

**Regional Tripartite Housing Committee
Minutes
Meeting of February 20 – 21 2018**

Attendees:	Lance Haymond, AFNQL	Rita Arseneau, ISC
	Claude Picard, AFNQL	André Dansereau, ISC
	Guy Latouche, AFNQL	Patricia Rioux, ISC
	Jean-Claude Pinette, AFNQL	Vince Klyne, CMHC
	Oumar Ba, Health Canada	Jean-François Samuel, CMHC
	Bruce Labrador, ISC	François Sauvageau, CMHC

Facilitator : Guy Latouche

Summary of Actions

- Action 1 : Integration of a logic model in the draft strategy to facilitate understanding.
- Action 2 : Presentation of the draft regional strategy to the Chiefs, in April.
- Action 3 : The Operational Committee will present a draft of the new generation of the Action Plan (2018-2019) to the coordinating members at the next RTHC meeting, in May.

1. Welcoming and Introduction

The agenda is approved with two additions. An update on taxation will be provided at the request of the AFNQL, and ISC will report on the surpluses that become available in the area of infrastructure countrywide.

To help Jean-Claude Pinette better understand the mandate, the structure and the functioning of the Committee, Guy Latouche provides some background to the existence of the RTHC.

2. Follow-up on Actions of the last Meetings (November 2017 and previous ones)

Action: The final report of the Engagement Session will be transmitted by the AFNQL.
Result: Completed.

Action: Follow-up by the OC on the final report of the session in Trois-Rivières. Recommendations on the analysis and actions to be taken in relation with the report and the evolution of the national file (MC) will be presented to the RTHC members at the February meeting.

Result: Completed.

- Action: The OC will prepare a summary document («one pager») of the final report.
Result: Completed.
- Action: At the next RTHC meeting, in February, the OC will present recommendations in relation with the realignment of the Action Plan which will be based on the results and orientations of the Mobilization Session report.
Result: Completed.
- Action: Plan a presentation on the results of the report by the RTHC at the meeting of the Director General of the Bands.
Result: Planned on March 15, 2017.
- Action: Oumar Ba, of Health Canada, will be informing the RTHC of the decision of his Directorate General concerning Health Canada's participation (delegate and implication) in the Tripartite Committee.
Result: Completed. Mr. Ba informed the Committee members that the Executive Director of the FNIHB gave his approval for their participation in the activities of the RTHC.
- Action: Presentation on insurance alternatives (action of September 27, 2016 – to be retained). The NBP is no longer in the area of insurance, but it would be prepared to present what they have developed on the matter in the past. Bill Montour's group will also be called upon to present their approach. These stakeholders will be invited to a forthcoming meeting of the RTHC when the issue of insurance will be discussed.
Result: Postponed to a future meeting with discussion, if this topic should be integrated in the Action Plan.
- Action: Initiate a discussion on possible conditions to be attached to the ministerial guarantees, ex.: in the case of a construction project in a flood zone? Act in a more "preventive" than "curative" manner.
Result: ISC did not respond since a reform on ministerial loan guarantees is now under way. ISC will provide an update on how the file is progressing.
- Action: André Dansereau will do a follow-up with the CMHC colleagues to examine the possibility of organizing a meeting between the CMHC housing counsellors and the ISC funding officers (ref.: Issue #2 of the Action Plan).
Result: Action under way; steps were taken to hold the meeting around April-May 2018. A preparatory meeting is to be anticipated.
- Action: Guy Latouche will invite the First Nations Adult Education School Council to come and meet with us at the next meeting to explain who they are. and how they view the ACS-AEC project.
Result: Completed.
- Action: Lyse Langevin, of ISC, had committed to contacting the First Nations Market Housing Fund to explore opportunities for cooperation.
Result: Bruce Labrador will follow up with Lyse Langevin.
- Action: Use the list of suggestions made by the November 2016 survey respondents in the planning of the future annual regional housing meetings of the AFNQL.
Result: It will be taken into consideration when planning the next regional meeting.

3. National and Regional Environments

CMHC

The current top priority is the delivery of programs in the CMHC Social Infrastructure Fund (SIF, 2016 Budget) to make sure that the allocated budgets are in fact spent, as of the deadline of March 31st. Quebec obtained an additional sum of \$825 000 for home renovation projects, due to the fact that other regions were unable to comply with time limits.

As for next year, the regional office expects that the construction and renovation budgets will return to the levels they were prior to the Social Infrastructure Fund. Nothing is confirmed for now, until the 2018 budgets are known. On the other hand, the budgets for capacity building, which were considerably increased with the SIF, will retain their increase at the same level for fiscal year 2018-2019.

As for the inspection service, CMHC continues, for the time being, to work with OZHI First Nations Professional Services.

The turnover of staff currently taking place at the Regional Office (Eastern Canada) should not affect the First Nations in Quebec.

Indigenous Services

The dissolution of the Department of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), as announced by the Prime Minister, in August 2017, and the creation of the two new ministries: Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) and Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) are now under way. ISC will integrate Health Canada's First Nations and Inuit Health Branch. There's some overlapping that needs to be worked out.

The ministry now has more flexibility on the delivery date of the program projects from the 2016 budget. All the funds from the current year (2017-2018) have been allocated. In the event of another national reallocation, the Regional Office of ISC has an expanded list of contingencies. Given that the details of the 2018 budget are not known at this time, there is a strong possibility that the confirmation of allocations for the First Nations Infrastructure Fund (FNIF) could come late in the fiscal year.

The total of the ministerial loan guarantees could reach a record amount this year: around \$35M.

During a recent meeting of the partners of various federal ministries, the latter realized that several initiatives would gain from more inter-ministerial cooperation. For example, operational and maintenance (O&M) budgets are often absent from the initiatives of other ministries. Accountability also varies.

The Quebec Housing Corporation (QHC) informed ISC that the renovation costs for the houses of the Kitcisakik First Nations are higher than the budget provided for in an agreement for that effect. There will be further discussions with ISC and CMHC (National Housing Strategy) to explore options to further contributions.

AFNQL

The first phase to engagement on the reform of housing and infrastructure is completed in several regions. Quebec First Nations completed theirs in September 2017, in Trois-Rivières. The policy framework co-developed by the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and ISC will be annexed to a Memorandum which will be submitted to the Prime Minister's Cabinet. The interests of the Quebec region have been taken into consideration in the document.

The collection of information relating to housing is much needed. Concrete actions on this subject are to be expected as of 2018. All partners agree on this need countrywide. This subject is already well covered in our region. The AFNQL has reliable statistics on the housing needs of the Quebec First Nations.

Among the works that will engage most particularly the AFN in the year ahead, we note:

- the development of a housing strategy inspired notably by the engagement sessions held so far;
- an engagement on drinking water, followed by collaborative efforts for the development of a new legislation;
- collaborative efforts for the revision of the ISC policy in relation to the O&M budgets for infrastructures.

ISC Central Office informed us that the government wishes to fill six positions amongst the fiduciaries of the First Nations Market Housing Fund. The process to be launched foresees 50% under the form of public appeal and 50% to be discussed with the AFN. Based on information obtained, these people will be tasked to modernize the mandate of the Fund. It should be noted that in the past, the AFN had ruled by way of resolution, that the control of the Fund should be transferred to the First Nations.

Regarding the inspection of housing units under the CMHC programs, it should be noted that the latter accepted to transfer the responsibility into the hands of the First Nations. The regions are currently in the process of preparing their takeover proposal. In Quebec, the Tribal Councils agreed that Mamuitun would take charge of the file and would develop a regional proposal which gives a space to all tribal councils as a sub-contractor. This is in fact the same approach as in 2015. The Cree Nation Government has joined the group. Conference calls are held on a regular basis with the CMHC and the tenderers. The deadline to table proposals is April 1st, 2018. Requirements are the same as those of the 2015 call for tenders, to which are added capacity building and a business continuity plan.

At the regional level, participation in an activity organized by the Community of Practice in Housing (*CoPH*) in February, made it possible for us to conclude that the organization is active and structured. Participants have discussions on core issues relating to the operations of the housing sector. They establish effective linkages via networking.

An update of the housing portfolio, in particular, the follow-up to the Engagement Session, will be provided by the AFNQL in a near future: Elected Women (February 28), General Directors (March), Algonquin Table (March 27).

4. First Nations Adult Education School Council (Presentation)

The First Nations Adult Education School Council (FNAESC) is a partner in the implementation of major initiatives which have developed around the RTHC table. Rola Helou, the Director General of the FNAESC, introduced her organization and offered an update of the ongoing initiatives which have a direct link with housing.

The FNAESC came into being subsequent to a commitment taken at the First Nations Socio-economic Forum, with the objective of ensuring the educational well-being of First Nation adults. The First Nations Human Resources Development Commission of Quebec (FNHRDCQ) then decided to establish a trust which would receive the sums granted by the governments. For example, the FNAESC receives, from ISC and CMHC, the funding necessary to the functioning of the CoPH. The largest funding provider of the FNAESC remains the Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur du Québec.

Madam Helou informs us that the second cohort of the Housing management program (ACS - AEC) which is currently under way, numbers about a dozen participants. It should be noted that 9 persons from the first cohort have successfully completed the entire program. This program could eventually be transferred to a First Nations post-secondary institution. Furthermore, the opportunity to offer a vocational studies program in plumbing is currently under study. This initiative could be launched in September 2018.

5. Update on Taxation

The special measures put in place for the 2016 taxation year concerning the Solidarity Tax Credit will apply for the 2017 taxation year and subsequent years. These measures have been implemented to allow First Nations members, who so request, to receive the entire tax credit to which they are entitled. Revenu Québec sent a letter to the First Nations reminding them about the importance of continuing the issuance of Relevés 31 to facilitate the access of the housing component related to the tax credit. The Ministry also informed the First Nations members that those who cannot come up with a Relevé 31 may provide another piece of evidence certifying that they are the owners, tenants or subtenants of a qualifying home.

6. Budget Surplus in Infrastructure

In order to fill a long-recognized need, the ISC Regional Office will launch an initiative to help the communities establish a bank of vacant lots for the construction of houses. Countrywide surpluses in infrastructure will help finance the initiative. An amount of \$17M is set aside for a first phase which aims more particularly First Nations that do not have a multi-year funding agreement.

7. Report of September's Operational Committee on Mobilization

At its meeting of November 22-23, 2017, the RTHC issued a mandate to its Operational Committee (OC) to analyze the Engagement Session report and to make recommendations on the actions to be taken, while taking into account the development of the file on a national scale. The OC captures the highlights of the Engagement Session and makes recommendations on the strategic steps to be executed on a short term.

The draft regional strategy developed for influencing the reform of housing and infrastructure focuses on the orientation already expressed by the Quebec Chiefs (*GoC – FN Partnership to eliminate the backlog while clearly linking a series of measures that will*

facilitate the transition towards a model of full jurisdiction by the First Nations). Six major areas are identified:

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

Innovation and integration in actions of all the partners should be a priority.

A series of actions are recommended to develop the strategy over a two-year period. The goal is to influence, for the benefit of the Quebec region, the reform of policies and programs which govern First Nation housing and infrastructures.

It is suggested to integrate a logic model into the draft strategy to facilitate its understanding.

The draft of the regional strategy will be presented to the Chiefs in April.

Actions: [Integration of a logic model in the draft strategy to facilitate understanding.](#)

[Presentation of the draft regional strategy to the Chiefs, in April.](#)

8. Follow-up to the Action Plan of the RTHC

At the last meeting of the RTHC, it was acknowledged that an in-depth revision of the Committee's Action Plan was needed, and that the housing reform should be taken into consideration in this revision. After analysis, the Operational Committee proposes 3 possible approaches:

1. Updating of the Action Plan according to the conventional approach, with the addition of a new challenge: "Reform";
2. Creation of a new generation plan focusing on the reform of housing and which integrates the various issues which make up the content of the current Action Plan of the Committee;
3. Creation of a new-generation plan focusing exclusively on the reform of housing without integrating the various issues which make up the content of the current Action Plan of the Committee.

After discussion, the coordinating members opt for approach #2. The reform becomes the guiding principle of the Action Plan, and issues previously identified by the Committee will be integrated into it. The Operational Committee will present a draft of the new-generation Action Plan (2018-2019) to the coordinating members at the next meeting of the RTHC, in May.

Action : [The Operational Committee will present a draft of the new generation of the Action Plan \(2018-2019\) to the coordinating members at the next meeting of the RTHC, in May.](#)

9. Meeting with the Deputy-Minister of Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)

The session was followed by a meeting with the Deputy-Minister, Mr. Jean-François Tremblay. Following are the key messages delivered to him:

- We have a very clear picture of First Nations' housing needs.

- We have been working together (the 3 partners) for a long time.
- We have a project for a strategy addressing the reform of housing; a plan to move forward which relies upon three pillars:
 - Skills and capacities;
 - Funding and Financing;
 - Governance and delivery;... With innovation.
- This strategy is fully in line with the policy framework which will be attached to the Memorandum to Cabinet and with the results of the initial process of engagement at the national and regional levels.
- The best solutions for the First Nations in Quebec come from the Quebec First Nations themselves.
- Quebec First Nations have demonstrated in the past their ability to deliver housing projects.
- Need for adequate and sustainable financing at the regional level to better support the implementation of the regional strategy in order to maintain the level of effort committed in the 2016 budget and beyond (stimulus measures).

10. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the RTHC will be organized by the CMHC, and will be held on Tuesday and Wednesday, May 29-30, 2018.

Prepared by: Guy Latouche
March 21 2018