



AMBITION 2035
DISCUSSION REPORT

**OCEAN INNOVATION
FOR A SUSTAINABLE
ARCTIC WORKSHOP**

IQALUIT, NUNAVUT | JANUARY 23, 2024



AMBITION 2035

Growing Canada's Ocean Economy by 5X to \$220B by 2035

In 2016, the OECD evaluated the growth of the global ocean economy, projecting it would double in size by 2030 to \$4 trillion dollars Canadian, and outpace the growth of the broader economy by 20 percent. In context of this global ocean potential, and in developing ocean solutions urgently needed, Canada can achieve transformative growth with significant opportunities for Canadian businesses and workers, from coast-to-coast-to-coast. This requires a collective approach and being bold in our ambition.

In the fall of 2022 Canada's Ocean Supercluster (OSC) released a discussion document introducing [Ambition 2035](#) - a 5X growth potential for Canada's ocean economy by 2035. Informed by more than 400 stakeholders and leaders from across the country as well as economists, it was developed to provide an ambition for all of Canada's ocean network to rally behind and consider the role they play in delivering on it. Following the Ambition 2035 event in Ottawa in the Spring of 2023, the OSC has released a next steps report which is available [here](#).

WE HAVE BIG
AMBITION FOR
OCEAN IN
CANADA

\$220
BILLION 5X
GROWTH
BY 2035

THE SIGNIFICANT ROLE OF THE ARCTIC FOR AMBITION 2035

Growing Canada's ocean economy to \$220 Billion by 2035 can only be achieved by focusing on regional priorities and the challenges and opportunities that they present. Canada, having the longest coastline in the world, is well positioned to drive marine sector growth in several areas such as energy, sustainable seafood, ocean technology, and marine transportation. With 70% of Canada's coastline stretching through the Arctic, focus should be naturally rooted in working with regional Inuit organizations, communities, companies, non-profits, government and researchers to find collaborative opportunities that can contribute to both ocean health and sustainable economic development.

The Arctic region presents new economic opportunities for Canada with increased access to marine shipping routes, tourism, seafood and trade, however any development must align with regional Inuit priorities. Canada has a responsibility to support the well-being of Inuit and their cultural preservation and self-determination. All but a few communities in Inuit Nunangat are coastal communities, making Inuit among the most acutely impacted by the effects of climate change. Thinning ice and changing weather has disrupted traditional access to hunting, fishing, and herding. Working closely with Inuit is critical in developing collaborative problem-solving that leads to responsive and innovative solutions.





WORKSHOP AND COMMUNITY RECEPTION

The OSC and Qikiqtaaluk Corporation, the Inuit birthright corporation for the Qikiqtani region and Host Sponsor, curated a workshop on Ocean Innovation for a Sustainable Arctic. The full-day event gathered over 40 representatives from regional Inuit organizations, communities, companies, non-profits, government and research community for exploratory discussions on the sustainable ocean economy and technology opportunities that can contribute to ocean health and sustainable economic development.

Key objectives included identifying areas where program funding could support development and commercialization of innovative ocean solutions and developing a community-informed engagement model that would support continued dialogue.

The workshop began with a traditional qulliq lighting by Elder Elisapi Aningmiuq and included addresses from Soloman Awa, Mayor of Iqaluit and David Akeeagok, Minister of Economic Development and Transportation. The plenary sessions included a short presentation from Qikiqtaaluk Corporation with a look at future ocean opportunities in Nunavut and from Canada's Ocean Supercluster on opportunities through the cluster and Ambition 2035. This was followed by an OSC member panel discussion with representatives from Qikiqtaaluk Corporation, Training Works, eDNAtec, and SmartICE on recent project work in the Arctic and their reflection on project success through the OSC collaboration model.

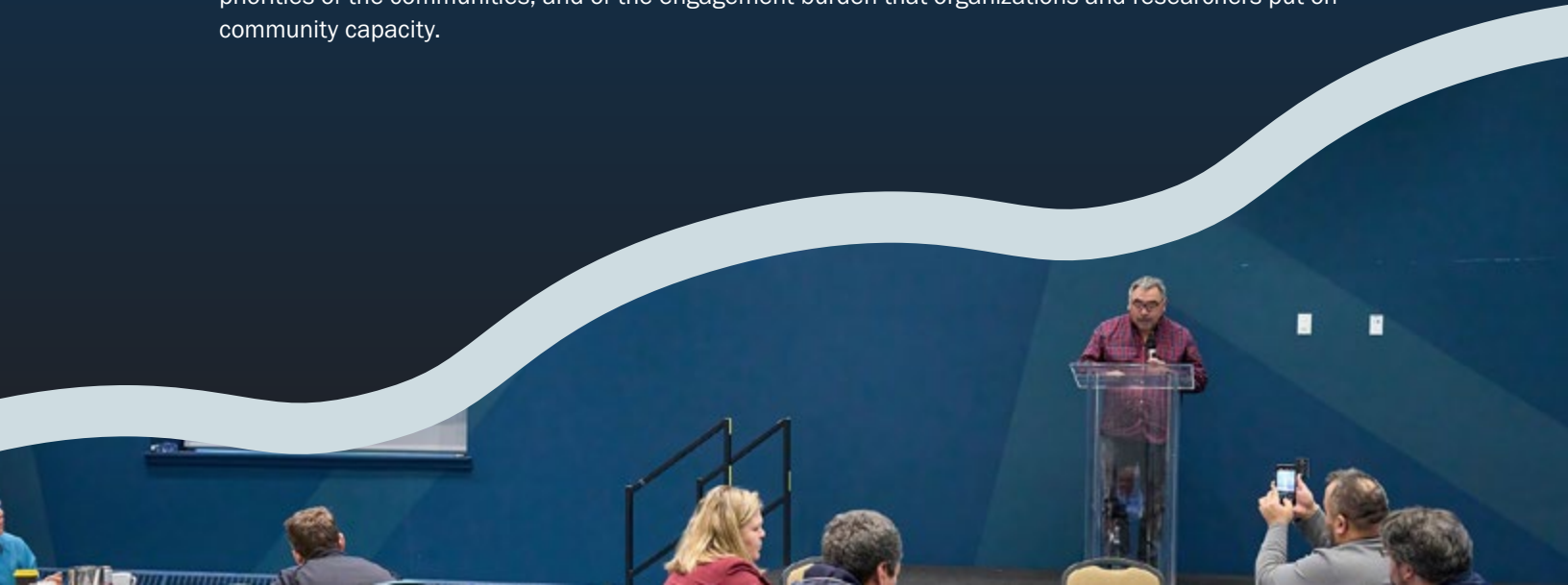
Local facilitator, Okalik Eegeesiak, led a session on defining regional priorities and opportunities to grow the ocean economy to support social, economic and environmental resiliency. She followed this with two breakout sessions to dive deeper into these priorities to identify technology and community gaps, challenges and solutions. A wrap-up session summarized what we heard through the sessions and queried recommendations for next steps.

An open-invite community reception was held in the evening. The event, supported by the Government of Nunavut, was well attended and included local cuisine and musical entertainment.

WHAT WE HEARD

REALITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- **The Arctic has unique challenges** – The weather and environmental conditions are critically impactful on all aspects of life in the Arctic. Characterized by small remote communities, widely dispersed, the cost of living is high, as can be business operations and economic development. There are glaring infrastructure and data gaps that need to be addressed. However, as Mayor Soloman Awa pointed out in his welcoming address, “...the Inuit have always looked for opportunities, and traditionally have followed where the animals went, to preserve the traditional Inuit way of life.” With challenge there is opportunity, therefore both innovative and out-of-the-box approaches are needed.
- **Any solutions or programs must be co-designed and co-led with communities** – Amplified throughout discussions was that every community is different, and solutions must meet communities where they are. We must take a balanced approach in engaging communities and not overburden them. Priorities of the communities can be seasonally dependent and organizations that wish to work with them must have a good understanding of these priorities. It is very important to use interpreters to ensure all voices and priorities are communicated.
- **Community and environment come first** - Solutions need to be grounded in community and the environment before considering any commercial impacts. For example, the opportunity in inshore fisheries is primarily important for food security, and only then should commercial interests be explored.
- **There are significant gaps in data** – There is a lack of baseline data on Arctic resources, with a shortage of publicly accessible data exchange platforms, no interoperability of existing datasets, as well as a lack of capacity and training on visualizing raw data. This challenge, although not unique to the Arctic, restricts informed decision making and resource planning.
- **The Arctic needs long-term thinking and long-term funding commitments** – Short-term partnerships, not grounded with a theory of change and that don't support local capacity, are not as meaningful or valued as long-term partnerships.
- **Being in community is the best way to demonstrate commitment** – There is a meaningful value in enhancing collaborative innovation by bringing people together where ideas happen. Additionally, it creates greater opportunity to offer novel technological solutions while integrating traditional Inuit knowledge.
- **Communication is key** – Culturally-appropriate communication with communities is critical for any organization wishing to do business in the Arctic. This demonstrates the needed awareness of the work and priorities of the communities, and of the engagement burden that organizations and researchers put on community capacity.



REFLECTIONS FROM PLENARY AND BREAKOUT SESSIONS

AMBITION 2035 ALIGNMENTS

- **Seafood opportunities** - Sustainably sourced seafood is important for both food security and commercial market opportunities. Using innovative and modernized approaches to stock assessments is needed and can make a difference in resource management. Additionally, there is a need for better baseline data gathering and research design.
- **Ocean climate solutions** – It is important that climate solutions first address local needs in the Arctic before they are tied directly to global climate change mitigation efforts. Lack of interoperability of data systems that provide open access to research data related to climate is a major challenge. Also significant in research design, is finding the right approaches that connect Western scientific methods and Indigenous science.
- **Talent challenges** – Recruitment for local positions should prioritize locals, even if it means extra effort in training and support. Local hires can act as liaisons for organizations operating in the Arctic. Retention is equally an ongoing challenge. There is a real need to bring trainers into the community to build capacity and provide training. Training also needs to be tied to meaningful job prospects. A best practice is in meeting people where they are in their career while embracing potentially differing work/life expectations that may be tied to traditional ways of living. It is important to consider other wrap-around support systems such as childcare and elder care.
- **Future of transport** - Regulations are catching up to voluntary mitigations that shipowners implement themselves, such as mitigating underwater noise. However, sometimes voluntary mitigations have unintended consequences, for example, voluntarily imposed speed limits may increase underwater noise or emissions or fuel use. Working closely with communities at every stage and ensuring that what is asked of them doesn't go beyond their capacity is crucial. Biofouling, particularly because of the increased risk of transporting invasive species, has been identified as a challenge. The viability of public-private partnerships to address infrastructure gaps such as port development in communities should be explored.



RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

- **Continued presence** - Ensure OSC project and ecosystem supports are communicated throughout Inuit Nunangat. Including funding structure and eligibility. This workshop shouldn't be a one-off engagement as it is crucial in connecting groups and organizations operating in the Arctic. Future engagement opportunities should focus on opportunity development.
- **Communication as a focus** - Focus on working with Regional Inuit Associations to ensure OSC opportunities get communicated to the community level. Also provide opportunity to communicate Inuit priorities throughout the OSC network.
- **Partnership development** – Find opportunities to partner with regional Inuit organizations, communities, companies, non-profits, government and the research community to support their ongoing projects, initiatives, events and research.
- **Talent will be a driver** - Bring partners together to support a framework or guidance document on the recruitment and retention needs of ocean companies and organizations operating in the Arctic.
- **Community-focused opportunity** – Work with communities and organizations to further explore Inuit priorities presented at the Arctic Workshop. Support development of these opportunities through a locally led model that supports the community's adaptation and development goals.





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