

FEBRUARY 2021



Housing Ecosystem Overview and Strategy Development Guidance

INDIGENOUS HOME-LANDS
INITIATIVE



Introduction

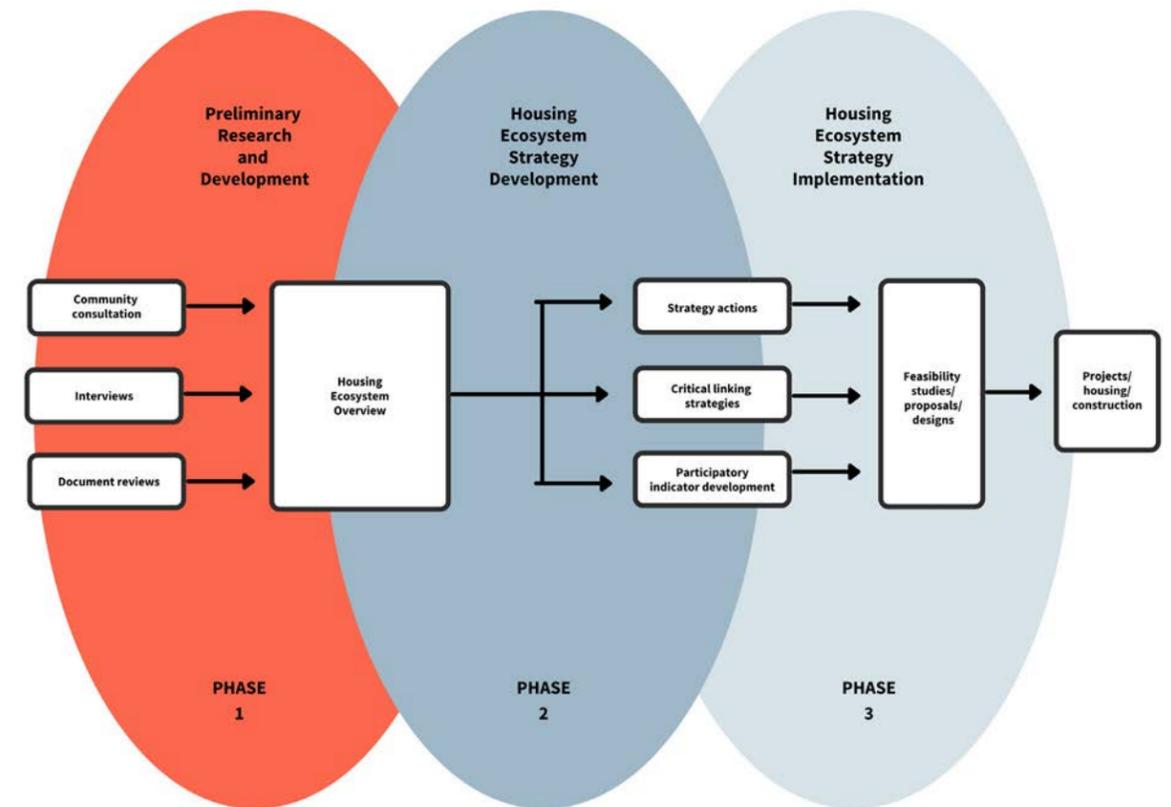
Indigenous groups and governments are increasingly exploring alternative and more holistic ways of addressing housing challenges within their communities. This document, along with other complementary tools offered by Ecotrust Canada, provide a series of resources that can be drawn upon and adapted by communities to identify and articulate housing ecosystems, to develop housing ecosystem strategies, and ultimately to monitor improvements in housing-related processes utilizing locally derived indicators of success.

The Indigenous Home-Lands (IHL) team at Ecotrust Canada has developed a housing ecosystem overview which takes into account the interconnected nature of housing with broader community and territorial processes and aspirations. This approach recognizes that housing, because of its link to the economic, social, and cultural well-being of a community, is one of the key leverage points for systems change and social innovation. The primary purpose of developing a housing eco-system overview is to organize pre-existing community level knowledge and information into an actionable framework that brings together previously disparate information, enabling a cross-sectoral understanding of the needs, assets, and opportunities that exist territorially such that they can be formulated into integrated housing ecosystem strategies.

In developing this tool, IHL and our partners are seeking to advance Indigenous self-determination by democratizing information and processes that can serve to empower Indigenous groups and governments in relation to housing and community development. In doing so, we encourage communities to adapt and revise these documents, processes and methods in ways that work best for them. We recognize also that enacting a housing ecosystem-based approach within the context of extreme housing quality and quantity shortages can be a challenge for communities with already overstretched staffing and resources. However, we believe that it is an approach worthy of consideration, and one which can be carried out alongside and in conjunction with other practical measures aimed toward ameliorating existing housing conditions.

As an example of what a housing ecosystem overview and strategy development can look like, please refer to the latest report prepared by IHL for the Yunesit'in Government: [Yunesit'in Housing Ecosystem Overview and Strategy Development \(2020\)](#)

The Process: Developing a Housing Ecosystem Overview and Strategy



Housing Ecosystem Strategy Development Phases

Phase I: Preliminary Research and Development

The first step in developing a housing ecosystem overview is to build the informational foundation upon which an analysis and strategy can be formulated. Methods for gathering and organizing this information can include community workshops/focus groups, interviews, questionnaires/surveys, and a comprehensive review of existing documents and reports, including, for example, Comprehensive

Community Plans (CCPs).

Ecotrust Canada, IHL and partners have developed a series of information gathering resources that communities can adapt and utilize to fit their specific needs and contexts. These include:

- A housing ecosystem overview assessment questionnaire, to be completed by Indigenous governments or staff, which offers a snapshot in time of the housing ecosystem at the community and territorial level (Annex A)

- A household/community member survey template that can be adapted and delivered in communities
- An example housing ecosystem overview and strategy development report, delivered by IHL for partner Yunesit'in First Nation
- A housing ecosystem monitoring and evaluation framework (forthcoming)
- A 'housing energy assessment' survey template (forthcoming)

No one method of information gathering can be fully relied upon in order to generate a housing ecosystem strategy. The more of the above methods and sources that can be drawn upon in order to 'triangulate' information, the greater the reliability and validity of that piece of information. In other words, when different methods and sources of information converge on an answer and reinforce one another, the greater confidence groups can have in building a housing ecosystem strategy around that information point.

Organizing Information

The housing ecosystem overview offers a way of organizing all of this information into an intuitive

Phase II: Strategy Action Development

Once all of the information has been organized into the housing ecosystem overview categories, it can then be further assessed and organized into a framework which identifies Needs, Assets, and Opportunities. This approach aims to put the strengths and assets of the community front

format that identifies and articulates the complex interactions between four categories: Housing, Homelands, People, and Governance.



Housing: the built environment of communities, including residential, commercial and common buildings and structures, as well as the infrastructure, which provide the basic and cultural needs of community members

Homelands: the natural assets within the territories of communities and the tangible and intangible goods and services that they provide

People: the members, citizens and residents of communities, and their attributes, skills, practices, knowledge and roles that facilitate individual and social well-being

Governance: the rules (or institutions) that communities put in place, or that operate informally, that determine how they organize themselves and how they interact with each other and with outsiders

and centre as the focal points for actionable solutions and strategies to address underlying needs.

Organizing information on housing, homelands, people, and governance into the categories of needs, assets, and opportunities allows for an analysis which identifies real and potential relationships within the housing ecosystem.

These can be thought of as critical linking strategies. That is, in order to create a strong housing ecosystem which satisfies diverse Needs, a community can leverage its existing Assets to develop and realize new Opportunities.

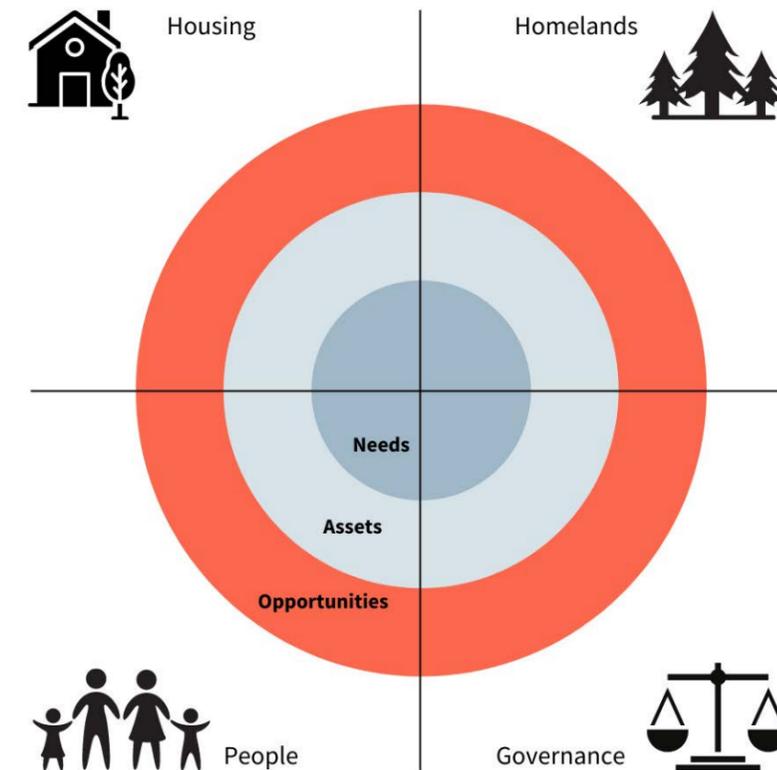
For an example of critical linking strategies, please refer to the [Yunesit'in Housing Ecosystem Overview and Strategy Development report](#).



Needs: the infrastructure, skills, resources and knowledge that the community needs for the achievement of their goals

Assets: the skills, resources and knowledge that exists within the community that contributes to their goals

Opportunities: the potential future assets of the community



The Housing Ecosystem Framework

Annex A: Housing Ecosystem Overview Questionnaire

Phase III: Implementation

Implementation of housing ecosystem strategies may require the development of feasibility studies in order to ensure actions are financially achievable. However, it is important also to recognize that the implementation of a housing ecosystem strategy may require initiatives and enterprises that build not only financial value, but also cultural, social and ecological value. While all efforts should be made to realize these efforts in a cost-effective manner, feasibility studies need to articulate community aspirations and values and factor them into the cost analyses of any project. Ultimately, increased costs to housing construction processes or other related enterprises may be justified within a systems approach to housing if community indicators of success are being achieved. As such, a critical process will be community engagement and participatory indicator development such that community member’s inputs, aspirations, and values are actively driving the development of a housing ecosystem strategy and the monitoring of its implementation.

IHL is currently working with community partners to establish a culturally-appropriate evaluative framework and methodology that highlights diverse practices of social innovation and measures, in ways that are locally meaningful, how these practices serve as pathways toward self-determination and community empowerment.

For further information and resources

Contact

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HOUSING	
Total number of housing units on-reserve	
Total number of each building type on-reserve:	
# of single family	
# of duplexes	
# of townhouses	
# of apartments	
# of trailers	
# of Other	
Total number of each ownership structure on-reserve:	

HOUSING	
# of Band owned (not social housing)	
# of CMHC social-housing	
# of Individual owned housing with ministerial guarantee	
# of Individual owned housing with no ministerial guarantee	
# of other housing	
Of the houses that are individually owned, do they have certificates of possession or are they band recognized?	
Which of the following housing needs are priority for the community:	
Elderly	<input type="checkbox"/> Number needed:
Students/youth	<input type="checkbox"/> Number needed:
Single families	<input type="checkbox"/> Number needed:
People with disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/> Number needed:
Multi-Generational	<input type="checkbox"/> Number needed:

HOUSING	
Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Please describe:
How many people are on the Band's waiting list?	
Average lifespan of a house in this community	Choose an item: <input type="checkbox"/> 5-10 years <input type="checkbox"/> 11-15 years <input type="checkbox"/> 16-20 years <input type="checkbox"/> 21-30 years <input type="checkbox"/> 31-40 years <input type="checkbox"/> 41-50 years <input type="checkbox"/> 50+ years
Number of units in need of minor repair	
Number of units in need of major repair	
Number of units in need of replacement	
Number of units contaminated by mould	
Who pays for hydro/water	<input type="checkbox"/> Individuals <input type="checkbox"/> Band <input type="checkbox"/> Combination
How is housing construction currently paid for or financed?	<input type="checkbox"/> CMHC Subsidy <input type="checkbox"/> ISC Subsidy <input type="checkbox"/> Band own-source revenue <input type="checkbox"/> Individual mortgages <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
How is housing repair currently paid for or financed?	<input type="checkbox"/> CMHC Subsidy <input type="checkbox"/> ISC Subsidy <input type="checkbox"/> Band own-source revenue <input type="checkbox"/> Individual loans <input type="checkbox"/> Other:

HOUSING	
Financial institutes (banks) that currently work with the community on housing:	
Current amortization periods and interest rates on mortgages for the band/community members	
Average rental cost in the community	Choose an item: <input type="checkbox"/> \$1-500 <input type="checkbox"/> \$500-\$750 <input type="checkbox"/> \$750-\$1,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000-\$1,500 <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,5000
Average rental cost in the nearest town off-reserve	Choose an item: <input type="checkbox"/> \$1-500 <input type="checkbox"/> \$500-\$750 <input type="checkbox"/> \$750-\$1,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000-\$1,500 <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,5000
Current status of arrears (\$)	
How are homes heated? (choose all that apply)	<input type="checkbox"/> Baseboard Electric <input type="checkbox"/> Wood <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Gas <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
Current sources of electricity (Choose all that apply)	<input type="checkbox"/> Hydro <input type="checkbox"/> Solar <input type="checkbox"/> Diesel <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
Current community water sources	
Current wastewater/disposal system	

HOMELANDS	
Amount harvestable timber within reserve lands available for <u>commercial use</u> (species, dimensions, and avg volume/hectare when harvested)	
Amount harvestable timber within reserve lands available for <u>local/cultural use</u> (species, dimensions, and avg volume/hectare when harvested)	
Amount of harvestable timber within traditional territory/title lands/treaty lands available for <u>commercial use</u> (species, dimensions, and avg volume/hectare when harvested)	
Amount of harvestable timber within traditional territory/title lands/treaty lands available for <u>local/cultural use</u> (species, dimensions, and avg volume/hectare when harvested)	
Community-controlled forestry tenures or co-management agreements with other operators within traditional territory	
Amount of commercially harvestable timber that the community currently has direct access to	
Other commercially harvestable resources on reserve or within traditional territory/title lands/treaty lands	
Current community-controlled natural resource-based businesses	
Natural resources currently extracted for cultural use only	
Which, if any, local resources are used in local building projects?	

HOMELANDS	
Other local resources aside from timber that is/could be utilized in local housing	
Does the community own/operate a sawmill?	

PEOPLE	
What is the population of the Band?	
How many members live On-Reserve?	
How many members live Off-Reserve?	
Projected population in 10 years	
Average household size	
Average education level of members	
Current level of (un)employment in the community	
Number of reserves (populated/unpopulated)	
Where do most of your off-reserve members live (location)?	
Key employers on or near the reserve	

PEOPLE	
Skills and capacities that currently exist within the community in relation to housing construction:	<input type="checkbox"/> Carpenters <input type="checkbox"/> Plumbers <input type="checkbox"/> Gas fitters <input type="checkbox"/> Electricians <input type="checkbox"/> Sawyers <input type="checkbox"/> Heavy equipment operators <input type="checkbox"/> Other:

GOVERNANCE	
What is the governance structure of the Nation? (choose all that apply)	<input type="checkbox"/> Indian Act band <input type="checkbox"/> Treaty Nation <input type="checkbox"/> Hereditary governance <input type="checkbox"/> National government <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
Under what legal structure does the Nation make land-use and resource decisions:	<input type="checkbox"/> First Nations Land Management Act <input type="checkbox"/> Indian Act <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
Is the Nation in the process of acquiring other lands?	
Does the Nation have an economic development corporation or similar entity?	
Does the Nation have own-source revenue and what percentage is allocated to housing?	
Does the Nation have any other agreements to provide funding to housing?	

GOVERNANCE	
How is housing managed by the Nation?	<input type="checkbox"/> Band housing manager <input type="checkbox"/> Independent housing authority <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
What property ownership models does the Nation utilize?	<input type="checkbox"/> Band-owned (social) <input type="checkbox"/> Individually-owned (certificates of possession) <input type="checkbox"/> Individually-owned (band-recognized) <input type="checkbox"/> Individually-owned (fee-simple) <input type="checkbox"/> Co-operative <input type="checkbox"/> Multi-generational owned <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
What property ownership models does the community wish to utilize in the future?	<input type="checkbox"/> Band-owned (social) <input type="checkbox"/> Individually-owned (certificates of possession) <input type="checkbox"/> Individually-owned (band-recognized) <input type="checkbox"/> Individually-owned (fee-simple) <input type="checkbox"/> Co-operative <input type="checkbox"/> Multi-generational owned <input type="checkbox"/> Other:



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