

Yukon First Nations Statistics Agency

Final Report



Self Government Secretariat, Council of Yukon First Nations

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Executive Summary

The Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN) Self Government Secretariat (SGS) in partnership with Carcross/Tagish First Nation (CTFN) created the Yukon First Nation Statistics Agency (YFNSA) in 2009. Funding was received through the Northern Strategy Trust Fund. The Agency was formed to address specific statistical needs in regards to Yukon First Nations. In 2009 when this project began, the First Nation Statistical Institute was the national contact point for First Nations statistical data, however Yukon First Nations (YFNs) felt like the Institute was not providing the detailed analysis required to effectively administer their programs and services. Thus, the YFNSA was created to collect and analyze data specific to the Yukon, and provided custom tabulations at the request of YFNs.

YFNSA supports YFNs governments by developing accurate population projections for each YFN, accessed and analyzed data held by other levels of government on YFN citizens, and undertook research specific informational requests by YFN governments. The Agency also worked closely with existing committees, which acted as the starting point for establishing information development and research priorities.

The YFNSA developed excellent working relationships with YFNs, and was able to provide YFN governments with accurate data that will assist them in administering their programs and services. Yukon First Nations have expressed an appetite to keep the YFNSA going in perpetuity. As such, the Self Government Secretariat will continue to seek funding to continue the important work of the YFNSA's in partnership with YFNs.

Yukon First Nation Statistics Agency

Overview

The original proposal for the establishment of the Yukon First Nations Statistics Agency (YFNSA) explicitly recognized that:

The development of a statistical agency is little to no value if there is not an infrastructure capable of taking the information and using it to assess, evaluate and solve real world problems in the lives of First Nations.

The vision was to function within a policy/planning infrastructure within the Self Government Secretariat (SGS) serving all 14 Yukon First Nations by working through existing committees with programmatic mandates as the starting point for establishing information development and research priorities.

In order to facilitate integration into the policy/planning process it was intended that the YFNSA would provide a number of services to produce high quality information and establish greater usage by YFNs such as:

- Developing knowledge and providing access to relevant survey and data collection within the national and territorial statistical systems.
- Collecting, collating and analyzing administrative data collected by federal, territorial, First Nation and municipal governments on or about First Nations.
- Providing custom reports, tabulations and specified data analysis, interpretation and publication services for First Nation governments.
- Delivering statistical training and promoting data usage (collection, analysis, interpretation and publication) in First Nation governments.
- Serve as focal point for federal and territorial governments and non-governmental researchers for information and approval of research and data collection activities on behalf of First Nation governments.

- Identify data needs, products, standards, research, and analysis priorities.
- Development of YFNSA Strategic Plan and evaluation
- Provide a framework for sustainable decision-making that builds upon the solid foundation of work already underway at YFNSA.

The agency was to have four core activities:

- Providing analyses for YFNs to improve program delivery and services
- Improving the quality of First Nation information in all levels of government
- Improving the statistical capacity of YFN governments
- Ensuring that research done on and data collected from First Nations by non-First Nation individuals and entities respects First Nation priorities

The SGS could not develop the planning/policy framework envisioned to integrate the YFNSA into the broader YFN programmatic planning needs and policy priorities. The SGS went through organizational and leadership challenges that required the YFNSA to make linkages with YFNs to develop research priorities. The progress reports reflect the specific successes of that approach with the major achievement being participating in Chapter 22 performance measure specification with all self governing YFNs.

A challenge that arose during initial discussions was that YFNs were aware that the federal and territorial government had information on their citizens' education, health, and involvement with justice systems that was not available to the YFNs. As part of the mandate YFNSA was to collect, collate and analyze data held by other levels of government and this became a major initiative. After much discussion, specifically with Yukon Government Health and Education, it was made clear that the YFNSA had to become a legal entity in order to meet the Yukon Government's (and federal government's) requirement to receive confidential information. This was proposed to CYFN leadership and rejected which led to a revised mandate and role since (a) the policy/planning framework originally envisioned as the vehicle for setting priorities and

for analytical flow did not exist: and, (b) the legal capacity with which to undertake the mandate envisioned was not to be realized.

Revised Mandate

The original proposal for the YFNSA envisioned an entity with the capacity to:

1. Provide secure off-site storage for critical YFN data in event of data system failure due to fire or virus;
2. Access data from federal and territorial departments on behalf of YFNs in terms of related education, health and justice data.

To fulfill these purposes it was necessary to establish the YFNSA as a legal entity. The effect of having a rejected proposal has limited what YFNSA can do as well as to inhibit the sharing of information with YFNSA by YFNs. In fact, YFNs have demonstrated a preference to contracting independent consultants for critical statistical work rather than access the services and expertise of the YFNSA.

This has inhibited the effectiveness of the YFNSA and its uptake by YFNs. However, the YFNSA did pursue three mandate areas:

1. Provide Information to YFN governments to carry out their work

This is accomplished by accessing statistical information, either currently available or through custom tabulations, specific to YFNs and developing statistical reports and summaries on topics of interest to YFNs.

In addition, when requested by an YFN for information, YFNSA develops presentations and presents analysis to YFN leadership on identified topics.

2. Improving the quality of FN information in all levels of government

Upon request working with YFNs to develop surveys and questionnaires to obtain program related information to assess progress and to set priorities for programs. Also bringing to bear on a topic of interest statistical information YFNSA has developed.

Designing data, gathering forms, such as enrolment, to streamline and improve the process and data quality.

3. Improving the statistical capacity of FN governments

Working with interested YFNs to develop basic statistical capacity for demographic analysis essential for program planning into the future.

For those YFNs who have accessed YFNSA to provide statistical expertise and analysis the existence of YFNSA has improved their statistical capacity. For those YFNs who have not accessed YFNSA there has been no increase in statistical capacity.

The YFNSA's ability to improve the statistical capacity of YFN governments is less through training people in each YFN and more through being able to provide statistical expertise that can be accessed by all YFNs. It has not been YFNSA's limitations that have inhibited achieving this mandate area but rather the reluctance of the YFNs to access this service.

The majority of activities reported over time, and summarized in the remainder of this report, fall under this revised mandate.

Project Summaries (November 2014 – June 2015)

Chapter 22 Review:

Yukon First Nations Data Collected by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada & Statistics Canada

1. YFNSA worked with Statistics Canada in 2010 to obtain membership based and land based census data from 1996, 2001, and 2006 for YFNs.
2. YFNSA worked with Statistics Canada (Vancouver office) to define YFN geo coding and to resolve identifications of FN origins to align with YFNs;
3. YFNSA was assured May 2012 that the matching 2011 data would be available late 2013;
4. In late January 2014 YFNSA was advised by Statistics Canada that AANDC “owned” the variable, which identified First Nation membership and were also advised that AANDC would have to approve any release to YFNSA. This was the first notification to YFNSA that AANDC was involved let alone “owned” the data as not such restriction was identified in the provision of the 1996, 2001, and 2006 custom tabulations;
5. In late May 2014 YFNSA was advised of the AANDC/Statistics Canada rule and queried its legitimacy;
6. June 5, 2014 email restates the rule and refusal to provide requested data.
7. August 2014 Custom tables YFNSA inquired about were looked into more thoroughly by Statistics Canada.
8. September 2014 Statistics Canada provided YFNSA with 2011 CSD map of the Yukon
9. September 2014 Statistics Canada production team was able to fill in the blanks for the 2011 concordance file
10. Data was provided to YFNSA by January/February 2015

Working closely with the YFNSA contractor, custom tabulations and data analysis was done for each Yukon First Nation (including the non-self-governing nations) and also included information from within their respective traditional territory. Work was done with all Yukon First Nations' involvement where the Chapter 22 Working Group went through the performance measures. YFNSA served as the technical support in defining performance measures and also looked at which measures would be achievable. The next step is for the Working Group to vet the information and approve the research plan. The information collected is ready to be released and presented to the First Nation. However, prior to the release of data, the First Nation will be required to sign an agreement that would relieve the YFNSA and CYFN of any liability.

With this data in hand, Yukon First Nations will be better positioned to make informed decisions regarding their programs and services that are administered within their government.

GLADUE Project

A Canada wide *GLADUE Practices in the Territories and Provinces* was released by the Department of Justice Canada in 2013. The CYFN Justice department then requested that the YFNSA do a separate GLADUE report specific to the Yukon Territory. Raw data was obtained from the Yukon Government Justice department and was analyzed according to CYFN's specification. The project was deemed a success and the *Yukon GLADUE: Research & Resource Identification Project* report was produced by CYFN Justice Programs can be viewed in the appendix of this report.

Enrollment Forum:

In 2013, YFNSA assisted SGS in the Enrollment Summit planning and initiation phase and summit. Planning meetings began August 2013 and the summit took place December 2013.

As per the SGS/YFNSA work-plan, a second Enrolment Forum was held in March 2015. The focus of this Forum was to bring together previous Enrolment Summit participants, and new enrollment staff, and provide an update on the status of the Yukon First Nations' enrollment files. The Forum was also used to provide more clarity regarding some issues where participants had expressed an interest in discussing during this event.

The outcome of the Forum was over all positive, and recommendations for moving forward were brought forth by the participants. Most people were interested in seeing obtainable recommendations that were supported by Leadership. Additionally, it was asked the SGS in conjunction with the YFNSA hold workshops that could address specific issues including but not limited to: understanding and implementing Chapter 3 of the Umbrella Final Agreement, protection of privacy, and dual citizenship were some of the key topics brought forth by participants.

Some feedback received after the Summit in 2013 was to produce a manual of relevant enrolment data to share amongst the YFNs. A manual was produced with policy and legislation from each of the YFNs. After the second summit, YFNs requested a the "preface" which would provide background information and explanations for the Enrolment Manual As such, the YFNSA contracted Boughton Law to provide a short document that would be used as a summary document for the original manual.

Yukon First Nations Support and Assistance

Champagne and Aishihik First Nation (CAFN):

Champagne and Aishihik First Nations contacted the YFNSA to have an initial meeting regarding Census data collection. The meeting took place with the YFNSA contractor as well as Councilors and administrative staff from CAFN. The Statistic Agency reviewed the census data compilation and analysis that it had to date, and the First Nation expressed an interest in creating and conducting their own version of the long form census in order capture accurate information relating to their citizens. The YFNSA offered to assist and support this process and once an the agreement is signed CYFN will share all CAFNs statistical data.

Ta'an Kwach'an Council (TKC):

TKC contacted the YFNSA for assistance in collecting and providing the First Nation with data that would then be used to update their citizen demographics as well as update their enrollment list for the TKC 2015 Election.

Carcross Tagish First Nation (CTFN): Capacity Development Project:

In May 2014, CTFN Education requested a meeting with YFNSA to discuss survey development. CTFN's goal is to have their own school and vision developed and to ensure their First Nations people were coinciding with their vision, and a survey was conducted and lead by the YFNSA.

In June 2014, the YFNSA, CYFN Education department to partner and CTFN developed a project to ensure that CTFNs citizen's needs are being met with regards to education. The project unfolded into an 8 month Project Charter involving YFNSA and CYFN Education working with the CTFN Capacity Development Director, CTFN Education staff and Education Advisory Council to develop an overall vision statement; a purpose

statement and a strategic plan regarding k-12 schooling in Carcross as it relates to Tlingit/Tagish students.

Community Consultation was held in July 2014, and subsequently in January 2015, where a consultation document in form of a questionnaire, as well as a parent engagement survey were filled out by CTFN citizens. The data was collected, analyzed and results were returned to the First Nation. The project ran into capacity issues within the First Nation, and as a result, the project was not completed within its previously defined timeline. CTFN has committed to the completion of this project, and CTFN Capacity Development department continues to partner with CYFN Education and together they will be seeking additional funding in order to implement strategic plan and complete the project during the 2015-2016 fiscal year.

Lessons Learned

The major lesson learned is that a shared resource, managed by a central entity which does not include all those sharing the resource, is not an effective way to establish an understanding and appreciation of the role a statistical agency can fulfill in policy, planning and performance management.

In retrospect it would have been effective to work with one YFN with an expressed interest in having statistical expertise integrated into their policy, planning and management processes. Management of the statistical agency would have to be by the local YFN leadership to ensure relevance as well as access to essential internal data and authority to collect data from other governments. Narrowing the scope of the required information for program management would also provide the YFNs with the essential data needed for each of their initiatives. Unfortunately, the YFNSA was just beginning to develop the baseline data, which requires years of census data analysis to forecast programs and services needed by YFNs for their citizens and success of Self Governance.

Recommendations

Overall, Yukon First Nations have relied on the Yukon First Nations Statistic Agency, as it was able to provide YFNs with data, the Agency was also able to produce useful analysis to the First Nation and also provide support in giving the results context.

Yukon First Nations have asked that the Yukon First Nation Statistical Agency remain as a working entity for as long as possible. As a result, YFN Leadership has directed CYFN to seek additional funding with hopes to establish the YFNSA in perpetuity.