation and access infrastructure
- information technology and telecommunications infrastructure
- implications of climate change on the built environment
- infrastructure financing

Indigenous Youth

Communities, industry, and governments all recognize the importance of developing the social conditions, life skills, and technical capacities that youth require to prosper and effectively join the workforce, and to contribute to Indigenous empowerment and self-determination.

Within this theme, the following topics have been identified as priorities:

- early childhood development
- education, training, and skills development
- culture promotion and enhancement
- social support
- mental health

Governance

Good governance in remote regions and communities presents a formidable challenge. Residents in remote Canada must contend with a unique set of issues, such as jurisdictional complexity, isolation, and a lack of capacity. The following topics have been identified as priority areas within this theme:

- capacity development
- resource co-management and revenue-sharing
- jurisdictional complexity
- regulatory regimes
- strategic planning and community development

“The Centre for the North is not an advocacy body, which makes its impartial and credible voice on our priority issues a welcome addition to the conversation.”

Jonathan Thompson, Director, Assembly of First Nations

Research Highlights

Since its inception, the Centre has released over 30 research reports on a wide array of issues. The Centre also releases biannual territorial forecasts that provide an overview of economic trends and drivers in the three territories. These forecasts are recognized as invaluable tools for decision-makers. Some of the most recent reports include the following:

Finding the Win-Win in Major Project Agreements: Lessons From Indigenous Groups and Industry Proponents (March 2017)

Rethinking Infrastructure Financing: Canada's Northern and Aboriginal Communities (February 2017)

P3s and Transportation Infrastructure: Experience and Opportunities for Canada's North (February 2017)

Power Shift: Electricity for Canada's Remote Communities (September 2016)

“The Centre for the North produces top-quality research studies and stimulates open and transparent debate about the most pressing Northern issues of our time. The North is much better for the rigorous, open, and culturally aware contributions of the Centre.”

Dr. Ken Coates, Canada Research Chair in Regional Innovation, Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy, University of Saskatchewan.

Member Organizations

Assembly of First Nations

Business Development Bank of Canada

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

Cisco Canada

First Air

Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (Northern Affairs Organization, and Lands and Economic Development)

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami

Government of Nunavut

Government of Ontario

Government of Quebec (Société du Plan Nord)

Government of the Northwest Territories

Government of Yukon

Makivik Corporation

Métis National Council

Royal Bank of Canada

TD Bank Group

Transport Canada

University of Saskatchewan

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