



## National trends

There has been enormous progress in the field of remote community renewable energy since the Pembina Institute published *Power Shift in Remote Indigenous Communities*, the precursor to this report, in 2019.<sup>287</sup> Most jurisdictions have implemented impactful policies that create meaningful opportunity for economic development and climate action in remote communities. The success of these policies is demonstrated by the widespread Indigenous-led build out of clean energy generation projects and high uptake of programs supporting capacity building, for community energy planning and energy efficiency initiatives.

There has been a notable evolution of the discussion around renewable energy in remote communities, from ‘decarbonization at all costs’ towards creating long-term energy security and advancing energy sovereignty. This shift in tone recognizes the importance of Indigenous leadership in community energy and energy policy for remote communities, and acknowledges the place diesel may have, in partnership with renewable energy and grid storage, to ensure remote communities have a safe, reliable, and clean source of power.

Our national scan of remote energy policy suggests that pathways for remote decarbonization are widening, but there is significant variation in how those pathways have been designed and implemented. Even so, common trends and strategies have emerged across jurisdictions that are yielding positive outcomes for Indigenous-led clean energy for remote communities. We have seen that the most progress is made in jurisdictions with strong policies across all five streams, though no jurisdiction can say the work is done. The following pages highlight some encouraging progress in each policy stream and areas where more attention is needed across all of the jurisdictions.

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<sup>287</sup> Dylan Hereema, Dave Lovekin, *Power Shift in Remote Indigenous Communities* (Pembina Institute, 2019).

<https://www.pembina.org/pub/indigenous-power-shift>

Photo: Pembina Institute



## Collaboration with rights-holders

There is still work to be done to advance and deepen collaboration and establish meaningful co-governance across every jurisdiction. While some jurisdictions have built a strong foundation through recurring working groups, modern treaties, and legislation of UNDRIP, the actual ability of Indigenous peoples to make decisions about their energy futures and participate in policy development is hamstrung by a complex web of legal, regulatory, social, and political factors.

Looking forward, the implementation of UNDRIP in legislation in jurisdictions like B.C. and the Northwest Territories, and across Canada with the federal United Nations Declaration Act, has the potential to create transformative changes necessary to ensure Indigenous voices are front and center in energy discussions about their territories. Progress made thus far, including established and recurring working groups, Indigenous engagements, Indigenous councils, and all forms of agreements, have created consensus-based solutions that have advanced community clean energy and energy security in a good way.



## Plans and strategies

Strong plans and strategies with targets, dates, and accountability have been shown to galvanize action across all five categories we examined. B.C., Quebec, and the Yukon all have taken policy action across the different streams with strong plans and ambitious targets that mandate government and utility actors to develop strong relationships with Indigenous leadership and tackle the barriers to diesel reduction head on. Across the board, these plans are strongest when developed in collaboration with remote community representatives and Indigenous leadership. Jurisdictions with strong plans and strategies also tend to score well in most areas, as effort is more effectively coordinated across provincial and territorial government, utilities, and the federal government.



## Community project funding and financing

Most jurisdictions rely on some level of federal partnership to deliver funding programs for community decarbonization and renewable energy initiatives. These partnerships go a long way to ensure that delivery of funds is tailored to the communities and projects that need them most. Jurisdictions with larger tax bases have contributed more of their own provincial budgets to support remote community projects, but other jurisdictions must rely more heavily on federal dollars to support their programs.

Funding these programs aligns with federal priorities of decarbonization, nation-building, protecting Arctic and Canadian sovereignty, and reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.



## Programs for efficient buildings

Most jurisdictions have strong programs for energy efficiency, which is a win-win, as efficiency saves costs for both the utility and the customers. But boilerplate programs that do not address the specific needs of remote communities see low uptake. Jurisdictions that have created funding for full-time program staff such as clean energy champions at the community level see much higher uptake as they are able to build community buy-in and identify and address the unique barriers to project implementation in residents' homes and on community buildings.

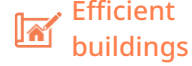
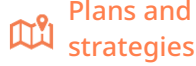
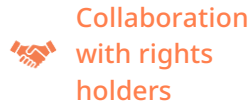


## Independent power producer (IPP) policies

Jurisdictions have taken many different approaches with respect to IPP policies: some are very prescriptive, while others leave it up to the utility and the IPP to negotiate an agreement. The north star in either case is a market for clean energy that is well-defined and easy to participate in. Prolonged, closed-door negotiations drain resources from both projects and utilities, so policies to bring clarity to the negotiation process and offer guidance or direction on the price for renewable energy are key enablers to market success. The price also should incentivize development, creating a business case for communities to participate in the IPP market with community-led projects. While several jurisdictions still don't have IPP policies, there have been welcome developments in B.C., Ontario, the Northwest Territories, and Nunavut around implementing or augmenting IPP policies.

Looking forward, it is critical that utilities and community-led projects continue to work together to monitor and understand how to support higher levels of renewable energy penetration on the grid; create technical pathways for energy storage; and create more resilient, clean, and reliable microgrids for remote communities.

# Restoring the flow across jurisdictions



	Collaboration with rights holders	Plans and strategies	Funding financing	Efficient buildings	IPP Market
Federal Government					N/A
Yukon					
Northwest Territories					
Nunavut					
British Columbia					
Alberta					
Saskatchewan					
Manitoba					
Ontario					
Quebec					
Newfoundland and Labrador					



## Conclusion

The policies, programs, and initiatives reviewed in this report have been designed and implemented by Canadian governments in partial fulfillment of their ongoing obligation to reconcile relations with Indigenous Peoples for the harms from colonization. The Canadian government already has a responsibility to all citizens to provide safe, affordable, and reliable power and the mandate to pursue climate action to reduce emissions and protect the environment. Implementing these policies is a win-win for the government and communities.

Clean energy in remote Indigenous communities is about more than reducing diesel. Developing renewable energy is a pathway to community flourishing. It can create long-term guaranteed revenue that stays in the community, improve energy security and affordability, and foster community growth and well-being. The community clean energy journey — whether community energy planning, energy efficiency projects, or utility-scale clean energy projects — builds capacity to advance a shared vision for stronger, healthier communities for generations to come.

There has been enormous progress towards supporting remote community energy priorities in the last decade. These policies, developed in response to Indigenous vision, advocacy, and leadership, are playing an important role in bringing new energy systems to life and restoring the flow of the myriad benefits of energy development back to remote Indigenous communities.



## Appendix A. Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following organizations for speaking to us to help shape this research:

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Government of the Northwest Territories

Government of Nunavut Climate Change Secretariat

Nunavut Nukkiksautiit Corporation

B.C. Ministry of Energy and Climate Solutions

BC Hydro

Manitoba Hydro

Kisik Clean Energy

Ontario Energy Board

Hydro-Québec

Quebec Ministry of the Environment, the Fight Against Climate Change, Wildlife and Parks

NunatuKavut Community Council

Nunatsiavut Government

Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro

Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Industry, Energy, and Technology