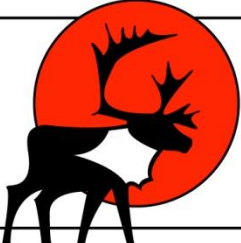


Research Priorities Workshop Report

Inuvik

September 17, 2012

Prepared for:

	Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board
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Context

The Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board (GRRB) was established following the conclusion of the *Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement* (GCLCA, 1992). It is the co-management body for wildlife, fish and forest management in the Gwich'in Settlement Area (GSA) established pursuant to this agreement. The powers and responsibilities of the Board are described in Chapter 12 and 13 of the GCLCA.

As a co-management board, the GRRB has a mix of Gwich'in participants and government appointees. It strives to act in the public interest to manage renewable resources in the Gwich'in Settlement Area. Board members are nominated by the Gwich'in Tribal Council (GTC) and various government departments. However, members have a mandate to act in the public interest, independent of their nominating organization or department.

Each year, the GRRB identifies its Research Priorities in consultation with its co-management partners in order to address community concerns and guide the GRRB's internal and external research agenda relating to the GRRB's mandate for wildlife management. This year the Board decided to do this through a facilitated one-day workshop in Inuvik on September 17th to engage its co-management partners to promote collaboration and prevent duplication of research in the Gwich'in Settlement Area.

Tait Communications was contracted to conduct the workshop and produce a preliminary report for use during the GRRB's strategic planning workshop held from September 19th to 21st. The following is the final report on the Research Priorities workshop, which incorporates these highlights as well as some additional information on the process that was used to solicit input on research priorities and analyse that input.

In total 27 people participated in the morning of the workshop and were joined by 3 additional participants in the afternoon, for a total of 30. Participants included representatives from:

- the GRRB Board
- the GRRB staff
- the four Renewable Resource Committees (RRC)
- the GTC
- the Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute (GSCI)
- the federal department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO)
- the Aurora Research Institute (ARI)
- the Cumulative Impact Monitoring Program (CIMP)
- GNWT department of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) – afternoon only

Objectives

- Review past Research Priorities
- Provide the GRRB and its staff with overarching direction on research activities going forward
- Build consensus on priority-setting criteria that can be applied by the GRRB and its staff when assessing research opportunities
- Provide overall feedback and input into the GRRB's strategic planning process
- Contribute to the development of a research and monitoring guidance document

Methodology

The following workshop format was used to elicit input on research priorities.

Step 1: Set the Context

First the group reviewed the **Objectives and Agenda** for the day to ensure these were well understood.

This was followed by a brief **Context-setting Presentation** by the GRRB's Executive Director, Amy Thompson (Annex 1) to review:

- Board mandate
- How research priorities fit into the planning process
- What the Board hopes to get out of the day and how it will use this input

The facilitator then took the time to **review existing Research Priorities (RPs)** with the participants. For the purposes of this exercise, a list of existing Research Priorities Activities was developed based on a full list of RPs collated by the GRRB staff. The facilitator also reviewed how RPs are currently set. This includes a few key elements:

- RRCs send their RPs to the GRRB in order of priority.
- Management Plans are used to identify required research and research where the GRRB plays a lead role. This is done in discussion with RRCs.
- Work with partners also contributes to the RP process as GRRB partners may have research activities and/or legislated priorities that drive their research agendas in the GSA (i.e. *Species at Risk Act*).
- Industry interests and development pressures (i.e. regulatory processes) also come into play.

The priorities were presented by species, area and objective category and similar activities were grouped to make the overall list more manageable. In total 68 RPs were put forward for review and assessment.

The group then reviewed the existing capacity of the GRRB to undertake work related to the RPs and other aspects of its mandate.

GRRB = 5 full-time staff

- 1 Executive Director: supervisory and oversight role
- 1 Wildlife Biologist: technical staff (conduct research, development management plans)
- 1 Fisheries Biologist: technical staff (conduct research, development management plans)
- 1 Renewable Resource Manager: liaison staff (consult, update RP list, coordinate harvest study)
- 1 Office Manager: administrative staff (financial and administrative)
- *Casual staff and summer student: dependent on funding*

The capacity of other partners was also described.

Environment and Natural Resources (GNWT) – Inuvik Office

- 2 wildlife biologists, 1 wildlife technician
- 1 forest officer (no forest biologist or technician)
- Possibility of partnership with other territorial staff (dependent on capacity)

Department of Fisheries and Oceans (Govt of Canada)

- Inuvik: 1 fisheries management biologist
- Winnipeg: 2 research biologists do work in the GSA (one on habitat and one on population dynamics)
- 3 research students that are located in Winnipeg with a focus on work in the GSA and are supported by DFO

Canadian Wildlife Service (Govt of Canada)

- No staff in GSA, operate out of Yellowknife

Gwich'in Tribal Council

- 1 Director of land and resources
- 1 lands and resources officer
- 1 lands and resources technical advisor position (vacant)
- Hopes for a GIS technician

RRCs

- 4 coordinators (1 per community)

The group recognized that there was a need to priorities RPs in order to use the limited resources of the GRRB and its partners to best effect.

The facilitator also reviewed what RPs are and how they are used.

- RPs are linked to the **GRRB's mandate** and are used to determine **what the GRRB spends time and money** on doing. This can include:
 - how staff time is allocated
 - what projects receive funding, and
 - which initiatives get letters of support, in-kind support and other forms of support from the GRRB.
- They are **not a judgment** about what research is needed in the GSA or what research is important to communities and partners.
- Research topics that are not retained as Research Priorities are not lost. The GRRB will continue to keep track of these interests, share them with other parties and look for opportunities to have them addressed in another way.

Step 2: Establish Priority-setting Criteria

The facilitator introduced the process that would be followed to review and evaluate the existing RPs. In order to apply a more rigorous review and evaluation process to the existing RPs, the group was asked to first develop priority-setting criteria which would then be applied in a structured way to the RP list.

This will allow the GRRB to better understand the RPs and incorporate that information into its forward planning.

Process

Participants worked in break-out groups to put forward potential priority-setting criteria. The following captures the input provided on potential criteria by all groups (as it appeared on the flipchart notes taken by the facilitator):

- GRRB Mandate
 - If not our mandate, whose is it?
- Community input/interest
 - Is it an urgent request from RRC's
 - Is there an impact for a number of communities (overlap)
 - Is there industry/development pressure
- Are resources available (\$, partners)
- Do we have capacity in-house
- Urgency and timing
 - Is there a conservation concern identified (e.g. Species at Risk)
 - Legislation
 - Management Plans (necessitate actions, usually developed in response to a crisis)
 - A cyclical research issue
- Value of resource – importance to communities
- Community wellness
- Partnership potential (experience, funding potential)
 - Is this being done, can the GRRB support, but not “do”
- Order of things – is this key in a series of steps
- Overlap – can it encompass other RPs, is it connected to other RPs

The Facilitator then identified the following themes:

- mandate/management plans
- community
- impact
- urgency/timing
- resources
- connection
- partnerships

During the scheduled break, the facilitator looked more closely at the themes and identified potential criteria “clusters” that were then presented as **five potential criteria**.

- 1) GRRB mandate or lead
- 2) Importance to communities
- 3) Availability of resources
- 4) Level of urgency or connection
- 5) Importance to partners

Questions that could be posed and sample ratings were provided to assist groups in applying the criteria. This proposed tool was briefly reviewed by the group. As a result, a table was proposed by the Facilitator as a *working* guide for the evaluation process.

Step 3: Applying Criteria

Process

Participants self-selected into five groups in order to assess the RPs against Priority-setting Criteria that they felt well placed to evaluate. Each group then worked together to assign a rating from 1 – 5 for their assigned Criteria to each of the 68 RPs. Groups were challenged to challenge themselves to evaluate the relative priority of the various RPs as the objective of the exercise was to help the Board fine-tune the list to better target limited resources.

A note on the application of “Importance to communities” criteria

*This criteria was originally presented by the facilitator as evaluating only on the “value of the resource” to the community. This, however, failed to reflect clearly the original input from break-out groups, which had also included “community interest/input” in the research. As the rankings were reviewed, the ratings given for this criteria raised concern given that some RPs related to species like caribou were much lower than expected. The group that had evaluated this criteria was asked to clarify how they did their evaluation. The facilitator met with the group and was able to clarify that they **applied rankings based primarily on their understanding of the community’s interest and support for the research** identified in the RP. Given the option, the group chose to clarify how they applied the criteria, rather than to re-rank the RPs based exclusively on the value of the resource to the community. Their **actual application** of the criteria is reflected in the summary table in **Annex 2**.*

The group went on to explain that it was more important for the GRRB to know how community viewed the importance/value of further research pertaining to the species identified. While a species may be important to the community, they wanted to be clear that in some cases, communities do not support a continued emphasis on research related to these species. They explained this was because:

- The community appreciates the research that has been done and considers the knowledge gained very important, but is comfortable that enough information has been gathered*
- There is community fatigue, concern and even frustration with on-going research on some species*
- On-going research could be unnecessarily disturbing or detrimental to the species*
- In light of other higher research interests in communities, the level of effort and resources put towards certain species would be better put towards other RPs. This could mean scaling back research in some areas.*

For this criteria, a ranking of “1” means this RP is considered a low research priority by the communities going forward. The group indicated that a low ranking on community priority was not a request to stop the research immediately, but a signal that research may need to be scaled down in order to allow the Board to focus on other RPs.

Other groups further clarified how they applied the rankings. Their comments are reflected in the table provided.

Outcomes

The final ranking and suggested categorisation of the evaluation of RPs was tabulated by the facilitator following the session and a first draft provided to the GRRB in the context of its strategic planning session in Fort McPherson from September 19-21. A detailed revised version of that summary is provided in Annex C.

ANNEX A

GRRB Context-setting Presentation

Research Priority Current status

- ▶ Lots of good information
- ▶ Long list of RPs
 - Difficult for Board approval (i.e. RP interests)
 - Difficult for staff work planning
 - RRC fatigue to review
- ▶ Does not account for staff capacity



Workshop objectives



Goal: achieve a manageable RP list

- ▶ Filter through list with priority-setting criteria
- ▶ Provide direction to staff for work planning (link to strategic plan)
- ▶ Identify areas for collaboration with partners

Next Steps

Workshop results will...

- ▶ be used in the GRRB strategic planning workshop
- ▶ be summarized into a final report (shared with public)
- ▶ include recommendations for the annual process

Amended process will continue



Hai Cho, Thank You



Feb 21-22, 2012

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Research Priority Background



2008 to 2012

- ▶ GRRB changed focus to management planning
- ▶ Research priority list developed
- ▶ Consultation policy developed
- ▶ Formalized an annual process to collect RPs

Research Priority Annual cycle



ANNEX B

Final Priority-setting Criteria

Priority Criteria	Key Questions	How to rate things	Who
GRRB mandate or lead	Is this under the GRRB's mandate? Is the GRRB already leading work on this? Is it part of a management plan / on-going commitment?	1 = Completely outside the mandate, someone else should be doing 2 = Within mandate but others should lead 3/4 = Management plan but not GRRB lead work 5 = Completely within mandate, GRRB leads or there is a management plan	Board members Staff
Research priority of communities <i>*See note</i>	Is this something the RRCs are hearing communities want research on? Is there enough research done? Are communities comfortable that we know enough about this species? Are communities interested in seeing more research in this area? Is this a research priority in more than one community?	1 = Considered a low research priority by communities 3 = Considered a research priority in one or more communities 5 = High research priority to all communities	Community representatives Partners
Availability of resources	Is there money for this already? Are we likely to be able to find money for this? Does the board have capacity to do this in house now or would it need more/different capacity? Do our partners have resources to contribute?	1 = No resources and no likelihood of getting any 3 = Resources <i>may</i> be available, but would require some work (funding requests, hire new staff, etc.) 5 = Resources are in place	Staff Partners
Level of urgency or connection	Is community well-being at risk (human)? Are there imminent safety risks? Is there a conservation concern? Is there development pressure or a timeline we don't want to miss? This is an identified Species At Risks? Is this something other priorities rely on or can maximize value of investment?	1 = Not at all urgent, no connection 2/3 = Less urgency, work being done by other groups 4/5 = This is a very urgent issue or there are critical time pressures	Community representatives Staff
Importance to partners	Do partners want to work with us on this? Does the GRRB have something critical required for the partnership to work? Do our partners need our support to get approvals/funding?	1 = No interest from partners 3 = Some interest from partners 5 = Partners require the GRRB to be part of this work.	Partners Board members

ANNEX C

Analysis of Research Priorities Assessment Exercise

GRRB RESEARCH PRIORITIES WORKSHOP

Analysis of Research Priorities Assessment Exercise

The full ranked list of existing RPs (68) has been sorted based on how strongly each RP aligns with the Board's mandate.

Based on how the RP ranked with respect to other criteria, four (4) broad categories of interpretation are recommended. For further clarity, items included in an existing management plan are provided in one table and all other Research Priorities are listed in a second table.

GRRB Priority

Management Plan Research: 19

Research Priorities: 2

Total = 21

- These are the “must dos” either because they are fully part of the GRRB’s mandate or represent a commitment under an existing management plan (Noted as ***MP** in table). These are items the GRRB should continue to lead to play a major role on and that staff should see as their primary focus. It will likely involve in-house research, GRRB research funds or a high-level of advice/feedback.
- Interested communities and partners should be actively engaged.
- In many cases resources are available, but where they are not, finding funding and resources to support the activity would be a priority activity for board staff.
- In some cases, RPs that ranked highly with respect to the GRRB mandate received much lower rankings with respect to Community Interest/Support. A (*) indicates RPs where there may be a disconnect between GRRB and community research priorities. This may warrant further discussions with communities about when and how to pursue research that the GRRB is mandated to do or for which it has an existing commitment under a management plan. These may be RPs where the GRRB will continue its involvement in research activities, but where the intensity and/or frequency of this work could potentially be adjusted or where the GRRB may want to allow other interested partners to lead initiatives. No new research activities should be undertaken with respect to this RP without consulting the community.

Actively Assist and Facilitate

Management Plan Research: 4

Research Priorities: 3

Total = 7

- These are RPs that were ranked lower in terms of the Board mandate, but where community and partner interests were high. Often urgency/connection was also ranked high and resources were considered to be available.
- Board staff efforts here would be primarily to identify and facilitate opportunities for partnerships and actively support the efforts of partners through letters of support and timely/considered input into review processes.
- The time and effort of staff should be gauged on a case-by-case basis.
- A (*) indicates RPs where there appears to be a strong interest at the community level and where the GRRB may want to consider increasing its activity in this area. Here, the Board may choose not to take the lead but actively support and facilitate research led by others.

Support When Possible

Management Plan Research: 8

Research Priorities: 20

Total = 28

- These RPs ranked low with respect to the GRRB mandate, but held strong interest from communities and/or partners. These could be listed as “research interests” rather than “research priorities”.
- The level of effort GRRB staff apply to these RPs would need to be gauged on a case-by-case basis. RPs where there is particularly high community (*) or partner (*) interest are noted.
- In some cases, support may simply be that GRRB staff help external groups access funding for (when resource availability ranked high). In cases where but community and partner priorities align, the board could focus on its role as facilitator of productive partnerships to address the research interest.

Low priority

Management Plan Research: 8

Research Priorities: 4

Total = 12

- These RPs did not rank highly in any area and should not be pursued.
- In a few cases, strong partner interest may merit letters of support on a case-by-case basis.

MANAGEMENT PLAN RESEARCH								
Category	Species (RP ref #)	Population	Objective category	GRRB mandate or lead	Research priority of communities	Availability of resources	Level of urgency or connection	Importance to partners
GRRB Priority	Dall's Sheep (B-03)	Northern Richardson	<i>Population Management (Community monitoring)</i>	5	5	4	5	4
GRRB Priority	Dall's Sheep (C-02)	Northern Richardson	<i>Harvest</i>	5	5	5	3	5
GRRB Priority *	Caribou (A-03)	Cape Bathurst and Bluenose- west caribou	<i>Population Monitoring - harvest</i>	5	1	5	5	5
GRRB Priority *	Moose (C-04)	GSA	<i>Population Management - harvest</i>	5	1	3	4	4
GRRB Priority	Dall's Sheep (B-03)	Northern Richardson	<i>Population Monitoring (Community monitoring)</i>	4	5	4	5	5
GRRB Priority *	Caribou (A-01)	Porcupine	<i>Population Monitoring - harvest</i>	4	1	5	5	5
GRRB Priority *	Caribou (A-03)	Cape Bathurst and Bluenose- west caribou	<i>Population Monitoring - population trends</i>	4	1	3	5	5
GRRB Priority *	Moose (C-04)	GSA	<i>Population Monitoring - harvest</i>	4	1	3	5	5
GRRB Priority *	Dolly Varden (B-09)	Vittrekwa River	<i>Population Status</i>	4	1	3	4	2

GRRB Priority	Forest disturbance – harvesting (C-15)	GSA	<i>Tree recruitment and regeneration post-disturbance</i>	3	5	3	5	5
GRRB Priority	Forest disturbance – fire (C-16)	GSA	<i>Fire behaviour</i>	3	5	4	5	5
GRRB Priority	Forest disturbance-devlpmt (C-19)	GSA	<i>Forestry and wildlife</i>	3	4	3	3	4
GRRB Priority	Forest- trees (C-20)	GSA	<i>Forestry and commercial use</i>	3	4	3	3	4
GRRB Priority	Dall's Sheep (D-07)	Northern Richardson	<i>Population Monitoring - predation</i>	3	5	3	3	4
GRRB Priority	Dall's Sheep (D-01/02/04/05)	Northern Richardson	<i>Habitat Monitoring</i> <i>D-01 : sensitive habitat</i> <i>D-0 : Veg survey</i> <i>D-04: risk to range</i> <i>D-05: devlpmt impacts</i>	3	5	3	3	3
GRRB Priority	Grizzly bear (C-05)	GSA	<i>Population Status</i>	3	5	2	5	3
Assist and Facilitate *	Caribou (A-03)	Cape Bathurst and Bluenose-west caribou	<i>Habitat Monitoring -</i>	3	1	3	5	4
Support When Possible *	Moose (C-04)	GSA	<i>Population Monitoring - population trends</i>	3	1	3	5	4

Support When Possible *	Moose (D-08)	GSA	Population Status (aerial survey)	3	1	3	5	4
Support When Possible *	Dolly Varden (A-05)	Rat River	Habitat Status	3	1	3	3	5
Assist and Facilitate *	Dolly Varden (A-07)	Rat River	Population monitoring	3	1	5	3	5
Assist and Facilitate *	Dolly Varden (B-10)	Rat River	Health & Disease	3	1	3	4	4
Assist and Facilitate *	Dolly Varden (B-12)	Arctic Red River	Population monitoring	3	1	3	1	5
GRRB Priority	Coney (D-11)	Mackenzie River	Population Status	3	5	3	3	2
GRRB Priority	Forest disturbance – insects (C-17)	GSA	Tree recruitment and regeneration post - disturbance	3	5	3	1	3
GRRB Priority	Forest disturbance - flood (C-18)	GSA	Tree recruitment and regeneration post - disturbance	3	5	3	3	2
Support When Possible *	Dall's Sheep (D-06)	Northern Richardson	Population Monitoring - health and disease	2	5	3	3	4
Support When Possible *	Dall's Sheep (B-06)	Northern Richardson	Population Management - education	2	5	3	3	4
Support When Possible *	Caribou (A-02)	Porcupine	Population Monitoring - population trends	2	1	5	5	5

Support When Possible *	Caribou (B-01)	Porcupine	Population Monitoring - distribution trends	2	1	5	5	5
Support When Possible *	Caribou (A-03)	Cape Bathurst and Bluenose-west caribou	Population Monitoring - Predator populations	2	1	2	5	5
Low priority	Moose (C-04)	GSA	Habitat Monitoring -	2	1	3	4	3
Low priority	Moose (D-08)	GSA	Population Monitoring - distribution, habitat use	2	1	3	4	4
Low priority	Moose (C-04)	GSA	Education	2	1	3	4	4
Low priority	Dolly Varden (A-06)	All	Education	2	1	3	3	2
Low priority	Caribou (A-03)	Cape Bathurst and Bluenose-west caribou	Land use and disturbance	1	1	2	5	5
Low priority	Dolly Varden (A-04)	Shingle Point	Harvest Monitoring	1	1	5	3	5
Low priority	Dolly Varden (D-08)	Big Fish River	Population Status	1	1	5	1	4
Low priority *	Dall's Sheep (D-05)	Northern Richardson	Habitat Monitoring - human impact	1	5	3	3	3

RESEARCH PRIORITIES								
Category	Species (RP ref #)	Population	Objective category	GRRB mandate or lead	Research priority of communities	Availability of resources	Level of urgency or connection	Importance to partners
GRRB Priority	Lake Trout (B-11)	Airport Lake	<i>Habitat Status</i>	4	5	4	5	5
GRRB Priority	Wolf (C-07)	GSA	<i>Population Monitoring - population trends</i>	3	5	2	3	3
Assist and Facilitate	Wolf (C-07)	GSA	<i>Population Status</i>	3	3	2	5	4
Assist and Facilitate	Lake Trout, Grayling, N. Pike (D-15)	Sandy, Travaillant Lakes	<i>Population Status - harvest</i>	3	3	3	3	SL - 1 / TL - 2
Assist and Facilitate *	Salmon (C-13)	Mackenzie River (Nagwichoonji k)	<i>Range expansion</i>	2	5	5	3	5
Support When Possible	Other fish (D-16)	Mackenzie River ; Chii Tiet	<i>Population Status - range expansion</i>	2	3	3	3	3 (climate change)
Support When Possible *	Vegetation (C-14)	GSA	<i>Vegetation survey</i>	2	5	3	5	5

Support When Possible *	Vegetation (D-16)	GSA	<i>Vegetation survey; TK</i>	2	4	3	4	4
Support When Possible *	Water quantity (D-20)	Peel Channel, Mackenzie Delta, Arctic Red River	<i>water quantity - fish health</i>	2	5	3	5	5
Support When Possible *	Water quality (D-22)	Peel Channel, Mackenzie River upstream of communities	<i>water quality - fish health</i>	2	5	3	5	5
Support When Possible *	Muskox (B-02)	Northern Richardson	<i>Population Monitoring - population trends</i>	2	5	3	4	4
Support When Possible *	Beaver (C-08)	GSA	<i>Population Status</i>	2	5	3	1	4
Support When Possible *	Peregrine Falcon (C-11)	Campbell Hills,	<i>Population Status</i>	2	3	3	3	4
Support When Possible	Swallows (C-12)	Mackenzie Delta	<i>Population Status</i>	2	3	3	4	3
Support When Possible *	Muskrat (C-09)	GSA and Delta	<i>Population Status</i>	2	5	3	5	4
Support When Possible *	Otter (B-07)	GSA	<i>Population Monitoring – pop. trends, distribution trends</i>	2	5	3	5	4

Support When Possible *	Insects (D-09)	GSA	<i>Range expansion</i>	2	5	2	2	2
Support When Possible *	Loche (D-10)	Mackenzie Delta	<i>Population Status</i>	2	5	3	3	2
Support When Possible *	Whitefish, Coney (D-12)	Peel, Arctic Red, Mackenzie Rivers	<i>Health & Disease</i>	2	5	3	3	3
Support When Possible *	Whitefish (Lake and Broad); Coney (D-14)	West Mackenzie Delta	<i>Population Status - health and disease</i>	2	5	3	3	3
Support When Possible *	Aquatic habitat (D-18)	Campbell Creek, Campbell Lake	<i>Aquatic habitat inventory</i>	2	4	3	5	1
Support When Possible *	Vegetation (D-26)	GSA	<i>Vegetation survey; TK</i>	1	4	3	4	4
Support When Possible *	Vegetation (D-25)	GSA	<i>Vegetation survey; TK (medicinal)</i>	1	4	4	4	4
Support When Possible *	Vegetation (D-27)	GSA	<i>Range expansion</i>	1	4	3	1	3

Support When Possible *	Erosion (D-17)	Mackenzie River; Arctic Red River	<i>Erosion - slope failure</i>	1	5	4	3	5
Low priority	Snowshoe Hare (C-10)	Ft McPherson region	<i>Population Status</i>	2	2	4	3	4
Low priority *	Water quantity (D-19)	Peel Channel, Mackenzie Delta, Arctic Red River	<i>water quantity - human health, human use</i>	1	5	3	5	1
Low priority *	Water quality (D-22)	Peel Channel, Mackenzie Delta, Arctic Red River	<i>water quality - human health</i>	1	5	3	5	1
Low priority *	Country food (D-21)	GSA	<i>health and culture - human</i>	1	5	3	5	2