



New Canadian Polar Commission Report Focuses on Knowledge Priorities of Northerners

Yellowknife April 24, 2014

The Canadian Polar Commission has released a wide-ranging new report on the state of northern knowledge in Canada that analyses the significant gains made since the beginning of International Polar Year 2007 with a view to determining today's high-level research opportunities. The report was released in Yellowknife today.

"Northerners have the greatest vested interest in northern research," said the Commission's Executive Director, David J. Scott. "Therefore our study focuses on their perspectives on progress and future knowledge needs."

The report is built on semi-structured interviews with 114 northern subject matter experts, two-thirds of them resident in Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Nunatsiavut and Nunavik. This was corroborated through an extensive survey of peer-reviewed literature and reinforced by further expert consultation during the 18-month study.

"Going forward, for northern research to reflect northern values, it's also important that northerners be actively engaged in that research," said Dr. Scott. "For that reason, our State of Northern Knowledge report also addresses the issue of northern capacity with a view to increasing northern involvement in research at all levels, from the establishment of policies and priorities to fieldwork."

"The increased use of the traditional knowledge of the region's Aboriginal peoples is an essential part of that increased northern involvement," said Scott. "The importance of traditional knowledge cannot be overstated."

Scott said the report's immediate objective is to inform Canadians, especially those living in Canada's North, of the state of northern knowledge so they can better influence future efforts to address priority knowledge gaps.

"We want to assist decision-makers in identifying and acting on those key knowledge gaps most critical to Northerners and the Canadian North," said the Commission's executive director. "For example, it will be a useful resource for those planning the details of the Canadian High Arctic Research Station's pan-northern science and technology program."

The report highlights new knowledge that can be used to address many of the issues that are important to northerners – among them mental wellness, the high cost of living, and maximizing the benefits of resource development while minimizing the environmental impacts – and suggests areas in which further new knowledge would be beneficial.

"This report also provides an opportunity to reflect on the excellent work carried out by our nation's community of northern researchers," said Scott. "Their collective efforts, the calibre of their work, and their accomplishments are a source of national pride."

The report is available online at www.polarcom.gc.ca.

The Canadian Polar Commission (CPC) is Canada's national institution for furthering polar knowledge and awareness. The report was produced under its mandate to monitor and report to Canadians on the state of knowledge of the polar regions.

For more information please contact :

Dr. David J. Scott
Executive Director
(613) 943-8605
davidj.scott@polarcom.gc.ca