

# AIR CONNECTIVITY AND AIRPORT INFRASTRUCTURE IN NORTHERN CANADA

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## KEY MESSAGES

- A total of 146 remote communities in Canada were identified in this study. All but eight of those communities are served by an airport located within 20 km by road from the community.
- Eighty-three per cent of airports have a single gravel or crushed-rock runway, 15 per cent have paved runways, and 2 per cent have turf or sand runways. Eleven per cent of airports have a runway that is long enough to accommodate only aircraft with up to twenty seats, 45 per cent can accommodate aircraft with up to fifty seats, and the remaining 44 per cent can accommodate larger, longer-range aircraft.
- Generally, the remote communities located in the provinces are well connected by air, with services to regional and international airports.
- There are 116 airports (82 per cent) with regular charter or scheduled flight services. Twenty-six airports (18 per cent) do not currently have any regular flight services, twelve of which airports are in the territories. Of the airports with regular flight services, 109 have scheduled flight operations and seven have only charter services. For the twenty-six airports without regular services, sixteen have no scheduled services accessible by road to an alternative airport.
- Fifty-nine airports (42 per cent) have published instrument-approach procedures and can potentially accommodate flight operations in low visibility. The remaining airports can accommodate flights only during visual meteorological conditions.
- Twenty-nine airports (20 per cent) do not have terminal buildings.
- From an analysis of recent historical flight data, 62 per cent of airports had daily or quasi-daily flights year-round over the past two-and-a-half years.
- No relevant policies were found regarding air services to northern remote communities in Canada. In general, air services to those communities are of a commercial nature and determined by supply and demand.
- A weather study conducted for twenty-one select airports, using cloud ceiling data — one of the critical factors in determining the ability of pilots to land at an airport — showed no evidence of impact of climate change in airport operational availability over the last seventeen years. Other factors, such as runway visual range — which is generally correlated to cloud ceiling — and runway surface condition were not investigated.