

## Foreword

The Project Steering Committee of the Northern Communications and Information Systems Working Group (NCIS-WG) is pleased to present the Arctic Communications Infrastructure Assessment (ACIA), produced by Imaituk Inc.

Every government department serving the Arctic struggles to communicate effectively with people scattered over huge distances with finite budgets and increasing expectations. Arctic communication service providers struggle to keep pace with expanding Southern services, serving a small population located in a region that is arguably the most expensive to reach on the continent.

The ACIA was initiated to provide information on the current state of communications infrastructure, identify future requirements, and provide insight into areas where federal and territorial departments could work collaboratively to solving communication challenges.

The Assessment also encouraged communications service providers to give their perspective and current capabilities for wide distribution to federal agencies and territorial governments.

An analysis of how other countries have initiated the building of networks in high cost regions was examined, to learn how these initiatives might apply to the Arctic.

The visioning workshops in Yellowknife, Whitehorse, Iqaluit and Ottawa, provided an excellent opportunity for different levels of government to learn from each other, and think about ways to work together to solve some immediate communication challenges, while working toward longer term solutions.

We hope this Assessment has provided useful recommendations for both NCIS-WG members, and government stakeholders to consider as they make investment decisions that can help ensure service providers can develop services that not only meet the needs of government, but also benefit the Northern economy, and Arctic residents in all communities in the long term.

We invite people to read this report, consider its recommendations, and be part of the search for solutions.

While the challenges are significant, the spirit of collaboration is genuine and the willingness to move forward and improve was evident throughout the production of this Assessment.

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