



Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami Pre-Budget Submission **2021**

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 update of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami’s 2020 pre-budget submission 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. For the 2021-2022 fiscal year, ITK seeks the inclusion of Inuit-specific priorities in the federal budget that advance the achievement of the principles and priorities identified in the Inuit Nunangat Declaration on Inuit-Crown Partnership.

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 2021 should build on progress made in the past four federal budgets by implementing an Inuit Nunangat fiscal policy in the allocation of Inuit-specific funding. The inclusion of an Inuit priorities section in the 2018 and 2019 Budgets was a welcome and positive development and should continue in Budget 2021. 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.

Infrastructure, including an Inuit Nunangat Infrastructure Fund

The pandemic has underscored the vulnerabilities to population health and economic security caused by profound infrastructure gaps throughout Inuit Nunangat. The multiple challenges that have become more pronounced as a result of the pandemic create an opportunity to finally bring the region into Canada. Moreover, 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 new, generational, Inuit-specific federal investments across a continuum of housing solutions (i.e. social housing, transitional housing, shelters, elder's/senior's residences, etc.), including capital and operations and maintenance costs across all four Inuit regions. ITK is also seeking major energy-saving retrofit investments that reduce operations and maintenance costs for existing housing stock.

The Government of Canada should also commit to major new investments in infrastructure, including through the creation of an Inuit Nunangat Infrastructure Fund with an initial investment of \$1 billion over five years. The purpose of the fund should be to accelerate the distribution of resources required to close the infrastructure gap through a single window approach, as well as to achieve the goals of the Arctic and Northern Policy Framework and uphold Canada's human rights obligations. Infrastructure costing and the economic scope of the infrastructure deficit across Inuit Nunangat should be quantified through the Inuit-Crown Partnership Committee Infrastructure working group. In addition to an Inuit Nunangat Infrastructure Fund, existing funding from other infrastructure programs with similar or overlapping mandates should identify minimum notional Inuit-specific carve-outs.

To aid the federal government in its commitment to accelerate closing the Inuit Nunangat infrastructure gap, Inuit regions have identified 22 tier-one priority infrastructure projects across various asset classes from transportation and telecommunications to health and social development to energy. Each of these projects includes completed strategic, economic, financial and operational cases. Specific examples include the construction of a new airstrip in Nain, Nunatsiavut, substantially increased internet and broadband capacity in Nunavik, cultural and heritage centres in Nunavut, and an energy security project in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region.



Providing Relief to Food Insecure families

Inuit experience the highest prevalence of food insecurity of any Indigenous people living in a developed country. The high prevalence of food insecurity throughout Inuit Nunangat as well as its associated social, economic and health challenges are exacerbated by the pandemic. The Government of Canada should commit to allocating food security resources directly to Inuit land claims organizations in order to enable direct relief to vulnerable families. Such an allocation should lay the foundation for the development of a new Inuit Nunangat food security program designed to uphold the right to adequate food. Despite doing important work, national and regional food organizations such as Food Banks Canada, Salvation Army, Second Harvest, Community Food Centres Canada, and Breakfast Club of Canada have a limited presence in Inuit Nunangat and are ill-suited to address the food needs of Inuit. The most effective and efficient way to ensure federal food relief funding reaches Inuit beyond this pandemic is to provide direct resources to Inuit land claims organizations, the organizations already working to provide relief to Inuit.

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 Language and Culture in Schools

The legacy of residential schools continues to cast a long shadow on Inuit culture and language and has contributed to the gap in education outcomes for Inuit students relative to other Canadians. 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 the Inuktitut language shift as well as to close a profound policy gap in the Crown's fiduciary responsibility to Inuit.

The pandemic has exacerbated systemic barriers Inuit face in accessing equitable and culturally relevant K-12 education within Inuit Nunangat. Canada's investment to safely reopen schools is welcomed. Building on this, there is a need for \$50 million over five years to strengthen and expand Inuit teacher education as well as a need for per-pupil Inuktitut funding for K-12 language of instruction in each of Inuit Nunangat's regions that achieves equivalency to per pupil spending for French and English. These measures would reaffirm Canada's commitment to reconciliation and taking effective measures to ensure Inuit have access to education in their own culture and language.

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 \$25 million over five years to advance implementation of the NISR.



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