Indigenous Food Security
NORTH / CENTRAL REGION

Key Findings

• Climate change is causing not only changes to the movement/ migration of the animals (Caribou) because of weather/ temperature changes, it is also affecting sea ice in the North. It now takes longer for sea ice to form in the fall, which affects the seal hunt.

• Gas is so expensive it is hard to even get out onto the land to hunt now/have to go farther and farther out. The cost of gas also results in very high prices for store-bought food.

• Climate change affects ice roads, which then affect food prices and availability, as well as gas prices (which affects the ability to get out on the land to hunt/ out on the water to fish). The muskeg is also softening now, so it is harder to get out there on your snow mobile, you can get stuck easily.
Priorities

• Addressing the barriers to accessing traditional/country foods. One of the barriers is the limits on harvesting for different groups ie: Caribou- traditionally people followed the caribou and they have always migrated. Caribou don’t recognize jurisdiction/boundaries.

• Helping groups (hunter’s groups, community groups) ship and share their food to community members that have a great want/need for traditional foods but no ability to access them. Elders in particular require traditional foods to stay healthy, especially if they grew up eating them.

Best practices

• Subsidies for food access provides immediate and necessary relief. Longer term programming such as Breakfast Programs for school children address a critical need.

• Support for land-based Traditional Knowledge programs which can help pass on important skills to the next generation of hunters and harvesters.

• Many colonial practices disrupted the transmission of food knowledge: not just hunting and harvesting, but also nutrition, food storage, food preparation and safety, and meal planning. There is a need for more programming for Indigenous people to re-learn these skills. (This can range from cooking classes in urban areas to more land-based programming).

• Community gardens and greenhouses address the lack of fresh produce that is prevalent in Northern and remote communities.