



Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami Pre-Budget Submission **2020**

About Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) is the national representative organization for Inuit in Canada, the majority of whom live in the 51 communities of Inuit Nunangat, the Inuit homeland encompassing the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (Northwest Territories), Nunavut, Nunavik (Northern Quebec), and Nunatsiavut (Northern Labrador). ITK advocates for policies, programs and services to address the social, cultural, political and environmental challenges facing our people.

The comprehensive land claim agreements that have been settled in Inuit Nunangat continue to form a core component of our organization's mandate. These land claims have the status of protected treaties under section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, and we remain committed to working in partnership with the Crown toward their full implementation. Consistent with its founding purpose, ITK represents the rights and interests of Inuit at the national level through a democratic governance structure that represents all Inuit regions.

ITK is governed by a Board of Directors composed of the following members:

- Chair and CEO, Inuvialuit Regional Corporation
- President, Makivik Corporation
- President, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated
- President, Nunatsiavut Government

In addition to voting members, the following non-voting Permanent Participant Representatives also sit on the Board:

- President, Inuit Circumpolar Council Canada
- President, Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada
- President, National Inuit Youth Council

Vision

Canadian Inuit are prospering through unity and self-determination

Mission

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami is the national voice for protecting and advancing the rights and interests of Inuit in Canada



Introduction

This pre-budget submission recommends that the key to supporting climate mitigation and adaptation in Inuit Nunangat is to make major investments in infrastructure, renewable energy, and Inuit-led climate and research initiatives. It focuses on the importance of broad infrastructure investments across Inuit Nunangat, as well as measures which enhance the competitiveness of Inuit Nunangat by reducing the high cost of living. Inuit Nunangat experiences a crippling infrastructure deficit that impacts on health and safety, economic development, cost of living, and transportation and connectivity. These challenges are compounded by climate change and further complicated by the opening of the Arctic to increasing shipping traffic, tourism, and natural resource extraction.

Inuit Nunangat

Inuit Nunangat is the Inuit homeland in Canada, made up of 51 communities in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (Northwest Territories), Nunavut, Nunavik (Northern Quebec), and Nunatsiavut (Northern Labrador). Inuit Nunangat encompasses nearly one third of Canada's landmass, its entire Arctic coastline, and significant offshore areas. It is a distinct geographic, political, and cultural region that is co-managed by Inuit and the federal government through governance structures established by comprehensive Inuit land claim agreements.

Applying an Inuit Nunangat fiscal policy

Budget 2020 should build on progress made in the past four federal budgets by continuing to implement an Inuit Nunangat fiscal policy in the allocation of Inuit-specific funding. The inclusion of an Inuit priorities section in the past two budgets was a welcome and positive development and should continue in Budget 2020. Continued implementation of an Inuit Nunangat fiscal policy in federal budgets creates efficiency, cost savings, and more immediate positive impacts and benefits for Inuit that in turn benefit all Canadians.

Stimulating economic self-reliance in Inuit Nunangat

In order to help stimulate economic self-reliance in Inuit Nunangat, the federal government should revise its procurement policy, consistent with the needs of Inuit, to enable and support corporations and businesses owned by Inuit land claims organizations and beneficiaries of Inuit land claims agreements to access no-bid federal contracts. And, consistent with the spirit of economic reconciliation there should be a review of all federal business and economic development programs that support Inuit communities, organizations, business and individuals who wish to pursue commercial activities to ensure they meet the needs of all organizations and individuals. Establishing a capacity-building pilot program for Inuit community-based service organizations to enhance their capacity to deliver programs and services, along with establishing an Inuit Nunangat network to share information and best practices, would enhance Inuit self-sufficiency.

Supporting Inuit-led climate mitigation and adaptation

Budget 2020 should support Inuit in advancing coordinated, effective action to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change. At the same time, it should prioritize closing infrastructure gaps between Inuit Nunangat and most other parts of Canada through major new and re-profiled investments. ITK recommends that the federal government partner with Inuit to establish an Arctic Infrastructure Bank with an initial investment of \$1 billion over five years to fund new infrastructure and mitigate the effects of climate change on existing infrastructure, and to ensure the funds are directed based on Inuit needs.

Key areas for investment

This pre-budget submission focuses on the following priority areas:

- 1. National Inuit Climate Change Strategy:** The National Inuit Climate Change Strategy (NICCS) was released in June 2019 and is the only comprehensive Arctic-focused climate change strategy in Canada. The Strategy identifies five priority areas where coordinated action is necessary to meet our pressing adaptation, mitigation, and resilience-building needs: 1) knowledge and capacity-building; 2) health, well-being, and the environment; 3) food systems; 4) infrastructure; and 5) energy. ITK is seeking \$10 million over five years to advance implementation of NICCS objectives.
- 2. National Inuit Strategy on Research:** Arctic research in Canada is governed, funded and administered in an uncoordinated and wasteful manner that rarely benefits Inuit. In order to help remedy this problem, ITK released the National Inuit Strategy on Research (NISR) in March 2018 and its companion Implementation Plan in August 2018. The NISR articulates Inuit expectations for research, defines Inuit-preferred approaches to building research partnerships, and identifies the actions needed to enhance the effectiveness, impact, and usefulness of Inuit Nunangat research for Inuit. ITK is seeking \$18 million over five years to advance implementation of the NISR.



3. Renewable energy: No community in Inuit Nunangat is connected to the North American grid and, with the exception of Inuvik and Tuktoyaktuk, none are connected to the road system. Each community is served by a local power plant dependent on fossil fuels, predominantly diesel, for power generation. The cost of diesel power generation is staggering, driving up the cost of living for households, the cost of doing business for private enterprise, and the cost of public service delivery for all levels of government. For electricity generation alone, ITK estimates that over \$100 million is spent annually on diesel¹. Energy security in Inuit Nunangat is also compromised by the volatility of the cost of diesel, which has seen price fluctuations nearing 400% in the last 20 years². While there is interest in deploying renewable energy technologies, a significant barrier to greater deployment of renewables, especially by independent power producers, is the rate offered by the incumbent utility for renewable energy based solely on the avoided cost of diesel³. Recognizing that there are multiple barriers, a range of policy instruments must be used in combination. In Canada and internationally, Feed-in Tariffs (FITs) have been an effective policy instrument to support community and/or Indigenous renewable energy projects. An Inuit Nunangat feed-in tariff for Inuit-owned power projects serving our communities would transcend jurisdictional boundaries and differing energy policies and provide direct support for Inuit renewable energy projects. At the same time, in order to directly encourage and support Inuit communities transition to renewable energy sources such as hydro, wind and solar, ITK recommends that the federal government develop an Arctic renewable energy fund with an initial investment of \$500 million over five years to support renewable energy projects and initiatives.

4. Social infrastructure: Social infrastructure investments are needed to enhance the health and safety of Inuit Nunangat communities, support women entering and remaining in the workforce, and to create the environmental conditions necessary for optimal lifelong development in children. Net outcomes of social infrastructure investments would include reduced income inequality and greater self-sufficiency and competitiveness. The following social infrastructure investments are needed to help achieve these outcomes:

- **Early learning and child care centres:** Access to early learning and childcare is linked to a number of positive knock-on effects, including: school preparedness and educational attainment, health and wellness, and greater employment among parents and families. In Nunavik, child care availability and cost are among the factors linked to that region's stronger labour market performance when compared to other Inuit Nunangat regions⁴. Investment in physical infrastructure is required to support greater access to early learning and child care in all Inuit communities.
- **Family violence shelters and transitional housing:** ITK is seeking federal investment in family violence shelters and transitional housing in all Inuit Nunangat communities. Growing up in a safe and secure environment sets a foundation for lifelong health and wellbeing. Household safety and security are linked to greater educational attainment, employment, and health and wellness outcomes. However too many families in Inuit Nunangat experience or are exposed to physical and/or sexual violence, creating risk for intergenerational trauma and a host of negative outcomes including underemployment and poverty, low educational attainment, and poor mental health. The severe housing shortage in Inuit Nunangat means the most vulnerable in society often cannot escape violence. Existing family violence shelter capacity is strained. There are currently only 13 family violence shelters serving all of Inuit Nunangat. Investments in family violence shelters and transitional housing are required to address the twin challenges of household crowding and violence. Transitional housing is needed for those transitioning out of family violence shelters and who may require longer-term support. Transitional housing bridges the gap between family violence and homeless shelters and public or private housing options.
- **Addictions treatment centres:** Addictions treatment is not accessible to most residents of Inuit Nunangat despite the disproportionate burden of intergenerational trauma faced by Inuit Nunangat communities compared to most other parts of Canada. Nearly all Inuit Nunangat residents who require addictions treatment must leave our homeland for addictions treatment centres in southern Canada, often at great expense to provincial and territorial governments. The limited accessibility of addictions treatment is a disincentive for those who require the most support, and treatment centres in the south are in most cases not Inuit-specific and do not provide services in Inuktitut. There is currently only one addictions treatment centre in Inuit Nunangat, Isuarsivik located in Kuujjuaq, Nunavik. Isuarsivik is a non-profit rehabilitation centre specializing in the treatment of substance, drug and alcohol abuse.



- **Social housing:** Inuit have been experiencing a housing crisis for more than half a century. Incremental federal investments in Inuit Nunangat housing have failed to end the housing crisis and will never be enough to fill the housing backlog in our communities. ITK is seeking major, generational, federal investments in new social housing builds as well as energy-saving retrofits that reduce operations and maintenance costs for existing housing stock.

5. Marine and air infrastructure: Inuit Nunangat encompasses all of Canada's Arctic coastline and significant offshore areas yet its marine infrastructure is almost nonexistent. The vast majority of communities in Inuit Nunangat have non-existent or woefully inadequate marine infrastructure despite the fact that all but one of our communities lies on the coast. This results in inefficiencies and costly delays relating to offloading of goods and creates an over reliance on air shipping. This contributes to lost economic opportunities, greater fossil fuel emissions, as well as a higher cost of living and its associated challenges. Moreover, the opening of the Northwest Passage to increased shipping traffic, tourism, and fisheries creates an added incentive to invest in the marine infrastructure required to provide timely and effective response to spills and other emergencies, monitoring, and to create accessibility for those communities seeking to benefit from tourism. These gaps extend to air transportation infrastructure. Most airport runways in Inuit Nunangat date from the 1950s and 1960s and are made up of compacted gravel. The only jet aircraft that can use these gravel runways are on average 25-30 years old. In many communities, airstrips can only support smaller aircraft with limited ability to operate in inclement weather and lack lights and technology to support air traffic beyond daylight hours. This has a significant impact on crucial emergency travel not to mention the delivery of goods and services and simple air travel that so many other Canadians take for granted.

6. Telecommunications: Incremental investments in satellite technologies confuses industrial policy with telecommunications policy and is not a cost-effective or long-term connectivity solution. In order to remedy these challenges, ITK is seeking federal investment in regional fibre projects, beginning with regional feasibility studies. The Auditor General's analysis of connectivity in rural and remote communities⁵ faulted the federal government's lack of ambition and lack of a comprehensive national broadband strategy for the continued failure to substantively address the digital divide, and nowhere is this more apparent than in Inuit Nunangat. The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) states that "broadband is a transformative enabling technology... [and] any Canadian left behind in terms of broadband access is profoundly disadvantaged"⁶. Due to remoteness factors, internet connectivity has an even more critical role to play in Inuit Nunangat than in most other parts of Canada in enabling access to health, education, and justice services, and in reducing the current overall costs of public service delivery in Inuit communities. Yet Inuit Nunangat continues to face a dire digital divide, one that has been noted by the federal government since the 1990s and reiterated most recently in the 2018 report on rural broadband by the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology⁷. Between 2013 and 2017, the share of residential Internet subscriptions to services with download speeds of over 50Mbps in Canada went from 5% to 39%⁸, a 95% compound annual growth rate which will see 50Mbps+ plans the norm for most Canadians in short time. While most Canadians are increasingly adopting higher levels of service, Inuit can only hope that communities across Inuit Nunangat will have access to these service levels by 2031⁹.

7. Supporting Inuit language and culture in schools: Inuktitut, the Inuit language, is either threatened or moribund throughout Inuit Nunangat. This means that more Inuktitut mother tongue speakers are dying than are being created in Nunavut and Nunavik, and the language is spoken fluently only by older generations in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region and Nunatsiavut. The dominance of French and English language of instruction in the primary and secondary grades continues to be the main driver of language shift throughout Inuit Nunangat by tethering academic, social and economic advancement to English and French. At the same time, Inuit teachers are not being developed and retained in sufficient numbers to meet the demand for Inuktitut language of instruction in the primary and secondary grades. Federal investment in Inuktitut language and cultural instruction in the primary and secondary grades, as well as in Inuit teacher education, is necessary to reverse Inuktitut language shift as well as to close a profound policy gap in the Crown's fiduciary responsibility to Inuit.



Federal investment in Inuktitut language and cultural instruction should be made as an Inuit-specific budgetary line item directed to Inuit land claims organizations, who can then direct service delivery agents to ensure that funds for Inuktitut language of instruction and Inuit teacher education are drawn down in a manner that benefits Inuit. Budget 2020 should help resolve these challenges by investing in the following:

- Per-pupil Inuktitut funding for K-12 language of instruction in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, Nunavut, Nunavik, and Nunatsiavut, that achieves equivalency in per pupil spending for French and English.
- ITK is seeking \$50 million over five years to strengthen and expand Inuit teacher education programs in the four regions of Inuit Nunangat.

8. Implementation of An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis Children, Youth and Families:

As the legislation will come into force on January 1, 2020, the federal government should allocate funding directly to Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., Makivik Corporation, and Nunatsiavut Government in order to achieve the following: (1) exploring the feasibility of exercising jurisdiction for child and family services; (2) working with provincial and territorial governments in addressing and developing alternatives to current practices that are not in the best interests of the child, and which may seek to apprehend children on the basis of socio-economic conditions; and (3) tracking data made possible through section 28 of the legislation regarding information agreements.

References

- ¹ Based on fuel use reported in NRCAN's [Remote Communities Energy Database](#) and the current cost of arctic diesel.
- ² Calculated based on historic diesel prices published by the U.S. Energy Information Administration
- ³ Gwich'in Council International. [Technical Report: Diverging from Diesel](#). 2017, accessed September 10, 2019
- ⁴ See Jasmin Thomas, "Nunavik's Labour Market and Educational Attainment Paradox", Center for the Study of Living Standards, 2016.
- ⁵ Auditor General of Canada. [2018 Fall Reports of the Auditor General of Canada to the Parliament of Canada: Report 1—Connectivity in Rural and Remote Areas](#). 2018, accessed on September 10, 2019
- ⁶ CRTC. [CRTC Submission to the Government of Canada's Innovation Agenda](#). 2016, accessed on September 10, 2019
- ⁷ Canada. Parliament. Senate. Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology. [Broadband Connectivity in Rural Canada: Overcoming the Digital Divide](#). 1st session, 42nd Parliament, 2018, accessed August 30, 2018
- ⁸ CRTC. [Communications Monitoring Report. 2018](#), accessed on September 30, 2019
- ⁹ CRTC. [Departmental Plan 2019-2020](#). 2019, accessed on September 10, 2019



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