Action Plan for Improving Support to Community Governments in the NWT

July 2019

PROGRESS REPORT

Government of
Northwest Territories

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Introduction

Following the October 2016 report, *Support to Communities for Municipal Services in the Northwest Territories – Department of Municipal and Community Affairs* (MACA) issued by the Auditor General of Canada, the Department of Community Affairs developed the *Action Plan for Improving Support to Community Governments in the Northwest Territories* (the Action Plan). The Action Plan was tabled in October 2017.

The Auditor General's report made 13 recommendations to MACA and the Department accepted all of them. In response MACA developed the Action Plan identifying 65 actions for the Department to undertake to address the recommendations and ultimately improved the support provided to community governments for the delivery of municipal services. An interim report on the status of *Action Plan for Improving Support to Community Governments in the Northwest Territories* activities in response to the recommendations of the Auditor General was released in May 2018.

The Action Plan outlined the status of each action in relation to the recommendation. In the few months following the release of the Action Plan in October 2017 and the first status report in May 2018, MACA had met 39 of the actions, 20 actions were practically met or in progress and six actions had yet to be met. This report outlines the achievements of the Department in the twelve month period since the Department's first progress report was provided to the Standing Committee on Governance Operations.

As of July 2019, MACA has met 54 of the 65 actions identified in the Action Plan. The final 11 will be completed in this fiscal year.

Background

In August 2015, the Auditor General of Canada (OAG) began an audit of the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs' support to community governments as they deliver essential services to their residents. The audit reviewed the areas of drinking water management, waste management, fire protection and emergency services. The auditors considered tools used to monitor community governments with a focus on MACA's Accountability Framework and the support provided to the nine communities that are identified as Designated Authorities for the delivery of municipal-type services. The last part of the audit focused on the Department's School of Community Government and its programming to develop community government capacity. The Auditor General's report was completed and provided to the Legislative Assembly in October 2016.

Following the review of the OAG report by the Standing Committee on Governance Operations in March 2017, the Department agreed with the Auditor's 13 recommendations. The Department provided a draft action plan to the Standing Committee on Governance Operations as a response to the OAG report. Following the Committee's review of the action plan, MACA incorporated the Committee's input in the plan. In October 2017, MACA released its response to the Audit and the Committee's recommendation; *Action Plan for Improving Support to Community Governments in the Northwest Territories.* The Action Plan outlines actions the Department will undertake to address each of the recommendations.

In May 2018, MACA released a progress report on the status of the Action Plan items. The report identified the status of each action through the measurements of unmet, partially met and met. Of the 65 actions there were 9% (6) unmet, 34% (22) partially met and 57% (37) met. This second progress report identifies the recommendations that have been addressed acknowledging that some of the actions implemented are now ongoing and part of the Department's regular business, which will provided stronger and regular support to community governments in the delivery of municipal services.

Context

The Northwest Territories is a jurisdiction of approximately 44,000 residents living within 33 communities each with a community government structure. Each of these community governments provides municipal-type services. Territorial or federal legislation has established 24 of these communities as municipal corporations. The other nine are Designated Authority communities, governed by an Indigenous council established under the *Indian Act*.

The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs' vision is to support capable, accountable, and self-directed community governments providing a safe, sustainable and healthy environment for community residents. In order to meet this vision the Department supports community governments in the delivery of core municipal programs and services. MACA's mandate supports the diversity in communities, their needs and abilities to provide their residents services such as the provision of water, road maintenance, land use and the collection, treatment and disposal of sewage and solid waste.

All 33 community governments in the NWT face challenges with the hiring, training and retaining of skilled staff for various community government positions. Many community governments have difficulty finding candidates with the diverse skills needed to fulfill the duties of the Senior Administrator Officer (SAO) position within the community. The SAO is responsible for the overall management of the community government administration including the hiring and management of all other community government staff. The SAO is the only community government staff member hired by council and is accountable to council for administration of the community government. Difficulties in attracting and retaining experienced SAOs increases significantly when recruiting for SAO positions in the smaller, remote communities of the NWT. This also has an impact on community governments' ability to engage with MACA on critical matters. Community governments often have to balance the need to focus on SAO recruitment with responding to requests from MACA to conduct fire fighter training or a table-top emergency planning exercise. This creates a state of constant change for most communities, with frequent periods of transition in the community government's administration with sometimes only brief periods of stability and progress on community initiatives.

Community Councils often face capacity challenges. Councilors' understanding of modern business, financial planning and accountability processes can be limited particularly in the smaller, more traditional communities. Some community governments have also faced rapid changes in their governance models due to the settlement of land and resources agreements. The advancement of Indigenous governance models through the signing of land claim and self-government agreements, coupled with a desire by councilors to follow previous, less rigorous financial practices can lead to issues of non-compliance with community council procedures and codes of conduct. The small population sizes of most NWT communities can also lead to conflicts of interest when it comes to staffing of community positions or the letting of community government contracts. MACA responds to these situations with formal council training and direct support to community councils when specific issues arise.

Despite these many challenges, MACA appreciated the work of the Auditor General of Canada in allowing the Department to identify and focus on continuous improvement in the areas of core service delivery. Although some of the actions have in the short term increased work with community governments, the lack of community government capacity in engaging with MACA has helped to make the progress more manageable from a department perspective. Since the implementation of the Department's Action Plan, the Department has addressed recommendations made by the OAG and made changes to a number of processes which will sustain the changes to ensure appropriate support to communities is made available on an ongoing basis.

PROGRESS ON PRIORITY ACTIONS

OAG Recommendation Paragraph 41

The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs should formally assess its information gaps with respect to water quality testing and use the information to work with community governments and the Department of Health and Social Services to identify and provide communities with the required types of support to comply with water testing requirements. It should also work with community governments to ensure that all water treatment plant operators receive the required training and support to obtain the appropriate certification.

Priority	Actions	Indicators	Timeline	Progress / Status
41.1	Continue to work with the Interdepartmental Drinking Water Committee (mandate commitment 5.4.2).	• number of times committee convenes as per TOR • review of TOR on annual basis.	Ongoing	Met The Interdepartmental Drinking Water Committee is a Deputy Minister-level committee which coordinates the four GNWT departments that have roles in drinking water management – Environment and Natural Resources (ENR), Infrastructure (INF), Health and Social Services (HSS), and MACA.
41.2	Establish a process to monitor database results, and identify a documented process to follow up and collect missing data information, and respond to database results.	• document a process, including established agreed upon goals	Complete	Met MACA and HSS's Environmental Health division have established and documented the process for monitoring database results.
41.3	Work with the Committee to implement a new database.	• completion of database	Complete	Met The new database, WaterTrax, was implemented in 2018. Updated results are available on the MACA website.

Shaded grey = Action item met

Priority	Actions	Indicators	Timeline	Progress / Status
41.4	Provide targeted training through the Circuit Rider Program and courses where certification is required depending on the classification of the water treatment plant.	• number of Circuit Rider visits • number of training events • number of communities with certified WTP operator to the level of plant	Ongoing	Met MACA delivered five training events for Water Treatment Plant Operators with a total of 52 participants from 15 communities. MACA completed 25 Circuit Rider visits. Twenty-two of 29 communities with a public water supply have certified water treatment plant operators to the classification level of their plant or possess certification to the water plant. Training plans are in place for operators in communities working towards certification. Training plans include circuit rider visits with MACA staff, attendance at adult education classes and treatment training courses and continuing education courses (i.e. Math for Operators).

Shaded grey = Action item met

OAG Recommendation Paragraph 53

The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, in consultation with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, should work with community governments to help identify and provide the necessary support and capacity building, so that they can comply with regulatory and other waste management requirements. This should include:

- support needed by each community government to comply with the water licence that regulates the management of solid waste sites and sewage lagoons; and

- support needed by community governments to ensure proper management of solid waste sites, and proper handling and disposal of hazardous waste.

Priority	Actions	Indicators	Timeline	Progress / Status
53.1	Broaden the Terms of Reference for the Interdepartmental Drinking Water and Wastewater Management Committee to include a subcommittee on waste management.	• an updated Terms of Reference with waste management subcommittee	Complete	Met The Waste Management Technical Committee and its Terms of Reference was stuck and approved in 2017. The Waste Management Technical Committee is currently implementing their action plan.

Shaded grey = Action item met

Priority	Actions	Indicators	Timeline	Progress / Status
53.2	From the NWT Study of Waste Management Systems, create an inventory on baseline analysis of solid waste sites and sewage lagoons.	• receipt of study • completion of inventory baseline analysis	Complete	Met The NWT study of waste management, entitled Study of Waste Management in the NWT was finalized in March 2017. The inventory of baseline analysis (NWT Waste Management System Volume One and Two) was completed in advance of the Study of Waste Management in the NWT in December 2016.
53.3	Working through the Waste Water Committee to assist communities with water licence compliance developing their operations and maintenance manuals for their community sewage lagoons, solid waste sites and spill contingency plans.	• completion of tracking tool of communities assisted.	Complete	Met MACA has created a water licence tracking spreadsheet to track the support MACA provides communities in water license compliance. MACA, in collaboration with communities, also developed template Operations and Maintenance manuals for community sewage lagoons and solid waste sites.

Shaded grey = Action item met

Priority	Actions	Indicators	Timeline	Progress / Status
53.4	Incorporate best practices on solid waste management into the Asset Management project and capital planning processes.	• completion of tools; and • display of resources available.	Complete	Met MACA launched the electronic asset / maintenance management system in ten pilot communities in 2018. Tools and available resources were built into the electronic system including reminders of preventative maintenance tasks such as the completion of the annual report and sampling for water licence compliance.
53.5	Work with interested parties to investigate opportunities to share resources and regional waste management.	• completion of Waste Management Strategy	Complete	Met ENR led the development of the GNWT's Waste Resource Management Strategy. MACA provided input gathered through engagement processes summarized in the *What We Heard* document produced by ENR in 2018. In collaboration with the NWT Association of Communities and information from *What We Heard*, the draft strategy has been completed. The Strategy was approved and presented to the Executive Council in June of 2019.

Shaded grey = Action item met

Priority	Actions	Indicators	Timeline	Progress / Status
53.6	Amend the Water and Sewer Fund Policy (Environmental Fund) to include solid waste.	• updated Water and Sewer Policy posted to MACA website	2019-2020	Partially met / in progress MACA is in the process of updating the Water and Sewer Funding Policy to include funding for operation and maintenance of solid waste facilities as part of the Municipal Funding Strategy. The draft policy is expected to be completed by the end of 2019.

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Priority	Actions	Indicators	Timeline	Progress / Status
53.7	Amend the Solid Waste Management course curriculum and deliver annual training. *Subject to Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) and Department of Environment and Natural Resources (E N R) to develop curriculum*	• course updated • number of participants and number of communities reported	Complete	Met MACA has revised the solid waste curriculum and it will continue to be expanded with new best practices, technical information and approved standards. Recently supplemental resources have been identified and integrated into training courses. The revised Solid Waste Management course was delivered in 2017 and 2018. A total of sixteen community government participants from twelve communities took the training. A Technical Advisory Committee has been formed under the Interdepartmental Water and Waste Committee. ENR is a member of the committee and provides quality advice and assistance in this area. MACA hired a Solid Waste Management Specialist.

Shaded grey = Action item met

OAG Recommendation Paragraph 63

The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs should take immediate action to reassess whether communities with fire departments meet requirements under the *Safety Act.* For those fire departments that do not, it should work with community governments to establish a plan to assist them in meeting requirements. For community governments without fire departments, the Department should work with them to develop a strategy for fire safety.

Priority	Actions	Indicators	Timeline	Progress / Status
63.1	Complete Community Fire Department Assessment Tool.	• assessment tool completed and in use	Complete	Met The Fire Department Assessment Tool was created in 2017 and is used by the Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM) staff. The tool, created in consultation with the Workers Safety and Compensation Commission (WSCC), provides community governments with an effective means to assess their fire department's current capacity, identify any critical gaps, and determine resource needs. The basis for this assessment is the WSCC's Firefighters Code of Practice which provides practical guidance in achieving safety requirements of the NWT *Safety Act* and related *Regulations*. Information gathered from the assessment is then used by OFM staff to help communities develop an action plan towards a sustainable and desired level of service.

Shaded grey = Action item met

Priority	Actions	Indicators	Timeline	Progress / Status
63.2	Identify priorities for Community Fire Protection Plans (mandate commitment 5.4.8) by completing assessments and developing community-specific action plans that help achieve *Safety Act* compliance.	• number of communities with action plans; and • progress towards achieving *Safety Act* compliance.	2019-2020	Partially met / in progress Significant progress has been made since 2017-18 to educate municipal governments, assess their needs, and develop actions plans to help community fire departments build capacity and achieve compliance with NWT safety legislation. Twenty-three fire departments have been assessed and fourteen community action plans have been developed to date. Action plans provide a means to track progress while providing ongoing support and guidance to community governments and local fire officials.
63.3	Help communities maintain *Fire Prevention Act* and *Safety Act* compliance.	• number of communities re-assessed; and • action plans updated.	Ongoing	Met MACA is working with communities to monitor progress towards achieving and maintaining Fire Prevention Act and Safety Act compliance. Routine follow-up is occurring with communities to help implement action plans, which is resulting in adjustments as circumstances require. A complete re-assessment of a community fire department will occur only after significant progress has been made in achieving compliance, or key factors change (e.g. a drop in qualified volunteers or a change in service).

Shaded grey = Action item met

Priority	Actions	Indicators	Timeline	Progress / Status
63.4	Align firefighter training with community fire department assessment results.	• number of training courses delivered per year aligned with assessments, number of training offers	Complete	Met In 2018, the Department: • hosted seven community based training events; • provided training to 86 local firefighters; • delivered Scene Safety and Security training to 30 fire personnel; and • hosted training at the NWT Fire Chiefs Association Conference and 24 chiefs received training.
63.5	Develop a web-based fire training resource centre.	• completion of web-based resource centre.	Complete	Met New resources and information are added as developed or required; remains and ongoing task. Resource information on Fire Officer training is under development and will be added in 2019-2020.

Shaded grey = Action item met

Priority	Actions	Indicators	Timeline	Progress / Status
63.6	Continue development of tools and resources to support implementation of community action plans according to the level of service defined by each community.	• develop and maintain tools and resources available to support action plans	2019-2020	Partially met / in progress MACA has been working closely with key stakeholders in the development of new tools and resources to support community governments with implementing action plans. Since 2017-2018, the following progress has been made: • Participation in the development of the WSCC Firefighters Code of Practice; • Developed community presentation to help educate municipal officials on the roles, responsibilities, and key elements of the fire service; • Developed and implemented a fire department assessment and action planning tool; • Developed a web-based fire protection resource centre for community governments and local fire officials; • Developed a fire protection bylaw template, and • Developed a standardized equipment guide. Initiatives to be completed in 2019 include: • Sample standard operating procedures based on NWT safety legislation, recognized standards and best practices; • A web-based fire safety resource centre continues to be supported as new resources and information is added. The Community Fire Protection Plan was last updated July 2018.

Shaded grey = Action item met

Priority	Actions	Indicators	Timeline	Progress / Status
63.7	Update the *Fire Prevention Act* (mandate commitment 5.4.8).	• updated *Act* comes into force	2019-2020	Partially met/in progress Further engagement and research is needed to determine the amendments to be proposed to the bill and regulations. As a result, the timeline for the tabling of the bill will surpass the end of the 18th Legislative Assembly. MACA has identified the need to conduct additional comparative research and to work with GNWT departments, community governments and professional associations to discuss a legislative approach for plan review which is suitable for the Northwest Territories.

Shaded grey = Action item met

OAG Recommendation Paragraph 69

The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs should work with community governments to provide the required supports, so that all communities have current emergency plans and receive training to implement these plans.

Priority	Actions	Indicators	Timeline	Progress / Status
69.1	Amend the *Civil Emergency Measures Act* and work with community governments to comply with the new legislation (mandate commitment 5.4.7).	• amended *CEMA Act* comes into force	2019-2020	Partially met/in progress In 2017, MACA implemented a process for a systematic annual review of all community emergency plans, which will now incorporate requirements in the new *Emergency Management Act*. Since fall 2018, Emergency planning workshops and activities to develop/update emergency plans were held in Colville Lake, Jean Marie River and Wrigley.

Shaded grey = Action item met

Priority	Actions	Indicators	Timeline	Progress / Status
69.2	Implement a systematic annual review of all community emergency plans.	• completion and implementation of an annual review process; and • progress towards updating emergency response plans.	Complete	Met Since fall 2018, Emergency planning workshops and activities to develop/update emergency plans were held in Colville Lake, Jean Marie River and Wrigley. In September 2018, Operation NANOOK provided an opportunity to validate the new NWT Emergency Plan, including participation by Behchoko which allowed the community government to update and validate the community emergency plan. As of July 2019, nine community governments have emergency plans validated in the past two years, and 21 community governments have plans that are less than five years old.
69.3	Implement online introductory emergency management training for municipal staff.	• completion of online training courses, number of participants	Complete	Met In 2018-2019, 11 students were involved in the online delivery. Implementation of A BEM webinar is scheduled for 2019-2020. Curriculum is under revision with the changes to the Emergency Management System. Online self-directed training continues to be available to community governments and volunteers.

Shaded grey = Action item met

Priority	Actions	Indicators	Timeline	Progress / Status
69.4	Monitor and evaluate community emergency planning and preparedness efforts.	• indicator in Accountability Framework (AF), reviewed annually	Complete	Met MACA's Accountability Framework survey includes indicators which monitor and evaluate community emergency planning and preparedness efforts.
69.5	Assess community training needs relative to emergency response and preparedness and develop a strategy for skills development.	• completion of training needs assessments • completion of a skills development strategy	2019-2020	Partially met/in progress With changes to the Emergency Management system, online curriculum is being revised. Community Governments are surveyed in alternate years. Next survey scheduled in 2020. Communities are satisfied with the training, workshops and content they receive. Emergency Management is a growing area of interest. GNWT Staff have been provided significant training, opportunities in ICS 100, 200 and 300.

Shaded grey = Action item met

OAG Recommendation Paragraph 80

The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs should regularly review and modify (as required) the wording of the questions in the NWT Community Government Accountability Framework to ensure community governments can correctly answer them.

Priority	Actions	Indicators	Timeline	Progress / Status
80.1	Annually review all questions in the AF tool, based on stakeholder feedback and MACA analysis of prior year documentation.	• completion of report on stakeholder feedback	Complete	Met MACA continues to engage community governments through its regional offices as well as during LGANT and NWTAC annual meetings. In addition, comment boxes are incorporated into the survey to capture feedback and recommendations. MACA also reviews the indicators and questions during the data validation process. Based on feedback received to date, some amendments will be incorporated in the 2019 edition of the AF.
80.2	Develop and implement a project plan to update the AF.	• completion and implementation of project plan	Complete	Met Subsequent roll-outs of the AF will incorporate improvements based on feedback and recommendations received from community governments and MACA personnel during previous years. The AF has been redesigned in a manner that guides and educates the end user with respect to the indicators and questions. Regional offices are available to support those users who may require assistance to complete the AF.

Shaded grey = Action item met

Priority	Actions	Indicators	Timeline	Progress / Status
80.3	Provide enhanced one-on-one support to community governments as they use the online AF Reporting Tool.	• number of community governments receiving one-on-one support • number of times support received	Complete	Met The AF has been redesigned in a manner that guides and educated the end user with respect to the indicators and questions. Examples of best practices are provided, as well as links to relevant information. Regional offices are available to support those users who may require assistance to complete the AF.
80.4	Evaluate data collected through the online AF Reporting Tool and consider a new or amended approach for 2018 process.	• identify trends and gaps in collected data • update process to collect data	Complete	Met The roll-out of the AF reporting and evaluation process occurred in the fall of 2018. Access to the survey and handbook was limited to a number of weeks to encourage timely responses. Data collected has been validated with regional operations as well as relevant HQ divisions. Reports will be distributed to communities in summer 2019.
80.5	Document all changes made to provide historical development continuum consistent with project plan objectives.	• develop tracking system using archived data and annual reports	Complete	Met Historical and revised documents are maintained in the GNWT Digital Integrated Information Management System (DIIMS), MACA's filing system.

Shaded grey = Action item met

OAG Recommendation Paragraph 81

The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs should develop clear guidance for community government officials to complete and Department officials to assess the NWT Community Government Accountability Framework's performance indicator checklists. The guidance should explain the criteria for each question and provide community governments with clear guidance on how to respond appropriately to each question.

Priority	Actions	Indicators	Timeline	Progress / Status
81.1	Develop and implement a project plan to update the AF.	• completion and implementation of project plan	Complete	Met The project plan to update the AF was developed. AF was implemented in 2018.
81.2	Develop a handbook that includes an orientation to the tool, how it works, the intent of the tool, how responses are scored, and the follow up by MACA.	• completion of handbook • feedback from stakeholders	Complete	Met The revised AF survey has been developed with a software solution using a data format easily migrated to programs such as Microsoft Excel. Reports can be customized to the needs of the end user. At present, reports include an evaluation of the community government's performance in relation to each indicator, as well as an explanation of how the score was determined.

Shaded grey = Action item met

Priority	Actions	Indicators	Timeline	Progress / Status
81.3	Formalize the Department's process for delivery of the tool including calendar for implementation, information on tracking and validating, and guidelines for supporting community public reporting.	• completion of draft; • implementation fulfilled	Complete	Met As a result of feedback from community governments, MACA personnel, and LGANT, the timing of future surveys may shift to earlier in the fiscal year in future years.

Shaded grey = Action item met

OAG Recommendation Paragraph 86

The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs should develop a strategy to verify the accuracy of information from community governments under the NWT Community Government Accountability Framework, in order to support meaningful engagement with community governments on required supports and foster accurate decision making about its department operations.

Priority	Actions	Indicators	Timeline	Progress / Status
86.1	Develop and implement a project plan to update the AF.	• completion of project plan	Complete	Met The project plan to update the AF was developed. AF was implemented in 2018.
86.2	Assess all questions to determine the weighting and criteria for assessing risk.	• completion of weighting and criteria system	Complete	Met The updated AF reporting tool is now more interactive and intuitive. Weighting of the questions is now achieved through branching and interdependencies of the questions, with the first questions for each indicator directly linked to statutory requirements and the level of risk involved.

Shaded grey = Action item met

Priority	Actions	Indicators	Timeline	Progress / Status
86.3	Develop a handbook that includes an orientation to the tool, how it works, the intent of the tool, how responses are scored, and the follow up by MACA.	• completion of handbook • feedback from stakeholders	Complete	Met The AF reporting tool provides data in a format that can be used to design and annual work plan, including MACA's recommendations. The handbook provides a description of the best practice, as well as links to relevant information that may be of assistance to community governments. MACA invites community governments to collaborate on the development of annual capacity building plans, based on the results of the AF survey.
86.4	Formalize the Department's process for delivery of the tool including a calendar for implementation, information on tracking and validating, and guidelines for supporting community public reporting.	• completion of draft • implementation fulfilled	Complete	Met As a result of the feedback from community governments, MACA personnel, and LGANT, further amendments to the AF will be incorporated as future revisions are made to the AF.

Shaded grey = Action item met

OAG Recommendation Paragraph 95

The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs should identify standard performance information for essential services that could be required under its contribution agreements. It should also follow a risk-based approach to identifying those higher-risk communities for which more frequent information should be provided.

Priority	Actions	Indicators	Timeline	Progress / Status
95.1	Develop and implement a project plan to update the AF.	• completion of plan	Complete	Met The project plan to update the AF was developed and the revised. AF was implemented in 2018.
95.2	Create a process that will define risk based engagement with community governments.	• process created	Complete	Met Similar to the current AF reporting tool, the updated AF reporting tool helps identify where issues within community governments exist and when MACA may need to engage with, and provide additional support to, community governments. The updated AF reporting tool requires increased response by MACA in situations where health and safety or statutory requirements are not being met.

Shaded grey = Action item met

Priority	Actions	Indicators	Timeline	Progress / Status
95.3	Develop a protocol that defines MACA / INAC roles and responsibilities related to designated authorities to strengthen accountability.	• completion of defined roles and responsibilities	Complete	Met MACA engages with First Nations Band Managers and Executive Directors annually, during their annual meeting with CIRNAC. Emphasis has been placed on describing the nature of MACA's relationship with First Nations recognized as primary providers of municipal services in their respective communities / Designated Authorities.
95.4	Deliver workshops with community governments to validate new process and changes to contribution agreements.	• number of workshops offered per year • post workshop surveys	Complete	Met MACA engaged community governments during NWTAC and LGANT annual general meetings. Community governments have been advised that the response to the AF will be a requirement within the contribution agreements with MACA. This information was also shared through regular communication between community government operations and MACA Regional Operations.

Shaded grey = Action item met

Priority	Actions	Indicators	Timeline	Progress / Status
95.5	Formalize the Department's process for delivery of the tool including a calendar for implementation, information on tracking and validating, and guidelines for supporting community public reporting.	• completion of guidelines	Complete	Met As a result of the feedback from community governments, MACA personnel, and LGANT, the AF has been revised. Further amendments to the AF will be incorporated as future revisions to the AF are made.
95.6	Amend contribution agreements to define core services, AF, and defined engagement processes.	• quarterly review of contribution agreements • number of updated CA templates	2019-2020	Partially met/in progress Contribution agreement templates have been created. In 2019-2020 the agreements will be revised to include activities that are permitted and the requirement for community governments to participate in the AF.
95.7	Amend contribution agreements for designated authorities to define core services, and determine the mechanism for failure to perform.	• quarterly review of contribution agreements for designated authorities • number of updated CA templates	2019-2020	Partially met/in progress Contribution agreement templates have been created. In 2019-2020 the agreements will be revised to include activities that are permitted and the requirement for community governments to participate in the AF.

Shaded grey = Action item met

OAG Recommendation Paragraph 99

The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs should review its monitoring mechanisms – notably contribution agreements and the NWT Community Government Accountability Framework – to determine how to use them more thoroughly to facilitate ongoing engagement with community governments. This would help provide community governments with required and timely support for essential services. The Department should also continue to develop tools aimed at identifying and collecting information critical for community government support.

Priority	Actions	Indicators	Timeline	Progress / Status
99.1	Develop and implement a project plan to update the AF.	• completion of project plan	Complete	Met The project plan to update the AF was developed. AF was implemented in 2018.
99.2	Create a community-specific engagement documentation process and tool for ongoing interaction with community governments. Documentation will include terms for escalation and risks, and roles and responsibilities.	• completion of engagement documentation process	Complete	Met The AF reporting tool provides an effective starting point for engagement. Reports can be used to validate interactions with community governments. The AF handbook clearly describes the steps involved in a possible escalation, as well as risks, and roles and responsibilities. Contribution agreements will now include a requirement to participate in the AF. Regional Operations continues to engage with communities on a continual basis. MACA uses the DIIMS system to record and archive its documentation.

Shaded grey = Action item met

Priority	Actions	Indicators	Timeline	Progress / Status
99.3	Work with NWTAC and LGANT, along with community governments on the development and implementation of an engagement document as part of process to advance accountability.	• number of meetings with stakeholder • completion of engagement document	Complete	Met MACA meets with LGANT and NWTAC on a regular basis throughout the year. Some of the meetings are tri-party meetings providing opportunity for the groups to discuss common issues. MACA also engages with each group individually, including participating in both organizations' annual meetings. Documentation on engagement with community governments has been incorporated into the AF handbook.
99.4	Amend Contribution Agreements	• number of amended contribution agreements	2019-2020	Partially met/in progress A total of eight different contribution agreement templates have been created. In 2019-2020 the agreements will be amended to include activities that are permitted and the requirement for community governments to participate in the AF.

Shaded grey = Action item met

OAG Recommendation Paragraph 109

The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs' contribution agreements with designated authorities should include provisions related to the delivery of essential services it funds, to allow it to collect required performance information and take corrective action when essential services are at risk.

Priority	Actions	Indicators	Timeline	Progress / Status
109.1	Work with DAAIR on the implementation of the Aboriginal Engagement Strategy.	• completion of Terms of Reference for implementation of strategy • strategy implemented	Complete	Met Following the restructuring of departments within the GNWT, MACA is working with EIA to further the work begun with DAAIR including discussions on negotiation of bilateral agreements and other engagement with Indigenous governments including s.35 consultation related to land use plans, community boundary changes, and community infrastructure development.
109.2	Develop and implement an engagement strategy designed to ensure that various stakeholders understand the Department's amended approach to dealing with issues related to DA communities.	• completion of engagement strategy • implementation of strategy	Complete	Met MACA meets with LGANT and NWTAC on a regular basis throughout the year. Some of the meetings were tri-party providing opportunity for the groups to discuss common issues. MACA also engages with each group individually, including participating in both organizations' annual meetings. Documentation on engagement with community governments has been incorporated into the updated AF handbook.

Shaded grey = Action item met

Priority	Actions	Indicators	Timeline	Progress / Status
109.3	Develop a protocol that defines MACA / INAC roles and responsibilities related to designated authorities to strengthen accountability.	• completion of protocol	Complete	Met MACA and INAC are focusing on increased communication and notification between the two organizations when responding to Designated Authorities' roles, responsibilities and accountability. Emphasis has been placed on describing the nature of MACA's relationship with First Nations recognized as primary providers of municipal services respecting them as Designated Authorities.

Shaded grey = Action item met

Priority	Actions	Indicators	Timeline	Progress / Status
109.4	Develop workshops and training (with INAC & DAAIR) that better explain INAC's role, MACA's role and the various functions that each do to support the band and how those relationships are established, defined and carried out.	• completion of workshops • number of workshops per year • post - satisfaction survey of workshop	Complete	Met MACA and INAC collaborated on the development of six First Nations council training modules to assist Designated Authorities with the delivery of municipal-type programs and services. Two Train the Trainer workshops on First Nations Governance were held in November 2017 and March 2018, with a total of twenty-eight participants for both workshops. Successful pilot training events were delivered in Fort McPherson and Tulita during 2017. The modules are now available for a classroom setting or through MACA's online training portal, eLearning - sofcg.org. This training was delivered in the classroom setting to three First Nations with one Council completing all the modules. Through a partnership agreement with CIRNAC, funding has been secured for further delivery, support online and classroom curriculum development. INAC provides funding for training directly to the community governments. MACA will deliver training to interested communities.

Shaded grey = Action item met

Priority	Actions	Indicators	Timeline	Progress / Status
109.5	Work with INAC to develop a version of the Accountability Framework tailored to all NWT First Nations serving as designated authorities.	• completion of AF version for designated authorities	Complete	Met The updated AF reporting tool includes separate reporting streams for community governments (established under territorial legislation) and designated authority communities. The reporting for Designated Authorities is tied to the First Nations responsibilities and obligations under the amended contribution agreements. MACA has also engaged with Indigenous Services Canada on First Nation accountability. Indigenous Services has a tool for First Nations accountability reporting which focuses on effective governance practices, financial matters and safety while MACA's Accountability Framework focuses more on the function of community government programs and services.

Shaded grey = Action item met

Priority	Actions	Indicators	Timeline	Progress / Status
109.6	Amend contribution agreements for designated authorities to define core services, and define the mechanism to determine failure to perform.	• contribution agreements amended	2019- 2020	Partially met/in progress Contribution agreement templates have been created. In 2019-2020 the agreements will be amended to include activities that are permitted and the requirement for community governments to participate in the AF.

Shaded grey = Action item met

OAG Recommendation Paragraph 112

The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs should consult with Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada to determine how the two organizations could work more effectively together to strengthen community governance in designated authority communities.

Priority	Actions	Indicators	Timeline	Progress / Status
112.1	Develop workshops and training (with INAC & DAAIR) that better explains INAC's role, MACA's role and the various functions that we support the band to do and how those relationships are established, defined and carried out.	• completion of workshops • number of training events per year • post-satisfaction survey of workshop	Complete	Met Through the MACA and INAC working group, six First Nations council training modules to assist Designated Authorities with the delivery of municipal-type programs and services were developed. The training was introduced to First Nations band managers at the LGANT AGM in October 2017. Two Train the Trainer workshops on First Nations Governance were held in November 2017 and March 2018, with a total of twenty-eight participants for both workshops. Successful pilot training events were also delivered in Fort McPherson and Tulita during 2017. Greater awareness about the modules has increased the number of First Nations requesting training. The modules are also available through MACA's online training portal, eLearning- sofcg.org.

Shaded grey = Action item met

Priority	Actions	Indicators	Timeline	Progress / Status
112.2	Develop a protocol that defines MACA / INAC roles and responsibilities related to designated authorities to strengthen accountability.	• completion of protocol	Complete	Met MACA and INAC are focusing on increased communication and notification between the two organizations when responding to Designated Authorities' roles, responsibilities and accountability. Emphasis has been placed on describing the nature of MACA's relationship with First Nations recognized as primary providers of municipal services respecting them as Designated Authorities.
112.3	Work with INAC to develop a long term strategy on capacity building for community governments.	• terms of reference with INAC on development of strategy • completion of strategy	Complete	Met The development of a strategy on capacity building for community governments has been tasked to the INAC / MACA working group.

Shaded grey = Action item met

OAG Recommendation Paragraph 128

The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs should formally assess how it identifies training needs for community governments, as well as the suite of training offered, to ensure that it continues to help community governments meet their needs and develop the required capacity to delivery essential services.

Priority	Actions	Indicators	Timeline	Progress / Status
128.1	Conduct alternate year surveys with community governments to assess and determine their priority training needs (mandate commitment 2.3.2).	• develop plan outlining schedule for community government surveys • completion of training needs assessments	Complete	Met Survey was initially conducted in 2017 and results have been distributed to community governments. Surveys will be ongoing and recommendations received through the surveys will be reviewed and incorporated into the School of Community Government's training plan.
128.2	Work with the Public Sector Capacity Building Steering Committee to implement improvements to the ALGAP program.	• meeting scheduled with implementation improvements on agenda • review progress quarterly	Complete	Met Through its work with the Public Sector Capacity Building Steering Committee, MACA has completed improvements to the Advancing Local Government Administrators Program (ALGAP). Improvements include an online training program, new practical activities developed in core areas, one-on-one coaching, and a new recognition program.

Shaded grey = Action item met

Priority	Actions	Indicators	Timeline	Progress / Status
128.3	Work with program advisory committees, partners and clients to review and confirm that the content within School of Community Government programs is aligned with capacity needs of community governments and amend content as required.	• develop terms of reference for PAC, partners, and clients • review database evaluation responses to determine alignment is required	Ongoing	Partially met/ongoing Program Advisory Committees (PACs) have been re-established for most School of Community Government Programs. MACA is reviewing feedback and recommendations to make adjustments.
128.4	The SCG will provide training and curriculum to a variety of distributed learning methods to ensure courses are accessible, available and affordable.	• number of training events by year, type of delivery, cost for participant and cost for department	Complete	Met MACA has implemented the following distributed learning methods: webinars; self-taught, self-directed online delivery; video conferencing' and blended deliveries. This work will continue into future years and more courses converted to distant delivery.

Shaded grey = Action item met

Priority	Actions	Indicators	Timeline	Progress / Status
128.5	Implement a process to review student and instructor feedback on whether training provided is meeting the needs to deliver essential services.	• completion of process to collect and review student and instructor feedback	Complete	Met MACA has introduced a process involving scheduled review meetings with staff that are chaired by the Manager to review feedback and to develop strategies for implementation. MACA has also re-established post assessment surveys identifying relevance and impact on students following the completion of training.

Shaded grey = Action item met

OAG Recommendation Paragraph 129

The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs should explore the use of distance education and partnership opportunities with educational institutions and other organizations as appropriate, to maximize the delivery of its programming.

Priority	Actions	Indicators	Timeline	Progress / Status
129.1	Meet with INAC officials to investigate the potential for cost shared training in areas of shared responsibilities.	• meetings scheduled with INAC to identify cost shared training	Complete	Met MACA and INAC developed six First Nations council training modules to assist designated authorities with the delivery of municipal-type programs and services. Successful pilot training events were delivered in Fort McPherson and Tulita in 2017. The six training modules are also available through MACA's online training portal. MACA and INAC have entered a partnership agreement for funding in 2019-20 to the delivery of training and resource development.
129.2	Transition SCG programs to diversified delivery, including online options (mandate commitment 2.3.2).	• number by type of options: online, face-to-face, workshops • trend of type year-by-year	Complete	Met MACA has implemented the following distributed learning methods: webinars; self-taught, self-directed online delivery; video conferencing' and blended deliveries. This work will continue into future years and more courses converted to distant delivery.

Shaded grey = Action item met

Priority	Actions	Indicators	Timeline	Progress / Status
129.3	Host meetings with stakeholder and partner organizations to reconfirm or negotiate ongoing relationships.	• number of meetings with stakeholder • satisfaction survey	Complete	Met MACA has hosted meetings with: • INAC: a new proposal for training was approved; • Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment: an extension to the existing agreement was approved; • NWTAC and LGANT to continue work collaboratively; • Royal Roads University for a new partnership for online training; • College of the Rockies agreed to extend fire training and to reopen recreation training; and • Wilfred Laurier University with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to support community involvement in research, knowledge and expanded training opportunities.

Shaded grey = Action item met

Priority	Actions	Indicators	Timeline	Progress / Status
129.4	Collaborate with relevant and educational institutions and negotiate educational or training agreements with the Department.	• number of agreements with education institutions	Complete	Met MACA has hosted meetings with: • The College of the Rockies: agreements in place for Fire training and recreation; • Royal Roads University: agreements are being negotiated in Governance, Management and Finance; • NAIT: preliminary discussions for Water and Waste training; • Nunavut's Municipal Training Organization: collaborative effort in Infrastructure Maintenance and Management; and • Wilfred Laurier University with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources: support community involvement in research, knowledge and expanded training opportunities.
129.5	Work with program advisory committees, partners and clients to review / confirm the content within School of Community Government (SCG) programs and implement recommendations.	• develop terms of reference for PAC, partners, and clients • review database evaluation responses • implement PAC recommendations	Complete	Met Program Advisory Committees (PACs) are actively providing guidance and recommendations for program development.

Shaded grey = Action item met

Summary

Since the implementation of MACA's *Action Plan for Improving Support to Community Governments in the Northwest Territories,* the Department has undertaken a variety of activities in response to the Auditor General of Canada's 2016 report, *Support to Communities for Municipal Services in the Northwest Territories – Department of Municipal and Community Affairs.*

MACA has taken steps to improve its support to mitigating the risks facing community governments in the areas of drinking water management, waste management, emergency preparedness planning, and fire protection. The work of the Department in collaboration with stakeholders continues to improve the tools used to monitor community governments. One of the fundamental improvements is the 'revised' NWT Community Government Accountability Framework. The Accountability Framework underwent a comprehensive review and update as part of the Action Plan.

This report illustrates MACA's progress and commitment to increasing community government capacity through the enhanced resources and training opportunities such as the six First Nations council training modules that are now available through MACA's online training portal and the continued collaboration with the NWT Association of Communities and the Local Government Administrators of the Northwest Territories.

MACA has completed 83% of the actions detailed in the Action Plan. Many of the action items that have received a rated of 'met' require continued implementation and as such will now form part of MACA's core support programs for the essential services provided by NWT community governments. The final 11 actions (17%) will be completed in the 2019-2020 fiscal year. Once completed, the Department will have addressed all 13 of the recommendations made by the Auditor General of Canada.