

Yukon innovation plan
What We Heard report
Appendix A

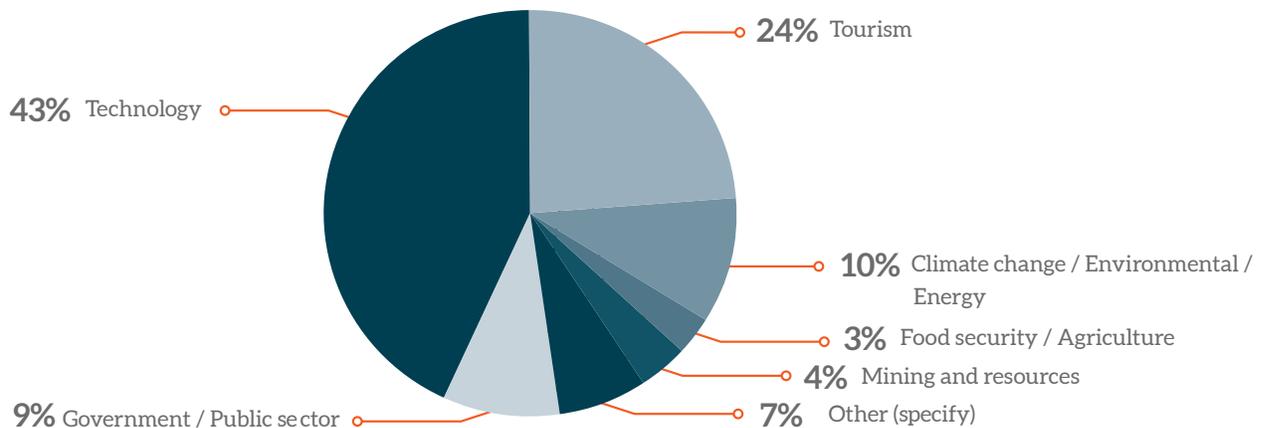
Online survey summary



Engagement by the numbers

- 74 respondents participated in the online survey at EngageYukon.ca.
- 15 responded on behalf of an organization. Of those, five were representing new businesses, three were representing established businesses and six were representing organizations that support entrepreneurs.
- Of the respondents responding on behalf of an organization, 14 of those organizations or businesses were based in Whitehorse.
- Of the remaining 59 respondents that were not representing organizations, all were Yukon residents: 54 were based in Whitehorse and four were based in communities (Dawson City, Watson Lake, Haines Junction and one was in another community).
- 24% of respondents were in the technology sector, 10% in climate change/energy/environment and 14% were in other target sectors. Nine per cent of respondents were in the public sector, and the remaining 43% represented various industries (see full list below).

Q What sector or industry are you in?

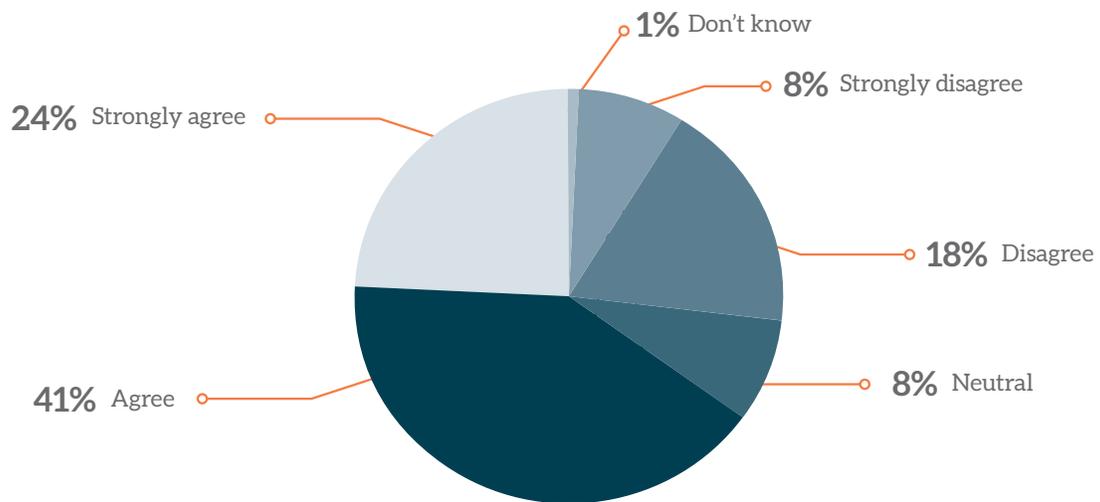


Definition of innovation

Q Please rate your level of agreement with the definition of innovation proposed.

“Innovation is creating new businesses, social models or improving processes or service delivery in established businesses and industries. Innovation is not limited to the technology sector.”

48 respondents (64.8%) agreed or strongly agreed with the definition.



29 respondents said they would make changes to the definition. Responses can be summarized in the following themes:

- Innovation is more than creation of new businesses.
- Innovation is about problem solving.
- Innovation happens in every sector, not just in tech companies.

- The definition need to include a greater scope of practice. These would include creation of new policies or processes.
- The definition need an outcome attached to what innovation will result in. For example: quality of life improvement or improvements to labour market.

Specific responses:

- “I disagree with ‘Innovation is the creation of new businesses’.”
- “Innovation is disrupting a process, service or sector.”
- “Innovation is a form of problem solving.”
- “The sentence “Innovation is not limited to the tech sector” is redundant.”
- “Innovation is a derivative from failure.”

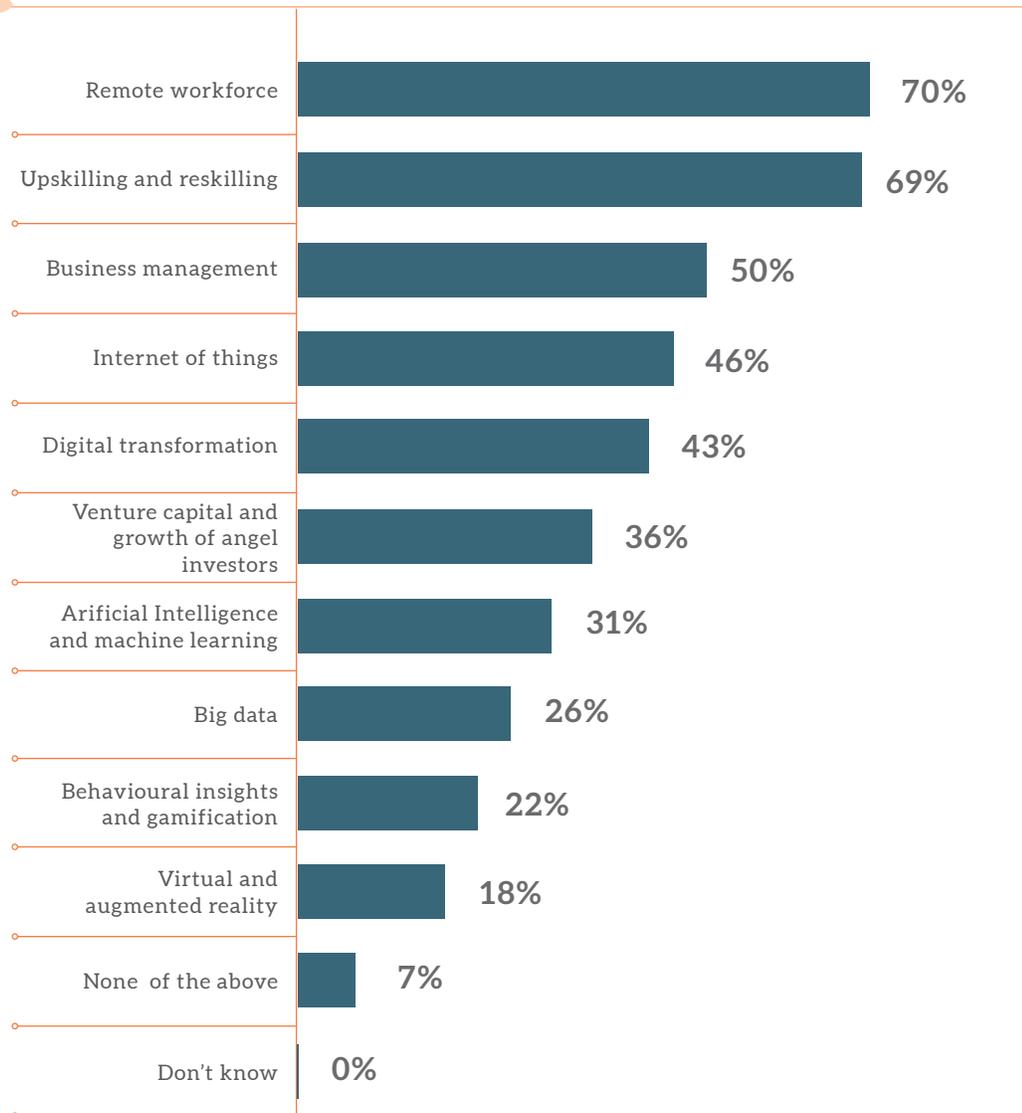
The Pillars



Talent and skills development

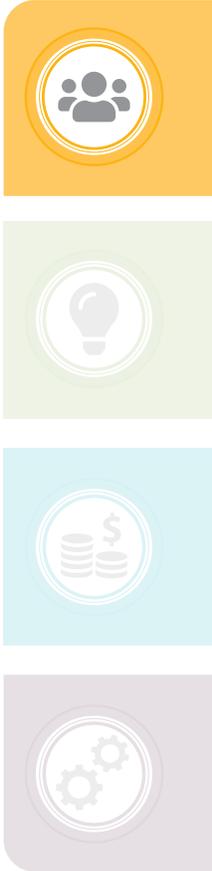
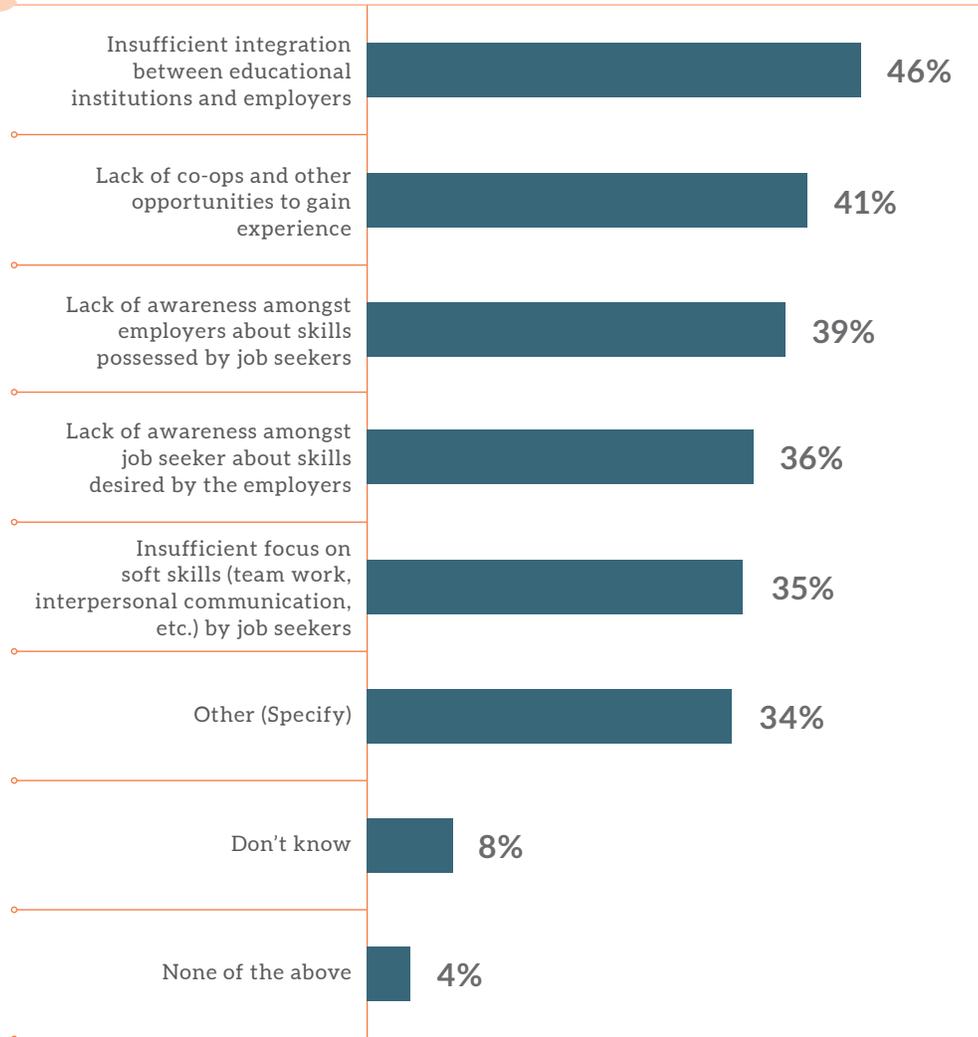


What skill sets should Yukon focus on building/ attracting to grow innovation in the territory?





In your opinion, what gaps or challenges are preventing a smooth entry or re-entry into the workforce for Yukoners?



Specific responses for “other”:

- “Lack of investment savvy and financial literacy, as well as financial intermediaries other than banks.”
- “Technological ability/skills.”
- “Insufficient education, basic literacy, self-awareness and job readiness.”
- “Lack of free market and trade between interprovincial borders.”
- “Market integration (national and global) integration into ‘outside markets.’”
- “Lack of opportunities for remote working, or reliable internet for remote work.”

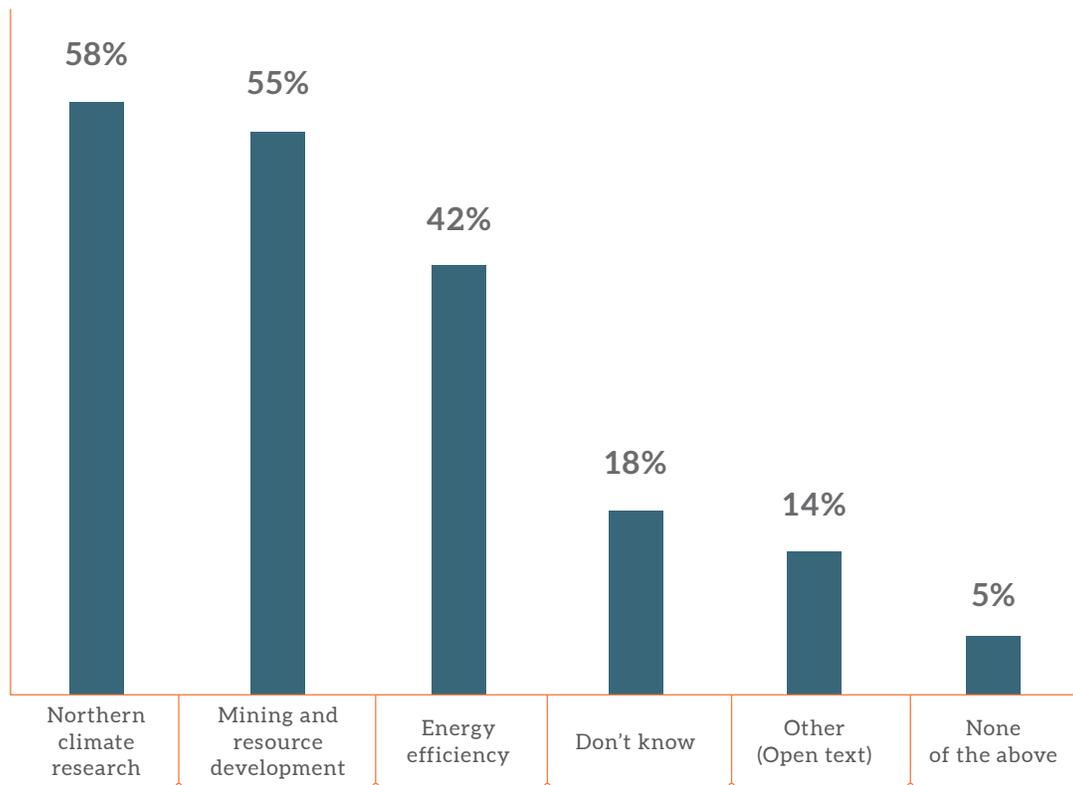
- “Yukon is small, and informal networks seem to be the best way to get a job. Even in Yukon Government, you can see how individuals get positions due to family and friends intervening. If you are an outsider, you are penalized; international/global trends tend to be disregarded due to them being considered ‘big city phenomena,’ but plenty of innovative things are missed due to the general aversion to change here in the Yukon.”
- “Need to re-train people with skill sets that can transfer to new industries (i.e. take the tradesmen from a mine site and transfer them to the renewable energy sector).”
- “I have been a knowledge professional for nearly 20 years. Due to a change in my family circumstances, I need to move from where I live into a different house. The housing situation here is such that I - a very well-paid professional - cannot afford to house. This is ridiculous. Yukon is my home, but I can work anywhere. I am seriously considering moving out of the territory because of it. Indeed, it is getting to the point where I may have no choice.”
- “Employers do not recognize the importance of failure as learning opportunities and humility and teachability [sic] as an essential attribute. Remember hire for attitude, train for skill, overemphasis on credentials.”
- “Currently, the Yukon does not have the infrastructure or the same level of attraction as other metropolitans. They are making it not as appealing for tech entrepreneurs to uproot their operations to Whitehorse. The lack of available capital from angels, VCs, and loan institutions and an incubation or acceleration program that offers financial investment following completion is likely key in creating more of a tech hub. Those factors into the lack of incoming innovation projects as there is little support throughout the preliminary development of an entrepreneur validating their business.”
- “Businesses are not keeping up with innovation and understanding new technologies and the new employee’s awareness in these areas.”



Supporting research and innovation



What are the existing areas of expertise for the Yukon research community?



Specific responses for “other”:

- “Energy.”
- “Tourism and community development.”
- “Sports tech, etc.”
- “Social sciences! University collaborations with the public and private and social sectors! The scope of this survey lacks imagination and is NOT innovative! Get the social scientists involved.”
- “Northern Agriculture.”



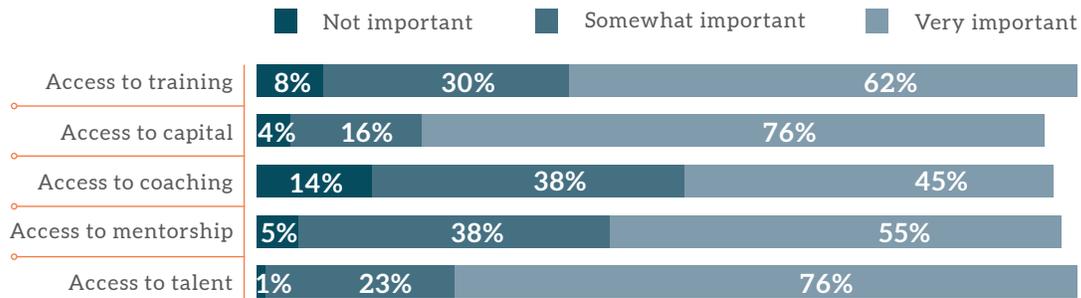
- “Indigenous self-determination & self-governance; Community-based research.”
- “Hyper-scale data storage centers using innovative cooling technology, powered by renewable energy/stored power.”
- “Many natural sciences.”

When asked how these areas of expertise could be further strengthened, the following themes were reported:

- There is a natural link between the science strategy and the innovation plan.
- An increase of collaborations and partners are mentioned. Examples include:
 - Collaborations between institutions and start-ups and small businesses.
 - Partnership between researchers and industry.
 - Encourage dialogues with existing expertise on new development.
 - Sector specific think tanks.
- Education opportunities for IT related fields are limited in Yukon.
- Identifying what Yukon want to be known for and start investing in being subject matter experts in those areas.
- An increase of on the job training to build up local capacity.



Q In your opinion, how important are the following resources and support for start-ups to succeed in Yukon?



In your opinion, how important are the following resources and support for start-ups to succeed in Yukon? :

- Access to suitable markets for scaling and export development.
- Access to knowledge, including business management, IT related knowledge and financial management.
- Access to reliable and affordable internet infrastructure.
- Living expenses/basic salary funding during initial product development phase.
- Incubation/acceleration program of similar calibre to down south, including tech specific programs.
- Red tape and regulations are cited as a barrier.
- Cost of living, availability of housing are barriers.
- Access to land or building infrastructure .

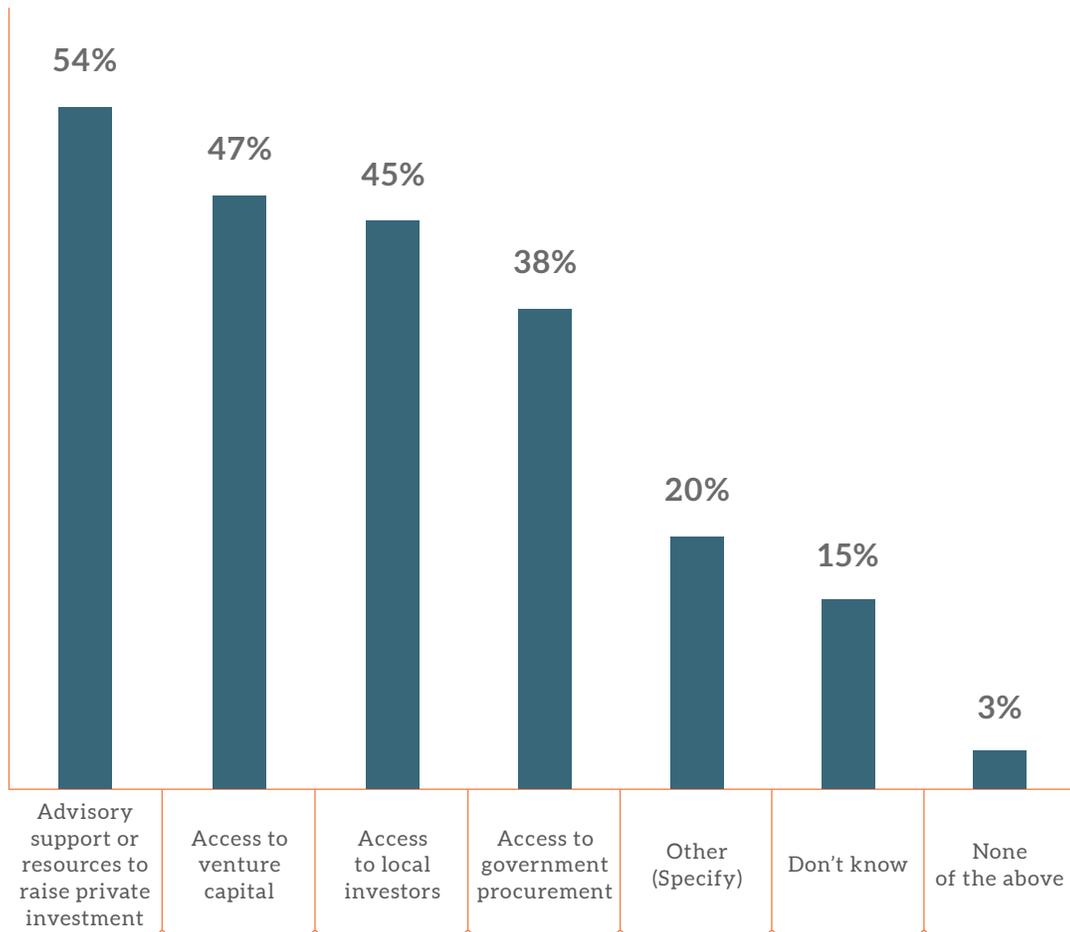




Access to capital



What do you believe are the main challenges for start-ups in accessing capital/fundraising in Yukon?



15 respondents suggested “Other” challenges in accessing capital/fundraising in Yukon.

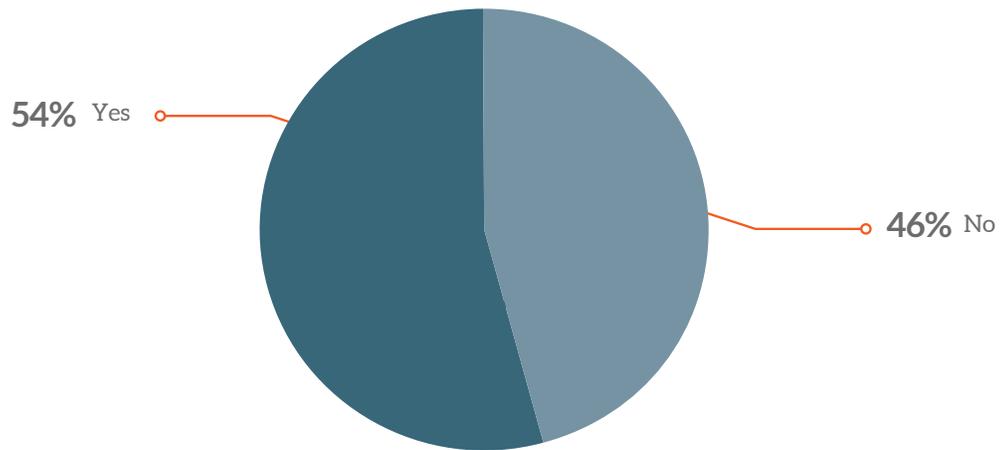
Responses can be summarized in the following two themes:

- Start-ups will need support in learning and developing into investment-ready companies. This includes support on development of business case.
- Support on the development of proof of concept.

Specific responses for “other”:

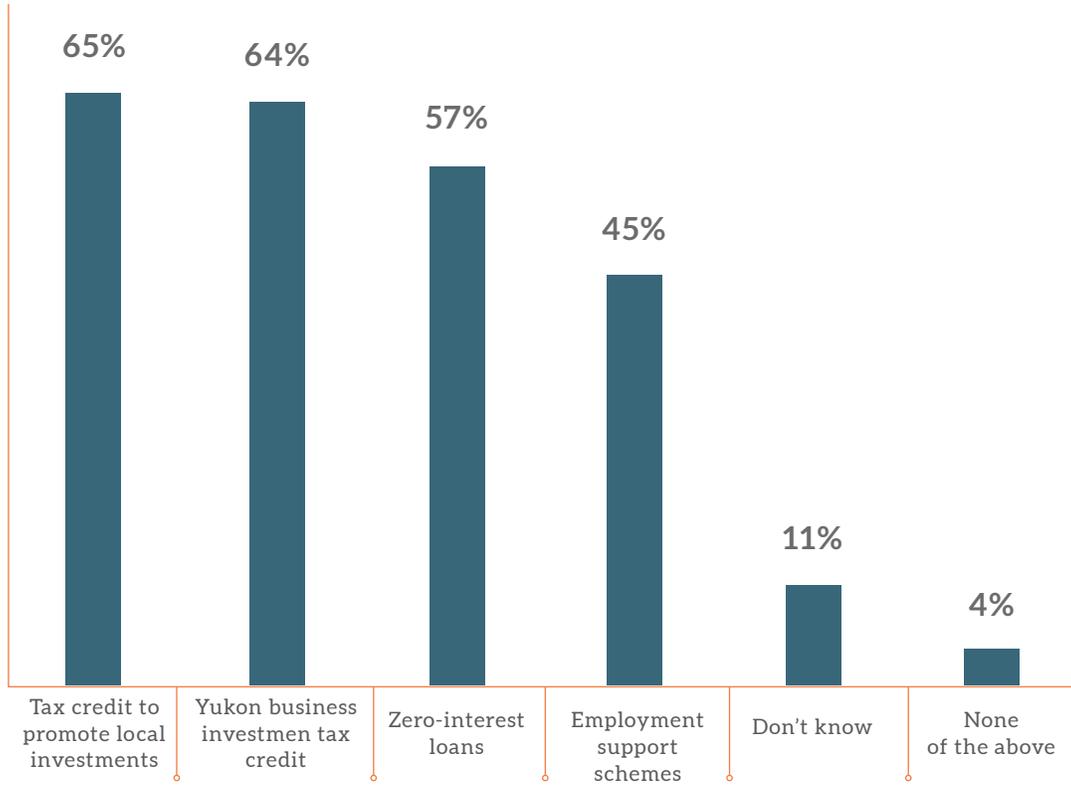
- “There is no lack of capital.”
- “Access to no-interest or forgivable loans.”

Q Are you aware of the Yukon Business Investment Tax Credit program offered by the Government of Yukon?





What measures should be continually expanded to support private investment in innovative Yukon companies?

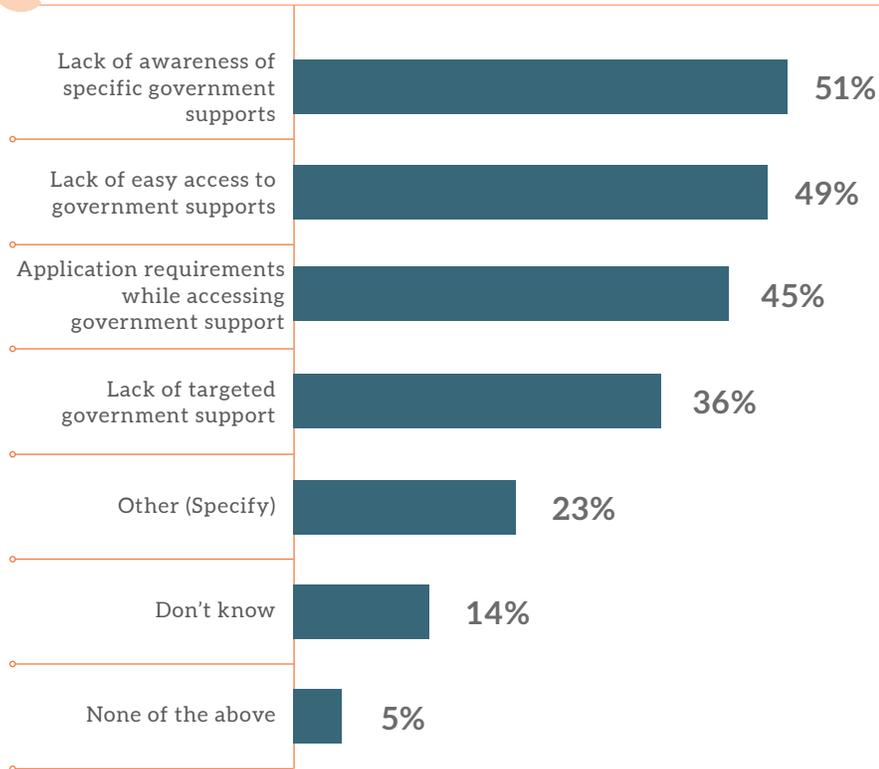




Simpler, inclusive program development and implementation

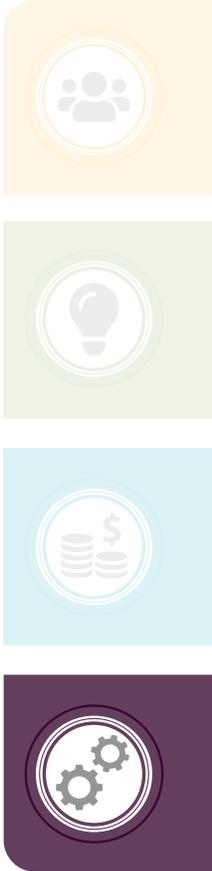


What are the main barriers faced by businesses while accessing government innovation supports?



17 respondents suggested “Other” barriers while accessing government innovation support. Responses can be summarized in the following three themes:

- Staff that is administering funds does not always have knowledge of the sector, industry or business of the application.
- Lack of flexibility in funding application.
- Lack of awareness of available support. Clients expressed frustration in finding information on YG’s web site.

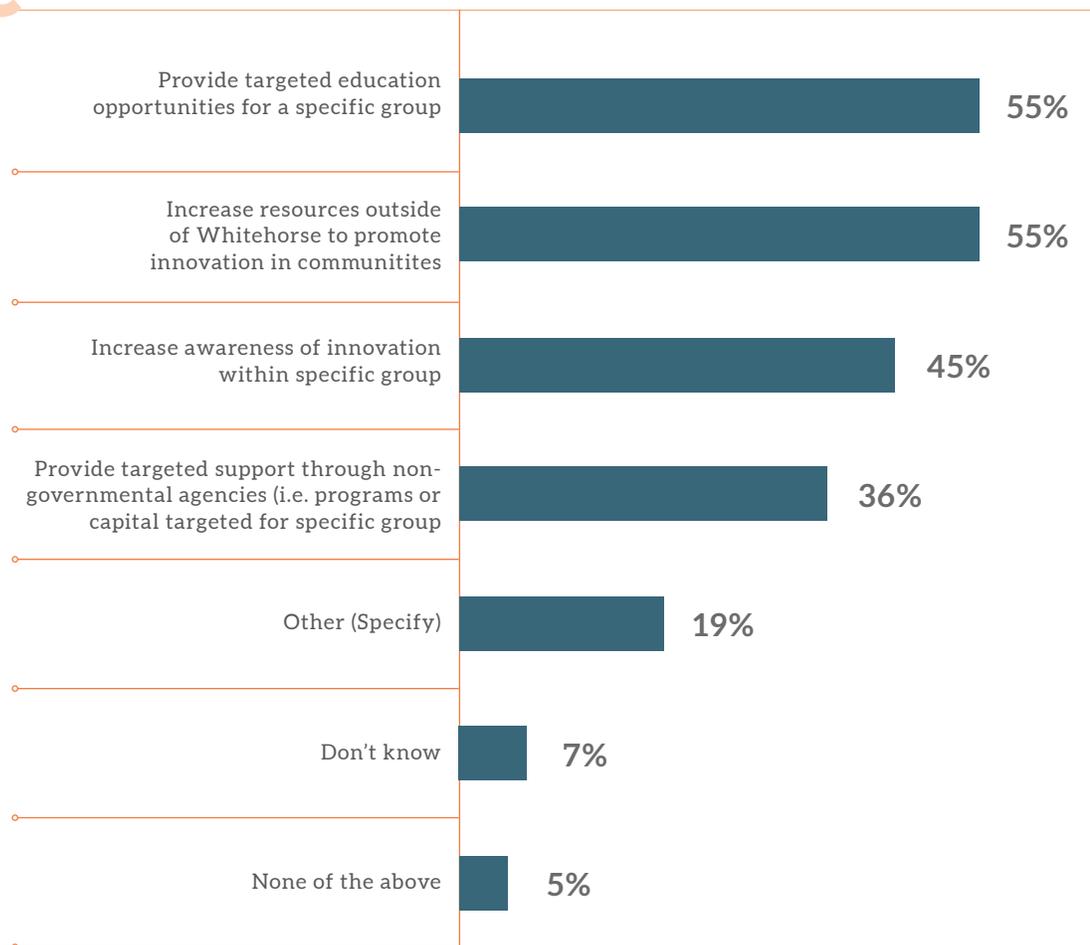


Specific responses for “other”:

- “Lack of business orientation and actual private business mgmt. skills in the public sector bureaucracy.”
- “Burdensome reporting requirements.”
- “Most innovation programs focused on small and micro businesses. Not generating new employment or GDP for the territory.”
- “Government support is usually only accessed by those made aware of it.”
- “Technical / logistical challenges, especially in communities (i.e. accessing applications); cultural / educational considerations (e.g. are written applications with budget submissions accessible for all Yukoners?).”

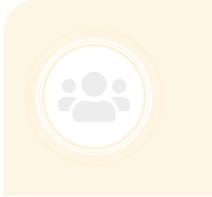


What can be done to improve women and First Nations citizens’ participation in innovation in the territory?



Specific responses for “other”:

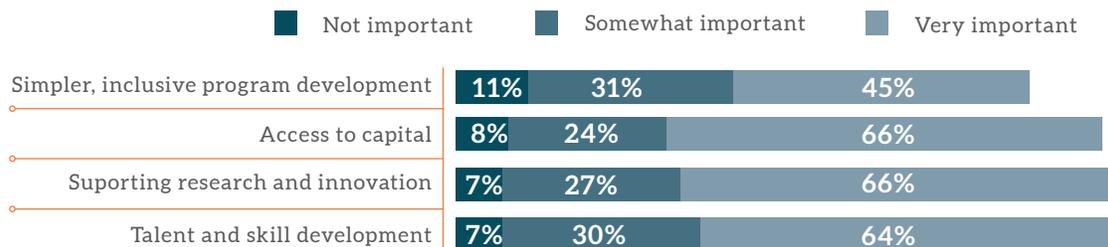
- “Twice a year, have women/FN mentors visit Jr schools, the high schools, and bring them to the Yukon University and the Innovation Centre.”
- “Tell stories! Successes and failures (and here is what we learned). Get into the schools and show people there is are rewarding options.”
- “Make current stakeholders aware of biases against qualified local individuals.”
- “Increase the participation of women and FN in the disbursements of supports to business.”
- “Ask/tune in to what language these groups use to talk about their creative solutions - perhaps “innovation” or “start-up” or “entrepreneurship” or “pitch” turn these groups off, whereas “creative solution” or “small business” or other languages might be more welcoming and invite their participation in these programs.”
- “Listen and dialogue with the targeted community.”



Final thoughts

All pillars for programs and services were considered essential for the government to focus on to grow innovation in Yukon in the next five years. The following question was asked to determine the most crucial pillar:

Q Please rate the importance of programs and services that the government should focus on to grow Yukon’s innovation in the next five years.



When asked if there were another program or service respondents would like to see the Yukon government invest in to support the growth of Innovation in Yukon in the next five years, the following themes were identified:

- Existing ecosystem supports are beneficial. We need to expand services and build a healthy ecosystem. Requires wayfinding service/navigation for available programs.
- Increase of networking and knowledge sharing opportunities with entrepreneurs.
- Explore local procurement options to support local technology solutions.
- Training and skills development for youth and in communities.
- Inclusivity of all businesses with less emphasis on technology and start-ups
- Importance of social enterprise.
- Improving accessibility and affordability of Infrastructure (transportation costs, internet, housing, access to land, electricity).
- Mentorships and apprenticeships outside Yukon.

Specific responses:

- “Improve educational development K-12.”
- “reintroduce at least one IT educational stream.”
- “No limit Gigabit fiber connections available to the home in every community.”
- “Stop trying to make everything ‘sound’ high tech by using “innovation and start up” terminology and just call it ‘business growth and support’. Find it alienating/intimidating to many small businesses that have a lot of potential-especially those from smaller communities.”
- “Bridging Yukon innovators with broader market opportunities.”
- “Creating a local marketplace for smaller work packages.”
- “I would prefer to see much more angel investment opportunities.”



Yukon 