



NIRB Uuktuutinga Ihivriuqhikhamut #126444

Evaluation of the Deep Geothermal Potential of Iqaluit, Nunavut, Canada

Uuktuutinga Qanurittuq: New

Havaap Qanurittunia: Scientific Research

Uuktuutinga Ublua: Thursday, April 30, 2026

Period of operation: from 2026-07-23 to 2026-08-08

Havauhikhaq Ikayuqtinga: Ysaline Bacon
Institut Nation de Recherche Scientifique
490 Rue de la Couronne
Québec City Québec G1K 9A9
Canada
Hivayautit Nampanga:: +33695051333, Kayumiktukkut Nampanga::

QANURITTUT

Tukihiaannaqtunik havaariyauyumayumik uqauhiuyun

Qablunaatitut: Evaluation of the Geothermal Potential of Iqaluit Ysaline Bacon¹, Xavier Leveillee Dallaire¹, and Pr. Jasmin Raymond¹¹ Institut National de la Recherche Scientifique (INRS), Québec, Canada The project evaluates the geothermal potential of Iqaluit, Nunavut, to support decarbonization and energy autonomy for northern communities. Context and justification: northern settlements are heavily dependent on imported diesel for heat and power, resulting in high costs, logistical vulnerability and negative environmental impacts. Territorial knowledge gaps (particularly limited data on geothermal gradients, subsurface thermal properties and fracture-network characteristics) have hindered reliable design and risk assessment for both shallow ground-source heat pumps (GSHPs) and deeper enhanced geothermal systems (EGS). There is also strategic interest from the Department of National Defence in decarbonizing northern operations; consequently, site selection prioritizes locations that could serve both civilian energy needs (residential and commercial heating, potential electricity) and military resilience. Two technological pathways are targeted: GSHPs for space heating and EGS - using fractured deep reservoirs - aimed at heat extraction and electricity generation. Short-term objectives (2025–2026) concentrate on targeted field acquisition. This summer campaign within a 10-km radius of Iqaluit will collect 20–30 representative surface rock samples across crystalline basement, sedimentary sequences and surficial/fractured units to obtain thermal conductivity, volumetric heat capacity and density. Systematic scanline fracture surveys on outcrops will document fracture orientation, spacing, aperture and connectivity to parameterize permeability and potential fluid pathways relevant to EGS screening. Prior to and during fieldwork the team will engage local and Indigenous organizations to co-design culturally appropriate protocols, communicate objectives, and incorporate community priorities into site selection and dissemination plans. All field activities will be non-invasive (surface sampling and observational mapping) and avoid collection of sensitive Indigenous knowledge. Long-term objectives (2026–2030) aim to expand regional understanding and produce decision-ready analyses for potential pilot deployments. Laboratory measurements will feed into numerical models to estimate local geothermal gradients, predict thermal responses for GSHP systems accounting for permafrost and latent-heat effects, and simulate reservoir behaviour for candidate EGS targets including uncertainty quantification. Techno-economic assessments will determine levelized cost of heat and electricity, lifecycle performance, logistical constraints for Arctic deployment, risk allocation for exploratory drilling, and staged implementation scenarios (e.g., GSHP demonstrators preceding exploratory wells). Outputs will explicitly compare geothermal options with diesel baselines to inform community and defence stakeholders. Data management and dissemination emphasize transparency, accessibility and local relevance. Validated datasets (thermal property measurements, fracture characterizations, analytical calculations, modelling outputs and non-sensitive imagery) Chaire de recherche du Canada sur l'analyse des systèmes géoénergétiques durables will be archived at INRS and, following validation and peer review, deposited in Borealis and the Northern Geothermal Database to support reuse across northern Canada. Anticipated outputs include doctoral theses, peer-reviewed articles, conference presentations and plain-language materials for community briefings. Knowledge mobilization will prioritize iterative feedback sessions, visual materials and locally appropriate communication channels. The project commits to culturally respectful engagement, environmental safeguards for sampling and site visits, and long-term availability as a technical resource for communities and decision-makers. By closing critical data gaps and producing transparent, locally relevant assessments, the project aims to enable informed pathways for geothermal pilot projects that advance low-carbon, resilient energy systems for Iqaluit and other northern communities.

Uiviititut: Évaluation du potentiel géothermique d'Iqaluit Ysaline Bacon¹, Xavier Leveillee Dallaire¹ et Pr. Jasmin Raymond¹¹ Institut national de la recherche scientifique (INRS), Québec, Canada Le projet évalue le potentiel géothermique d'Iqaluit, au Nunavut, afin de soutenir la décarbonation et l'autonomie énergétique des communautés nordiques. Contexte et justification Les collectivités du Nord dépendent fortement du diesel importé pour le chauffage et la production d'électricité, ce qui entraîne des coûts élevés, une vulnérabilité logistique et des impacts environnementaux négatifs. Les lacunes dans les connaissances du territoire — notamment le manque de données sur les gradients géothermiques, les propriétés thermiques du sous-sol et les caractéristiques des réseaux de fractures — ont

Hulilukaarutit

Inigiya	Hulilukaarut Qanurittuq	Nunannga Qanurittaakhaanik	Initurlinga qanuritpa	Initurlinga utuqqarnitat unaluuniit Ingilraaqnitat Uyarannuqtut akhuurninnga	Qanitqiyauyuq qanitqiamut nunallaat kitulluuniit ahiruqtaiiyainnit nuna
sampling area	Sampling sites	Municipal	The history of the site and the Iqaluit region reflects long-standing Inuit occupation, as well as more recent land use associated with seasonal travel, harvesting activities, and modern settlement.	The area may contain archaeological resources, including cultural remains or burial sites; as a precaution, all project activities will be planned to avoid such sensitive areas and maintain an appropriate protective buffer distance.	less than 10 km away from Iqaluit

Nunaliin Ilauyun, Aviktuqhimayuniitunullu Ikayuuhiarunguyun

Nunauyuq	Atia	Timiuyuq	Upluani Uqaqatigiyaungmata
Iqaluit	Mark Antho	United for Literacy Nunavut	2026-04-01
Iqaluit	Keith Drove and Jill Byrne	Nunavut Nukkiksautiit Corporation	2025-04-01
Iqaluit	Christina Beland and Blaine Chislett	Nunavut Tunngavik	2026-03-06
Iqaluit	Martha Lenio	Mars Green	2026-04-29

Angiuttauvaktunik

Naunaiqlugu nunanga talvani havauhikhaq ittuq:

South Baffin

Angiuttauvaktunik

Munariniqmut Ayuittiaqtuq	Angirutinga Qanurittuq	Tadja Qanurittaakhaanik	Ublua Tuniyauyuq/Uuktuqtuq	Umikvikhaa Ublua
Nunavut Planning Commission	Permit describing our research and its contributions to Nunavut	Active	2026-04-26	
Nunavunmi Ihivriuniquq Timiqutigiyanga	Permit describing our research and its contributions to Nunavut	Applied, Decision Pending		

Project transportation types

Transportation Type	Qanuq Atuqtauniarmangaa	Length of Use
Air	Direct flight from Ottawa to Iqaluit	
Land	We rented a car for displacement within the sampling area provided.	

Project accomodation types

Nunauyuq

Alaanut,

Ihuaqutivaluin Atuqtauyukhan

Hanalrutit atuqtaunahuat (ukuallu ikuutat, pampiutainnik, tingmitinik, akhaluutinik, hunaluuniit)

Hanalrutit Qanurittuq	Qaffiuyut	Aktikkulaanga – Qanurittullu	Qanuq Atuqtauniarmangaa
Geological Hammers	3	30 cm	For geological research, we will utilize a specialized geological hammer for surface sample collection, ensuring samples are hand-sized. This tool is designed to minimize environmental impact, allowing precise collection while preserving the delicate nature of the terrain.
vehicule	1	4200*1500*1700	Renting a small local vehicle is vital for efficient mapping in our designated area. Its compact size enables easy navigation through tight spaces. Choosing a local agency supports the community and provides insights into the terrain. This flexibility is crucial for adapting to our mapping needs, ensuring effective coverage.

Qanurittuq Urhuqyuaq unalu Qayangnaqtut Hunavaluit Aturninnga

Qanurittuq urhuqyuaq hunavaluit aturninnga:	Urhuqyuaq Qanurittuq	Qaffiuyut qattaryut	Qattaryuk Aktikkulaanga	Atauttimut Qaffiuyut	Ilanga	Qanuq Atuqtauniarmangaa
Information is not available						

Imaqmik Aturninnga

Ubluq qanuraaluk (m3)	Aturumayain imavaluin utiqittagaani qanuq	Atulirumayain imavaluin utiqittagani humi
0	Drinking water available in the hotel (for cooking, drinking, showering)	Iqaluit Nunavut Research Institute accommodation.

Iqqakuq

Ikkakunik Munakgiyauyunik

Havauhikhaq Hulilukaarut	Qanurittuq Iqqakut	Ihumagiyauyuq Qanuraaluktut Atuqtait	Qanuq Iqqakuurniarmangaa	Halummaqtirarnirutikhan piyutin
Information is not available				

Avatiliriniqmut Ayurhauingit:

Small rock samples will be collected, resulting in very low environmental impact. No drilling, excavation, or use of heavy machinery is planned. Potential impacts are minor and localized, including slight disturbance to surface materials and vegetation at sampling sites. Mitigation measures include conducting activities near existing roads and previously disturbed areas, avoiding environmentally and culturally sensitive sites (e.g., archaeological areas and cemeteries), limiting vegetation disturbance by targeting exposed bedrock outcrops only, and minimizing the number and size of samples collected. A strict "leave no trace" approach will be followed, including the removal of all waste. While immediate impacts are negligible, the study may contribute, in the longer term, to positive environmental and socioeconomic outcomes by improving knowledge of geothermal potential and supporting more informed energy decisions in Nunavut. This may also indirectly support employment opportunities, infrastructure planning, self-governance, and energy sovereignty.

Additional Information

SECTION A1: Project Info

SECTION A2: Allweather Road

SECTION A3: Winter Road

SECTION B1: Project Info

SECTION B2: Exploration Activity

SECTION B3: Geosciences

SECTION B4: Drilling

SECTION B5: Stripping

SECTION B6: Underground Activity

SECTION B7: Waste Rock

SECTION B8: Stockpiles

SECTION B9: Mine Development

SECTION B10: Geology

SECTION B11: Mine

SECTION B12: Mill

SECTION C1: Pits

SECTION D1: Facility

SECTION D2: Facility Construction

SECTION D3: Facility Operation

SECTION D4: Vessel Use

SECTION E1: Offshore Survey

SECTION E2: Nearshore Survey

SECTION E3: Vessel Use

SECTION F1: Site Cleanup

SECTION G1: Well Authorization

SECTION G2: Onland Exploration

SECTION G3: Offshore Exploration

SECTION G4: Rig

SECTION H1: Vessel Use

SECTION H2: Disposal At Sea

SECTION I1: Municipal Development

Qanurittuq Ittunik Avatinga: Avatingalluanga

Iqaluit is located on the southeastern coast of Baffin Island, within a sub-Arctic to Arctic climate characterized by long, cold winters and short, cool summers. The region is underlain by continuous to discontinuous permafrost, which strongly influences ground thermal regimes and subsurface hydrology. Surface conditions are dominated by tundra vegetation, thin soils, and widespread exposed crystalline bedrock of the Canadian Shield. Topography is generally low-relief but locally controlled by glacially scoured outcrops and frost-related processes. Seasonal freeze–thaw cycles affect near-surface stability, while snow cover and ice conditions vary significantly throughout the year. The area is also influenced by coastal processes from Frobisher Bay, including sea ice formation and tidal effects. Freshwater resources are limited to lakes and small streams, many of which are frozen for most of the year. Infrastructure development is constrained by permafrost, requiring adapted construction practices. Overall, the physical environment presents significant logistical and technical challenges for subsurface investigations and energy development.

Qanurittuq Ittunik Avatinga: Inuuhimayunut Avatinga

The biological environment around Iqaluit is characteristic of Arctic tundra ecosystems, with low biodiversity but high ecological sensitivity. Vegetation is dominated by mosses, lichens, grasses, and low-growing shrubs adapted to cold temperatures, shallow active layers, and nutrient-poor soils. Plant growth is limited to a short growing season, making recovery from disturbance slow. Wildlife includes terrestrial species such as caribou (notably the Baffin Island population), Arctic fox, and polar bear, although encounters near the city are occasional. The area also supports small mammals and a variety of migratory bird species during the summer breeding season. Marine and coastal ecosystems linked to Frobisher Bay are biologically productive and support species such as seals and fish, which are important for local subsistence. These ecosystems are closely tied to seasonal sea ice dynamics. Overall, Arctic ecosystems are particularly vulnerable to disturbance due to slow regeneration rates, strong seasonal constraints, and tight coupling between climate, permafrost, and biological activity.

Qanurittuq Ittunik Avatinga: Inungit-maniliurutingit Avatinga

Iqaluit is the capital of Nunavut and serves as the primary administrative, economic, and transportation hub of the region. The population is predominantly Inuit, and local livelihoods are shaped by a mix of wage-based employment (government, services) and traditional land-based activities such as hunting, fishing, and harvesting. The community faces a high cost of living, driven by its geographic isolation and reliance on air and seasonal sea transport. Energy supply is almost entirely dependent on diesel generation, resulting in high energy costs, logistical vulnerability, and environmental concerns. As a result, there is strong interest in alternative and locally available energy sources. Infrastructure development is constrained by permafrost, limited road networks, and the absence of connections to southern electrical grids. Cultural

and archaeological considerations are central to any project in the region. Inuit knowledge plays an important role in land use planning, and certain areas may hold cultural significance or contain archaeological remains, requiring avoidance or careful management.

Miscellaneous Project Information

na

Naunaiyainiq ukuninnga Ayurhautingit unalu Piumayaat Ikkliyuumiutinahuarutit

The project involves surface fracture observations and small rock sample collection, resulting in very low environmental disturbance. Activities will be conducted near existing roads and previously disturbed areas, while avoiding environmentally and culturally sensitive sites (e.g., archaeological areas and cemeteries). No heavy equipment will be used, and sampling will be kept to a minimum. A strict "leave no trace" approach will be followed, including the removal of all waste. Research objectives and results will be shared with local communities. Overall, the project is expected to have negligible environmental and socioeconomic impacts.

Tamatkiumayunik Ithukgutivaktunik

Given the small scale and short duration of the proposed activities, the project is not expected to contribute significantly to cumulative adverse environmental effects. Activities are limited to surface observations and small sample collection near existing roads, with no infrastructure development or long-term disturbance. However, the project may contribute positively at a cumulative level by improving knowledge of local geothermal potential, supporting more informed energy decision-making in Nunavut, where communities currently rely heavily on diesel.

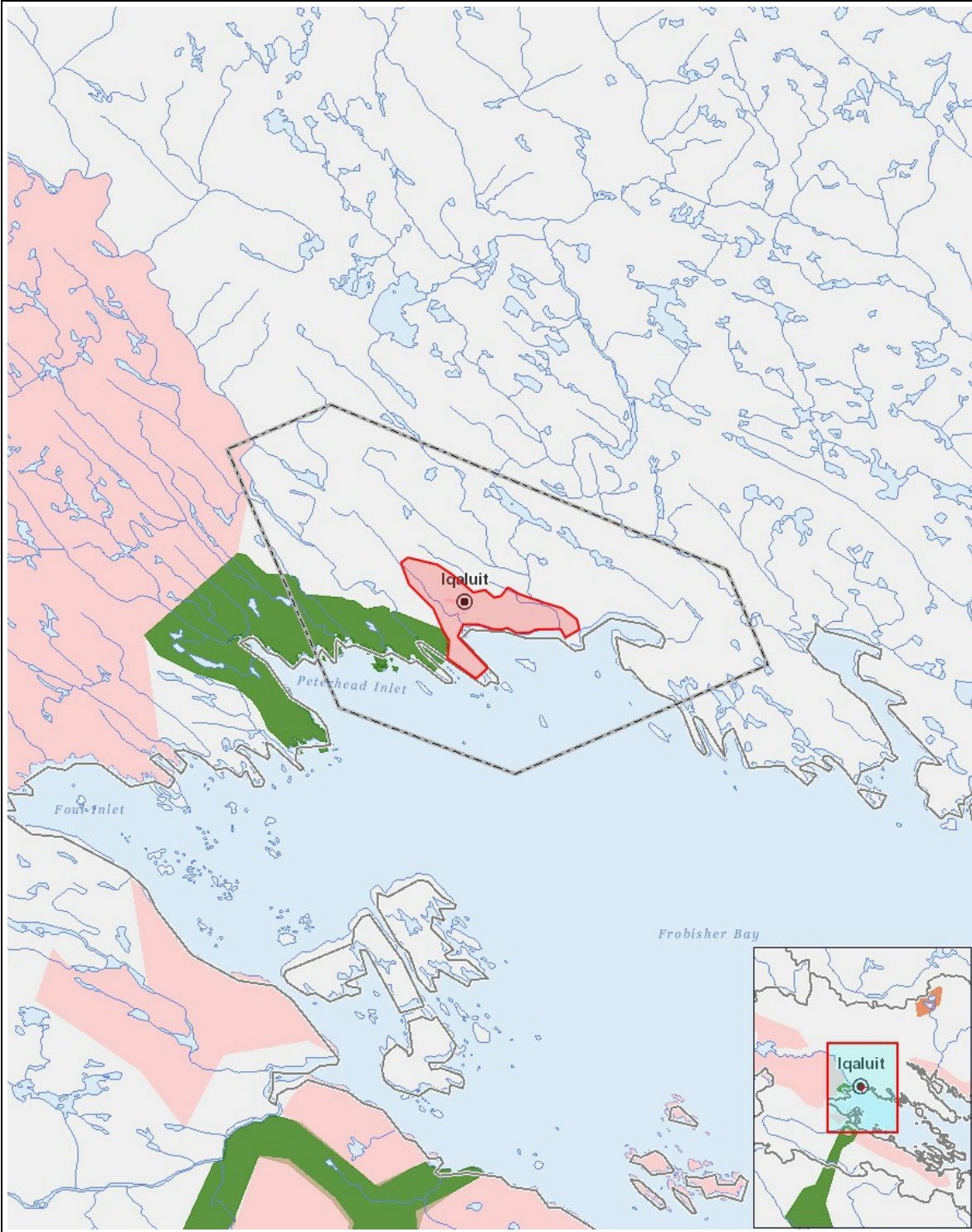
Impacts

Ilitariyauniq Avatiliriniqmut Ayurhauingit

	PHYSICAL	Designated environmental areas	Ground stability	Permafrost	Hydrology / Limnology	Water quality	Climate conditions	Eskers and other unique or fragile landscapes	Surface and bedrock geology	Sediment and soil quality	Tidal processes and bathymetry	Air quality	Noise levels	BIOLOGICAL	Vegetation	Wildlife, including habitat and migration patterns	Birds, including habitat and migration patterns	Aquatic species, incl. habitat and migration/spawning	Wildlife protected areas	SOCIO-ECONOMIC	Archaeological and cultural historic sites	Employment	Community wellness	Community infrastructure	Human health
Havakvinga																									
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Aulapkaininnga																									
Sampling sites	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	M	-	-	-	-	-	M	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	P	P	P	P
Piiqtauniq																									
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

(P = Nakuuyuq, N = Nakuungittut unalu mikhilimaittuq, M = Nakuungittut unalu mikhittaaqtuq, U = Naluyauyuq)

Havaariyauyukhamut Nayugaa



List of Project Geometries

1	polygon	sampling area
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