



## REMOTE WORK POLICY

### 1. Statement of Policy

The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) is committed to providing high quality public services supported by an engaged and effective workforce.

The GNWT recognizes and supports Remote Work as an alternative work arrangement to enable employees to meet their performance goals and objectives, while balancing their preference for flexibility in carrying out their work responsibilities and the location in which they work.

### 2. Principles

The GNWT will adhere to the following principles when implementing this Policy:

- (1) The GNWT is committed to providing employees with a safe, healthy and respectful work environment;
- (2) Participating in Remote Work is voluntary and requires the mutual agreement of the employee and the department or agency.
- (3) The suitability of Remote Work will vary according to specific operational requirements or employee circumstances. Employees must maintain their performance throughout their Remote Work Agreement.
- (4) Open, ongoing communication about performance, team goals, workplace environment, scheduling changes, training and technology are key factors to a successful Remote Work Agreement.
- (5) Remote Work must not be used to avoid paying the costs associated with employee duty travel.
- (6) Remote Work must not create significant additional expenses for the GNWT with respect to any financial, operational, and safety considerations.
- (7) Remote Work must include safeguards for the privacy and protection of information.
- (8) Remote Work may offer employees in Regional Centres and smaller communities the ability to access employment opportunities at GNWT Headquarters.
- (9) In order to have a public service that provides the largest possible benefit, and that is accountable to and representative of the population that it serves, GNWT employees are expected to reside in the Northwest Territories (NWT), except in exceptional situations.



### 3. Scope

This Policy and applicable guidelines apply to all departments and agencies and employees of the GNWT, except for:

- Members of the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association, and
- Employees of the Northwest Territories Power Corporation.

*Employees working remotely as part of an accommodation are subject to the Duty to Accommodate Injury and Disability Policy; these accommodations are outside of the scope of the Remote Work Policy and associated Guidelines.*

### 4. Definitions

The following terms apply to this Policy:

Deputy Head – As defined in the *Public Service Act*: the Deputy Minister of a department, the Chief Executive Officer of a public committee, board or council, or such a person may be appointed or designated as Deputy Head.

Designated Workplace – An employee's regular place of work if a Remote Work Agreement is not in effect.

Long-Distance Remote Work – is a work arrangement that allows an employee to perform their job duties at a singular work location within the NWT, or within the NWT and Nunavut for employees of the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission (WSCC), that is outside of the community where their Designated Workplace is located.

Out-of-Territory Remote Work – is a work arrangement that allows an employee to perform their job duties away from their Designated Workplace, at a location within Canada that is outside of the jurisdiction of the NWT, or for WSCC employees, outside of the NWT and Nunavut.

Remote Work – A work arrangement that allows an employee to perform their job duties, either in part or in full, away from their Designated Workplace.

Remote Work Site – A location outside of the Designated Workplace where an employee has been given permission to carry out their regular work duties.

Suitability – pertains to the appropriateness of Remote Work for a particular employee, position, and the proposed Remote Work Site, in the context of continuing to deliver GNWT programs and services to the public.



## 5. Authority and Accountability

### **General**

This Policy is issued under the authority of the Financial Management Board. The authority to make exceptions and approve revisions to this Policy rests with the Financial Management Board.

Authority and accountability are further defined as follows:

(a) **Minister of Finance (Minister)**

The Minister of Finance is accountable to the Financial Management Board for the implementation of this Policy.

(b) **Deputy Minister**

The Deputy Minister of Finance is accountable to the Minister for the administration of this Policy.

### **Specific**

(a) **Financial Management Board**

The Financial Management Board may approve the Remote Work Policy. The Financial Management Board may approve amendments and exceptions to the Remote Work Policy.

(b) **Minister of Finance**

The Minister may recommend amendments and exceptions to the Remote Work Policy to the Financial Management Board;

The Minister may approve guidelines necessary to implement the Remote Work Policy.

(c) **Deputy Minister of Finance**

The Deputy Minister of Finance may recommend to the Minister of Finance appropriate guidelines and propose amendments to the guidelines. Guidelines may include:

- i. Specific criteria to determine which employees and positions are suitable for a Remote Work Agreement such as the nature of the work performed by the employee and appropriateness of the Remote Work Site, if applicable;
- ii. A process to evaluate and assess employee eligibility for Remote Work; and
- iii. Health and safety protocols for employees with an approved Remote Work Agreement.



- iv. The Deputy Minister of Finance may approve applications for Out-of-Territory Remote Work.

(d) Minister Responsible for the *Public Service Act*

The Minister responsible for the *Public Service Act* has the management and direction of the public service and is responsible for ensuring that GNWT departments and agencies operate in accordance with this Policy and associated guidelines.

(e) Deputy Heads

- i. Ensure appropriate communication of the Remote Work Policy and accompanying guidelines to GNWT staff;
- ii. Monitor the effectiveness of the Remote Work Policy and accompanying guidelines;
- iii. Monitor and ensure tracking is in place for all remote work arrangements within their department or agency, for both formal Remote Work Agreements and informal remote work arrangements.
- iv. Ensure that operational needs are met without productivity loss and unnecessary resource expenditures;
- v. Review and determine employee eligibility for a Remote Work Agreement, and give final approval to applications for Remote Work inside the NWT; and
- vi. Recommend to the Deputy Minister of Finance the approval of applications for Out-of-Territory Remote Work.

## 6. Provisions

(1) Eligibility

Eligibility for a Remote Work Agreement will be determined on a case-by-case basis taking into consideration multiple factors, including but not limited to the type of position, the nature of the work performed by the employee, the proposed Remote Work Site, and operational requirements.

Employees whose Designated Workplace is outside of GNWT Headquarters are not eligible for a Long-Distance Remote Work Agreement where the proposed Remote Work Site is in Yellowknife. However, informal long-distance remote work in Yellowknife may be approved in exceptional circumstances and for periods not exceeding 21 business days in duration.

Out-of-Territory Remote Work may be considered in exceptional circumstances.



(2) Requirement for Remote Work Agreement

A formal Remote Work Agreement is required for Remote Work over 21 business days. Informal remote work arrangements for 21 business days or less may be approved by an employees' supervisor; a formal Remote Work Agreement is not necessary. The specific duration of a Remote Work arrangement should be stipulated in the Remote Work Agreement

The duration of an individual Remote Work Agreement shall not exceed two (2) years. Employees working under a Remote Work Agreement may apply for another Remote Work Agreement to begin upon conclusion of their existing agreement, however if the cumulative duration of the Remote Work Agreements is in excess of two (2) years, approval from the Deputy Minister of Finance is required.

(3) Termination of Agreement

Except where the department or agency has cause to order immediate termination of the Agreement (such as in the event of a serious breach of employment conditions or health and safety risk), either party may request termination of the Remote Work Agreement. Upon termination of the Remote Work Agreement, the employee will return to their Designated Workplace, and arrangements will also be made for the return of all government property.

If the employee changes positions within the GNWT or an applicable agency, the Remote Work Agreement is automatically terminated.

(4) Policy Review

This Policy will be reviewed by the Department of Finance every three years.

## **7. Prerogative of the Financial Management Board**

Nothing in this Policy shall in any way be construed to limit the prerogative of the Financial Management Board to make decisions or take action with respect to the Remote Work Policy.