

**Regional  
Tripartite Housing  
Committee**  
AFNQL – ISC – CMHC

**Draft Regional Strategy on  
Housing and Infrastructure**

July 2018



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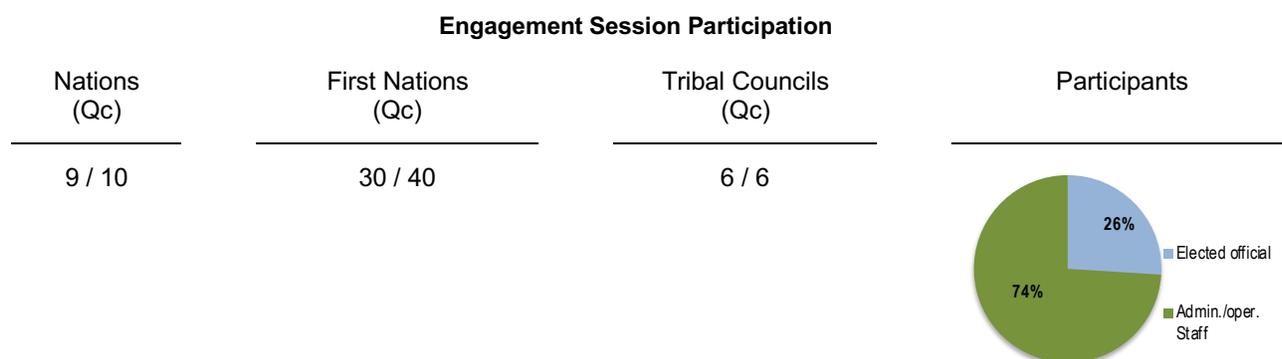


## Context

The Government of Canada is mobilizing First Nations and other partners for the purpose of establishing an effective long term approach to support housing and infrastructure and contribute to a Global National Strategy in terms of Housing (2016 Budget). Recent federal activities including drafting a joint (FN-GoC) Memorandum to Cabinet, indicates a readiness on behalf of federal partners to transform housing and infrastructure in First Nations communities. In the engagement endeavour, the Regional Tripartite Housing Committee (RTHC) sees an opportunity to influence, for the benefit of the region of Quebec, policy and program reform that provides for First Nations housing and infrastructures.

First Nations of Quebec housing and infrastructure stakeholders (elected officials, technicians and administrators) were invited to and participated in great numbers in the Engagement Session held in Trois-Rivières from September 26th to the 28th, 2017. Organized by the Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador (AFNQL) and Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), the session was intended to stimulate a discussion with First Nations on the reform’s suitable guidelines.

The Engagement Session’s facilitator’s report (*Innovation Seven*) refers to over 1000 data points collected throughout the 3-day event. The participants provided information through a series of questions aimed at collecting their opinion in terms of the reform’s potential orientations. The report includes recommendations and identifies steps towards implementation.



The Committee analyzed the report of the Engagement Session and identified the actions to be taken, while taking into account the evolution of the file at the national level. The present document therefore provides:

- The Session’s key points.
- A draft regional strategy on housing and infrastructure.

## **Engagement Session Key Points**

*Innovation Seven* was mandated to act as the facilitator and supply a report including recommendations for housing reform along with a regional working plan to implement the proposed vision and recommendations. The facilitator's report must be perceived as a reference tool to the approach wherein the region has to take a stance on housing and infrastructure reform.

The findings below emerged during discussions held with the participants.

### **Skills and Capacities**

- Training for political decision-makers, executives, owners and members.
- Challenges with regards to language, which are perceived as obstacles.
- Institutions must be regional rather than national.
- The organization should have the capacity of handing out certifications.
- Housing managers are overstretched in the variety of their tasks.

A deeper analysis of answers also shed light on the fact that First Nations face challenges with developing their capacities, that management and maintenance are key skills to be prioritized and, it should be at the regional level that an eventual support organization should be developed in terms of capacity building.

### **Funding and Finance**

- Access to funding tools and capital that impose no restriction to First Nations (ex. ABSCAN).
- Elimination of Ministerial Loan Guarantees.
- More funding is required.
- Funding by province.
- Sharing resource revenues.

Upon deeper analysis of the answers, it was revealed that First Nations want significant changes in housing and infrastructure in terms of policies and programs, primarily more funding options as well as long term commitment from the government and new partners.

### **Governance and Delivery**

- Not replacing bureaucracy with more bureaucracy.
- Separating politics and the administration.
- Collaboration / networking / resource sharing / overcoming isolation.
- Funding allocation is a difficult issue.
- Reluctance in being too hasty with the process. Implementing a process that leads to a solution from the community level upwards.

Further revelations show that governance directly relies on standardizing approaches, tools and models. The development of new programs and options, planning, management support and networking are areas of responsibilities favoured by First Nations organizations. Expectations with regards to funding (more options, more funds) were equally clearly expressed under this theme.

## **Innovation**

- Increasing individual responsibilities.
- Additional funding options (obligations, revolving loan funds, personal equity, loans, etc.).
- Demographic considerations in creating appropriate housing that meets the lifestyle of residents in the homes.
- Significant increase and commitment with respect to long term funding to support revitalization of housing.
- Mentoring and options for youth and all members for active participation in developing new units, including construction, operation and management of these new community assets.

Additionally, answers also highlighted innovation as a factor that must be omnipresent in all aspects of the housing and infrastructure reform. Accordingly, a new way of doing things and innovative approaches that venture off the beaten path should directly apply to the preferences underlined by First Nations in terms of capacity building, funding / financial management and governance / provision of services.

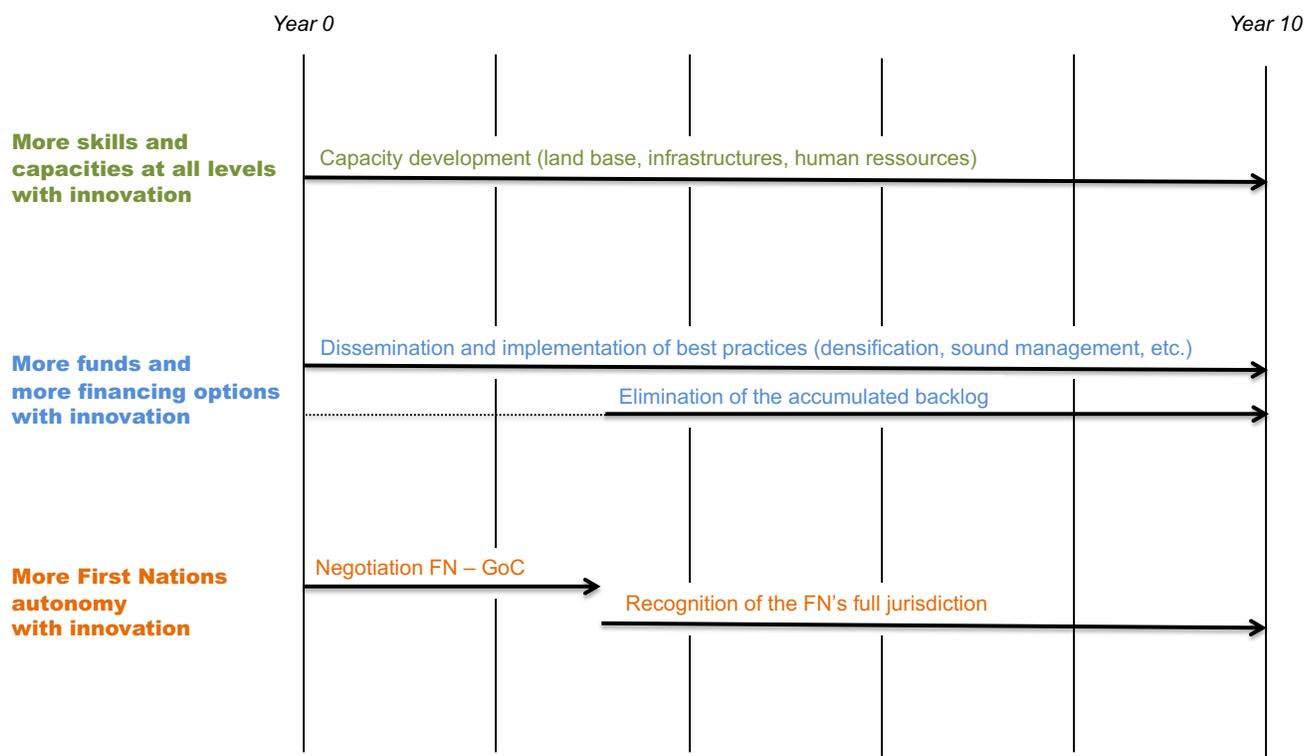
## Strategic Considerations and Draft Regional Strategy

The region’s expectations related to the housing and infrastructure reform framework can be summarized as follows:

Skills and capacities	More skills and capacities at all levels with innovation
Funding and finance	More funds and more financing options with innovation
Governance and delivery	More First Nations autonomy with innovation

The expectations identified are consistent with the RTHC Action Plan as well as the position of the Chiefs in Quebec on the issue of housing and infrastructure wherein a GoC-FN partnership is proposed to *deal with the backlog and at the same time, put in place a series of measures (addition to reserve lands, upgrade infrastructures, capacity development, pilot projects, etc.) to facilitate the transition towards a model of full jurisdiction by the First Nations* (THE HOUSING NEEDS OF THE FIRST NATIONS IN QUEBEC AND LABRADOR, AFNQL, 2014).

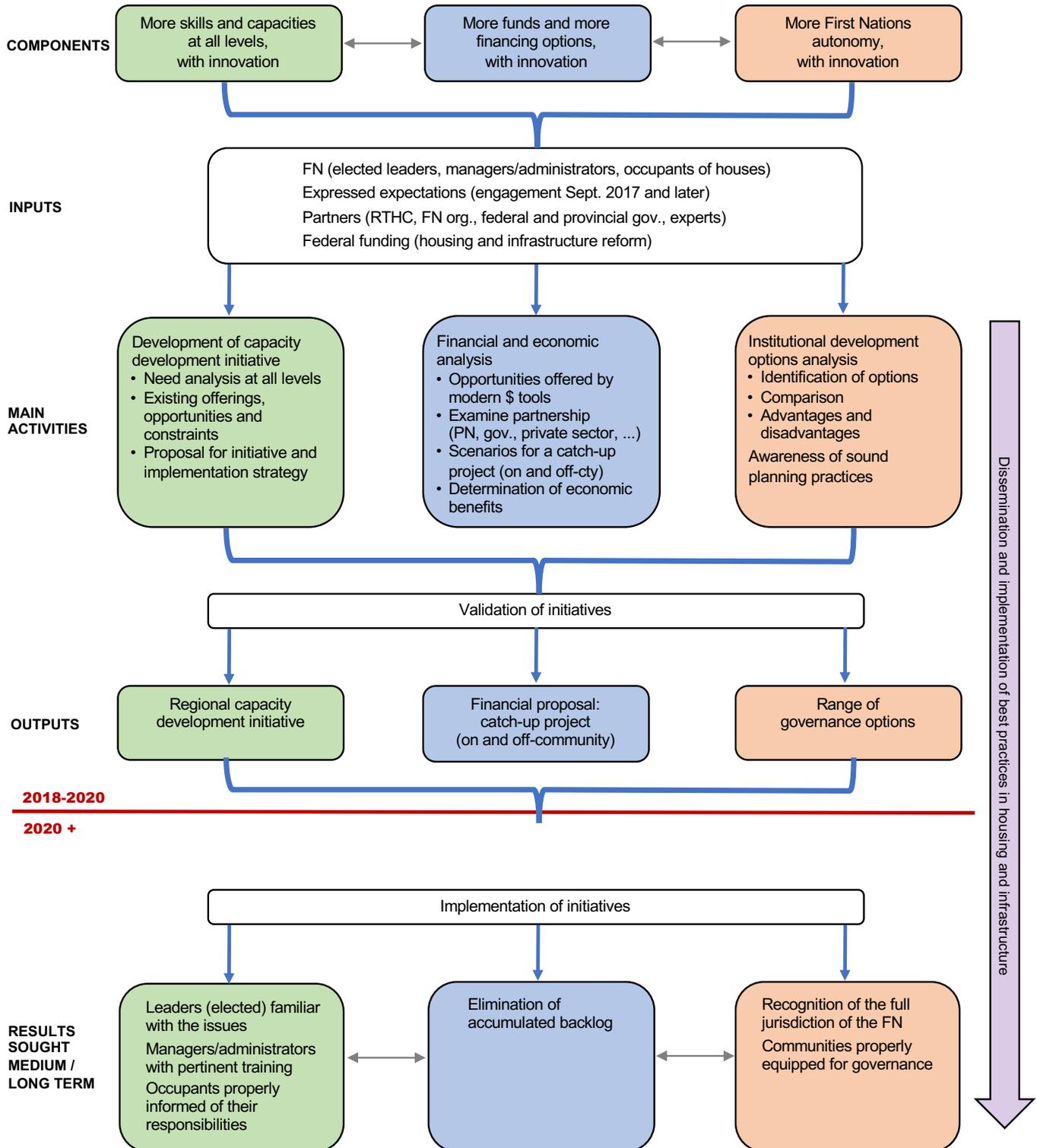
The regional strategy that focuses on influencing the housing and infrastructure reform must be based on the mentioned orientation and the 3 main components identified.



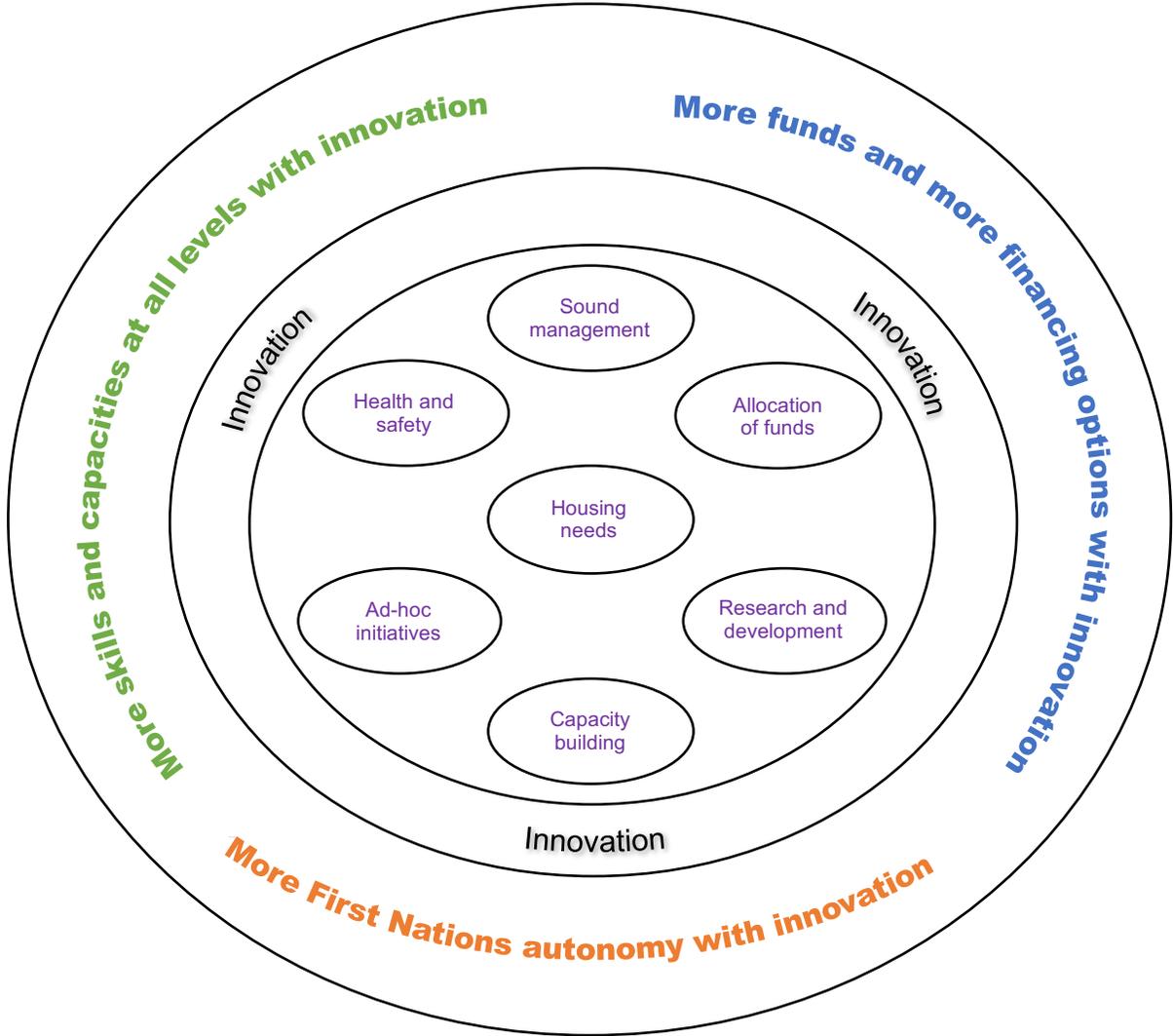
A reform of this scope expresses implicitly or explicitly greater innovation and integration in the actions of all partners – owners and tenants on the field all the way to governmental partners – to maximise positive impacts.

The regional strategy’s 3 main components are detailed in the following pages. The RTHC Action Plan is revised to reflect this.

# Draft Regional Strategy for Housing and Infrastructure – Logic Model



# Integration of the Draft Regional Strategy for Housing and Infrastructure and the Action Plan of the RTHC



COMPONENT	SKILLS AND CAPACITIES
Orientation	<b>More Skills and Capacities at all Levels</b>
<b>Description</b>	<p>Building and skills capacities is a prerequisite for better results in and around the field of housing and infrastructure. For the reform to be successful, at a minimum, players at all levels must have the required skills and capacities to carry out their roles and responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Leaders (elected) proficient in housing and infrastructure issues;</li> <li>■ Managers/administrators with pertinent training to carry out their functions;</li> <li>■ Occupants properly informed of their responsibilities as owners or tenants.</li> </ul> <p>Skill building requirements vary from one First Nation to another. A regional institution would, without a doubt, be the body better positioned to identify and address different needs. As a result, a skills and capacity initiative led by a regional institution is required as a key priority objective of the regional strategy. Such an initiative could have the greatest immediate impact, while paving the way for the implementation of the other pillars of the strategy.</p>
<b>Short term actions 2018-2019</b>	<p><u>Analysis of Skill and Capacity Building Needs and Initiatives</u></p> <p>The analysis must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Identify needs at all levels (leaders, managers/administrators, occupants) and in all housing and infrastructure activity areas (planning, management, implementation, construction, renovation, maintenance, financial literacy);</li> <li>■ Take into account the existing offerings in the matter;</li> <li>■ Identify constraints and opportunities that are susceptible to influence First Nations skill and capacity building initiatives in all fields surrounding housing and infrastructure (ex. retention and turnover of personnel, geographical factors, language, youth, desire for change, off reserve needs, etc.);</li> <li>■ Propose a regional initiative on skill and capacity building on housing and infrastructure based on the identified needs, constraints and opportunities including the existing offerings;</li> <li>■ Analysis of implementation options by a First Nations organization (existing organizations, partnership between existing organizations, new structure to be created) and compare their feasibility.</li> </ul> <p><u>Validation and Implementation of a Skill and Capacity Building Initiative</u></p> <p>Validation and implementation will be undertaken in phases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Analysis by the RTHC and recommendations submitted to authorities;</li> <li>■ Approval by the Assembly of Chiefs (with or without modifications);</li> <li>■ Representation before the authorities concerned (funders);</li> <li>■ Development and implementation of training initiatives;</li> <li>■ Keep First Nations abreast at every step.</li> </ul>

COMPONENT	FUNDING AND FINANCE
Orientation	More Funds and More Financing Options
Description	<p>Funding is primarily comprised of governmental contributions. ISC and CMHC are the main contributors in the framework of various federal program initiatives. Financial management herein refers to leveraging invested capital aimed at creating units and infrastructures. Investments can be from personal source, available capital and additional capital sought from financial institutions. Loans, obligations and equity financing are modern tools of financing for development.</p> <p>It is universally recognized that the level of investment must be substantially improved. To better address First Nations needs in housing and infrastructure and to eliminate the disparities, it is necessary to go through a stage of catching-up supported by additional investment. In addition, more needs to be done with governmental contributions and other financing sources. One of the means to achieve this lies on the universal implementation of practices that to date, have been successful in First Nations communities.</p> <p>A part of the regional strategy needs to explore the opportunities offered by modern financing tools that are little or not used by First Nations but remain available for governments in order to support the development of housing and infrastructure. Increases in federal contributions, optimizing leverage and implementation focused on best practices are concrete means to consider in an attempt to catch-up. The optimization of local economic development opportunities also represents an avenue to explore in supporting communities with their financial autonomy and job creation.</p>
Short term actions 2018-2019 & 2019-2020	<p><u>Analysis of Modern Financial Tool Opportunities, Catching-up Approach and Economic Development</u></p> <p>The analysis must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ In the context of First Nations, identify opportunities offered by modern financial tools;</li> <li>■ Examine partnership possibilities with private sector companies and other levels of government in order to increase development opportunities;</li> <li>■ Analyze the potential integration of partner options towards maximizing local impacts (economic and others);</li> <li>■ Propose scenarios of increased governmental contributions and funding management through leveraging to support a catching-up approach that include the needs of members that reside off reserve.</li> </ul> <p><u>Funding and Financial Management Initiative Validation and Implementation</u></p> <p>Validation and implementation will be undertaken in phases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Analysis by RTHC and recommendations submitted to authorities;</li> <li>■ Approval by the Assembly of Chiefs (with or without modifications);</li> <li>■ Keep First Nations abreast at every step;</li> <li>■ Implementation by First Nations according to their capabilities of delivery.</li> </ul> <p><u>Housing and Infrastructure Best Practices Dissemination</u></p> <p>The activity focuses on best practices in the most sensitive areas such as sound management, access to private home ownership, rent collection, asset maintenance, densification of social housing, etc. It must be tied to the skill and capacity building initiatives.</p>

<b>COMPONENT</b>	<b>GOVERNANCE AND DELIVERY</b>
<b>Orientation</b>	<b>More Autonomy for First Nations</b>
<b>Description</b>	<p>The future will prove brighter when First Nations take control of housing and infrastructure governance and implementation. They want greater autonomy in the interaction and decision-making process to solve challenges in terms of this sector and need to focus on certain steps in order to take full and complete control. Also at this level, the capacity building initiatives are called upon to play a fundamental role. Greater autonomy depends on high capacity and skill sets.</p> <p>Incidentally, we know that the development of new programs and initiatives, planning, management support and networking are areas of responsibilities to prioritize by any eventual First Nations organization that would go beyond the scope of a local framework. It remains to be determined how responsibilities can be transferred without increasing bureaucracy.</p> <p>Promoting awareness of sound planning practices can pave the way for more self-reliance. The various options for transfer of jurisdiction must also be analyzed.</p>
<b>Short term actions 2018-2019 &amp; 2019-2020</b>	<p><u>Raising First Nations Awareness on Planning Best Practices</u></p> <p>Priority should be given to those areas that have the potential of increasing community autonomy, such as global community planning (knowledge of community issues and mobilization of local forces).</p> <p><u>Institutional Development Option Analysis</u></p> <p>The analysis must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Identify various options that are offered to First Nations in terms of institutional development in line with an eventual transfer of jurisdiction on housing and infrastructure (local, tribal, regional);</li> <li>■ Integrate governance and the supply of units to members that reside outside of their community;</li> <li>■ Take into account expectations expressed by First Nations (Engagement Session of September 2017 and further consultations to come);</li> <li>■ Identify advantages and disadvantages of each option.</li> </ul> <p><u>Governance Initiative Validation and Implementation</u></p> <p>Validation and implementation will be undertaken in phases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Analysis by the RTHC and recommendations submitted to authorities;</li> <li>■ Approval by the Assembly of Chiefs (with or without modifications);</li> <li>■ Representation before the authorities concerned (funders);</li> <li>■ Creation of the new structure(s);</li> <li>■ Keep First Nations abreast at every step.</li> </ul>