

# Land and Environment Management Update

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Indigenous Services  
Canada

Services aux  
Autochtones Canada

Canada

# Presentation Outline

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## Reserve Land and Environment Management Program

- Budget 2023 Implementation – Phased Approach
  - Immediate Program Impact
  - Strengthening Program Delivery
  - Towards a Long-Term Vision for the Program
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## First Nation Land Management

- Budget 2023 and Recent Achievements
  - Areas of Focus
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## Land Use Planning

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## Additions to Reserve Update

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## Lands Administration Updates

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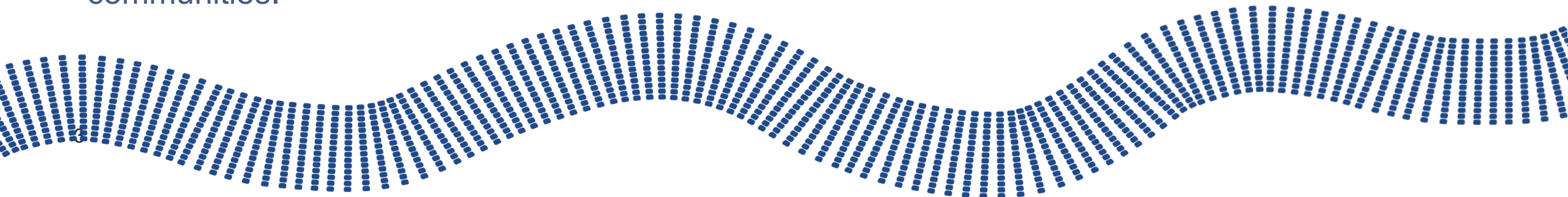
## Environment Update

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# Reserve Land and Environment Management Program

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- Established in 2005, RLEMP aims to support First Nations to develop capacity to manage their reserve lands, natural resources, and environment under the *Indian Act*.
- Structured into 3 progressive levels of responsibility that build capacity as communities assume greater responsibility in managing land activities.
  - Level 1: Training and Development (~2 years)
  - Level 2: Operational
  - Level 3: Delegated Authority (closed to new entrants since 2011)
- In building this foundational capacity, RLEMP supports greater service delivery by First Nation communities.



# Budget 2023 Implementation Strategy – Phased Approach

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## Phase 1(a) – Immediate Program Impact

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Budget 2023 Commitment: \$30 million over five years:

- Opened the program to between 25 and 44 new entrants;
  - Accepted 29 new entrants as of September 2025
  - 65 PLMCP level 1 students supported
- Established a base level of funding of \$70,000 at the Operational level, responding to 2023 Evaluation findings;
  - 60% of all existing program participants saw an increase
  - Greater uptake from smaller communities
- Moved from rigid eligibility criteria to a prioritization exercise that better accounts for communities with diverse priorities (e.g., environment, economic development);
- Developed new communications tools to raise awareness of the program;

**157**

RLEMP First Nations

**260**

Land Managers Trained  
(Through the PLMCP)

\* As of September 2025

# New RLEMP Entrants by Region

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## Atlantic

- Millbrook First Nation
- Pictou Landing First Nation
- Pabineau First Nation
- Sheshatshiu Innu First Nation
- Esgenoôpetitj First Nation
- Mushuau Innu First Nation
- Wasoqopa'q First Nation

## Quebec

- Micmac's of Gesgapegiag First Nation
- Bande des Innus de Pessamit
- Première Nation Abitibiwinini
- Première Nation des Innus Essipit

## Ontario

- Whitesand First Nation

## Manitoba

- Skownan First Nation
- Kinonjeoshtegon First Nation
- Sandy Bay Ojibway First Nation

## Saskatchewan

- Big River First Nation
- Birch Narrows Dene Nation

## Alberta

- Driftpile Cree Nation
- Cold Lake First Nation
- Little Red River Cree Nation

## British Columbia

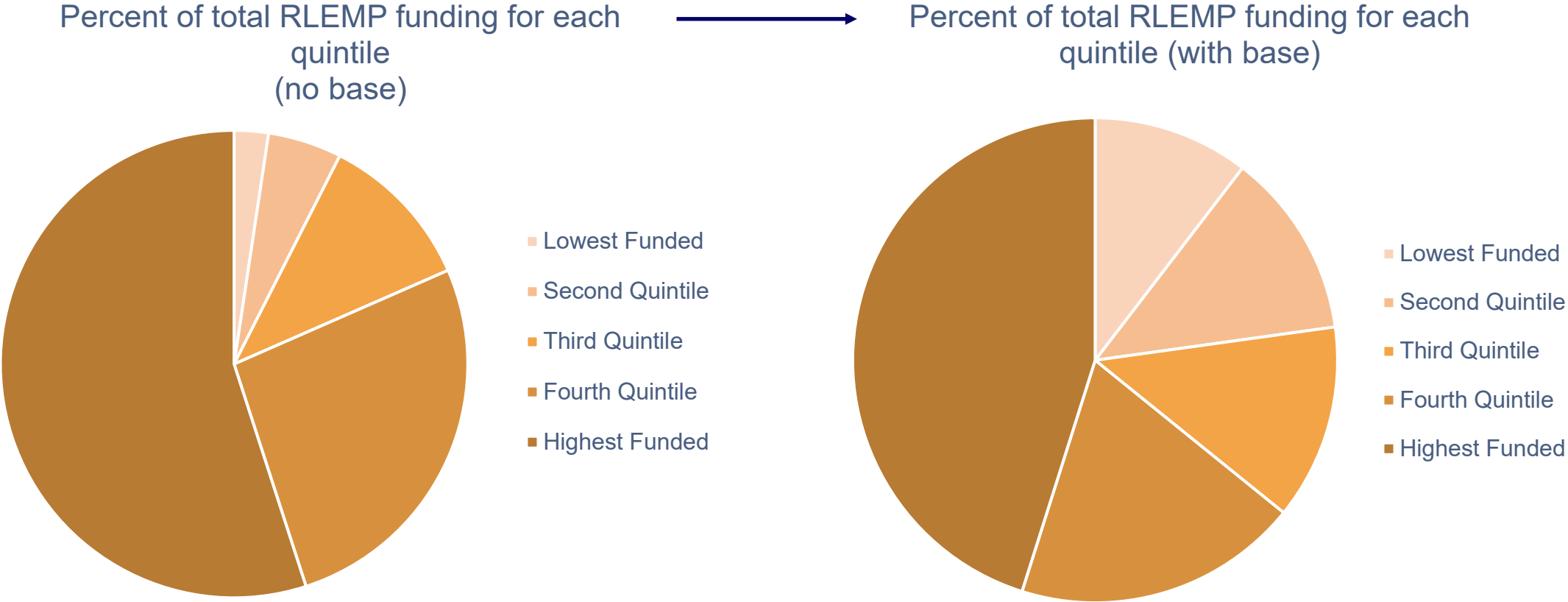
- Stellat'en First Nation
- Gitwangak First Nation
- Tseshaht First Nation
- Pauquachin First Nation
- Nadleh Whut'en First Nation
- Nuxalk Nation
- Tsartlip First Nation
- Nooaitch Indian Band

## Northwest Territories

- Salt River First Nation

# More equitable program funding

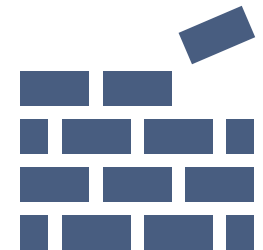
- As a result of introduction of base-level of funding, the distribution of funding in RLEMP has become significantly more equitable.



## Phase 1(b) – Strengthening Program Delivery

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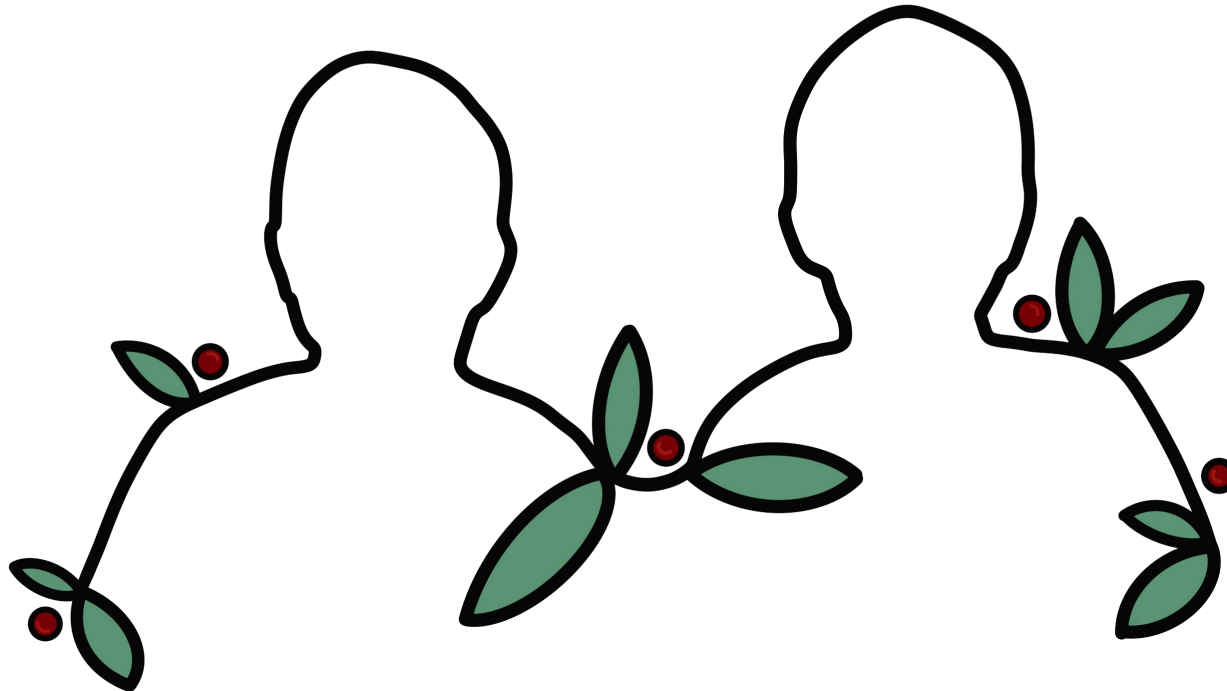
- Updated and streamlined reporting tools and frequency, to reduce reporting burden and capture success stories;
- Increased access to program tools and guidance (both internally and externally), in line with the Evaluation recommendations;
  - Internal repository
  - NALMA website
- Improved Program Guidance (in progress)
  - Collaborative approach in overhauling the RLEMP Manual and Toolkit
  - Ongoing discussion on key roles and responsibilities of delivery partners
- Upcoming recalculation of RLEMP allocations to ensure alignment with current workloads (in progress)



## Toward Phase 2 – Long-term Vision for the Program

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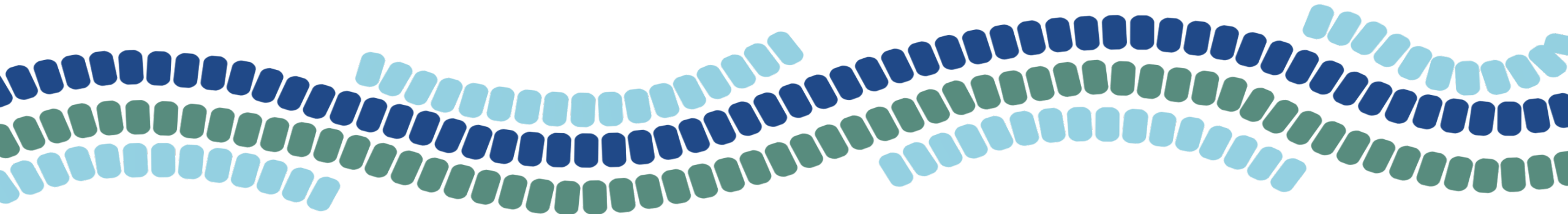
- Launch of a Land Manager Workforce Survey
  - Represents an opportunity to gather meaningful data on First Nation Land Manager experiences, workload and priorities to inform potential longer-term reforms of both RLEMP and the PLMCP.
  - Together with new reporting tools, seeks to capture progress and success stories to inform funding renewal in 2028



# First Nation Land Management

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- First Nation Land Management (FNLM) is a government-to-government relationship through which First Nations can opt-out of 44 sections of the *Indian Act* related to land and environmental management, and take on jurisdiction in these areas.
- FNLM is enabled through:
  - Framework Agreement on First Nation Land Management (Framework Agreement) signed by 13 First Nations and Canada in 1996;
  - The *Framework Agreement on First Nation Land Management Act* (2022) which recognizes the primacy of the Framework Agreement and gives it the force of law.
- Interested First Nations become signatories to the Framework Agreement and develop and ratify a land code which outlines the laws, policies, and procedures they will use to govern their lands.



# First Nation Land Management – Recent Achievements

- Budget 2023 Investments:
  - New Operational Funding Formula
    - 105 communities received funding top-ups
    - Most communities received a 21% increase in Core Contribution funding
  - Commitment to support up to 50 new First Nation signatories
  - Support for the creation of a new independent First Nations National Land Registry
- Implemented a partner-led rolling intake process for new entrants to the Framework Agreement to be more responsive to First Nation momentum;
- 17 new entrants have been welcomed to date under Budget 2023 funding;
- Joint priority with the FNLMRC to improve the Developmental Phase:
  - Increased Developmental Phase Funding by 50%
  - Environmental Site Assessments
    - New Information-Sharing Process for Phase 1 ESA
    - Improved ISC outreach to other federal departments
- First signatory First Nation pursuing land code for Lands Set Aside (Yukon)

219

First Nations signatories to the Framework Agreement

123

Operational First Nations

4

First Nations with Comprehensive Self-Government Agreements

\* As of September 2025

# First Nation Land Management – Areas of Focus

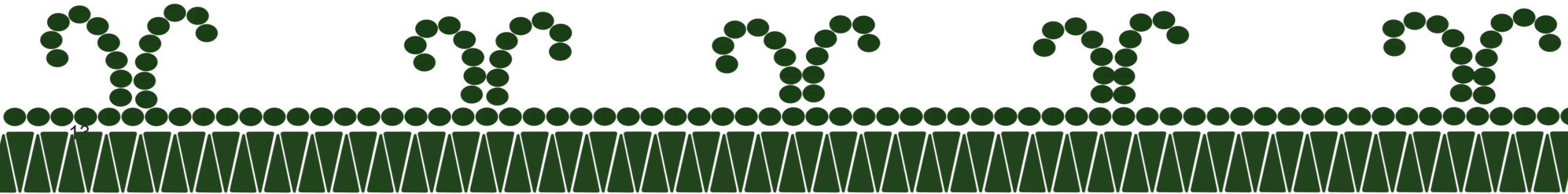
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- Continued work between federal partners (CIRNAC, ISC, NRCan) and the First Nations Land Management Resource Centre (FNL MRC) to support the Lands Advisory Board's three strategic priorities:
  - Additions to Reserve Policy Redesign
  - First Nation Land Governance Registry
  - Enforcement of First Nation Laws
- Continued efforts to raise awareness of the Framework Agreement, and intake interested First Nations;
- Improving the developmental phase to support First Nation communities to move forward effectively, and at their desired pace, including:
  - Training and tools for ISC staff
  - Potential amendments to the Framework Agreement to remove developmental phase barriers
  - Possible establishment of a formal land code training program between FNL MRC and TULO
  - Policy work to support First Nations with Lands Set Aside
  - Opportunities for further service transfer to the FNL MRC

# Land Use Planning

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- The Land Use Planning (LUP) Initiative provides proposal-based funding to First Nations communities across Canada to develop and implement their vision for the use and development of their lands and resources, in accordance with their community priorities and needs.
- The Land Use Planning Initiative has been delivered and administered by the FNLMRC and NALMA since 2018.
- The FNLMRC and NALMA support First Nations with the development of their land use plans (and associated surveys) and provide national training and skills development opportunities to First Nation practitioners.
- An effective LUP is a valuable tool for First Nations managing their reserve lands, whether under the *Indian Act* or under the Framework Agreement on First Nations Land Management.



# Land Use Planning

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## Recent Achievements

- 181 First Nations have completed Land Use Plans to date
- Facilitated outreach to raise awareness and build linkages between federal and First Nations partners, to improve alignment between LUPs and federal supports and investments
- Increased funding to support implementation activities

## Areas of Focus

- Continue to collaborate with departmental stakeholders to raise awareness of LUP and improve alignment
- Work with partners to improve and streamline reporting in order to better understand LUP needs and success stories, to inform potential renewal of funding in 2028

**181**

First Nations with  
completed LUPs

**62**

First Nations with LUP in  
development

**45**

First Nations renewing or  
updating their LUP

\* As of September 2025

# Lands Administration – Updates and Ongoing Work

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- Updated and released key policies: *Designations Policy; Leasing on Designated Reserve Land Policy; Land Management Manual – Glossary*
- Upcoming publication of policies on ISC website: *Designations, Leasing on Designated Reserve Land, and Timber Permits and Licences*
- Upcoming improvements to ISC Land Management webpages to enhance navigation and searchability
- Supporting the ongoing drafting of the Lands Capacity Assessment, as recommended in the Evaluation
- Updates to First Nation Data Governance systems: Progress on Recommendation 5 of Evaluation
  - National Additions to Reserves Tracking System: most recently updated to comply with interim changes to the 2016 ATR Policy Directive
  - Trust and Lands Information Management System: Originally targeted for completion in September 2026, now completed
  - Indian Land Registry System (ILRS): postponed
  - Integrated Environmental Management System: postponed
- Supporting the development of the First Nation Land Governance Registry
  - Targeted for completion in September 2026. The ILRS database structure and related instruments for bands under the FAFNLM have been successfully transferred. Work continues with ISC/CIRNAC colleagues to support ongoing data transfers to the Lands Advisory Board.

# Additions to Reserve - Updates

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- Budget 2021 provided \$43 million over four years (2021-22 to 2024-25):
  - \$32.2 million for ISC to reduce the ATR inventory (project, capacity and staffing dollars); and
  - \$10.8 million for CIRNAC to lead the redesign of the federal ATR policy.
- In Spring 2025, an additional year of funding was approved to continue supporting these initiatives.
- Since April 1, 2022, ISC has:
  - Created 32 ATR-specific positions across the country, which are essential to speeding up the ATR process;
  - Supported First Nation capacity through Indigenous organizations (NALMA and three regional land associations) to deliver ATR related services (i.e. training, technical, etc.) to their member First Nations;
  - Provided approximately \$10 million to over 100 First Nations to complete ATR technical components (i.e., environmental site assessments, municipal service agreements, surveys, etc.);
  - Created a Duty to Consult unit to support consultation activities on complex files and developed and implemented training materials for the modernized National ATR Tracking System (NATS); and,
  - Supported CIRNAC with the ATR policy redesign by developing short-term solutions to expedite ATRs and provide input into longer term legislative and policy reform options.

# Environment Directorate - Updates

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- The Joint Table
  - A Joint First Nations-Federal Table has been established to explore options to address the environmental protection gap on reserve land, focusing on waste management and unauthorized dumping.
  - Later this calendar year, the Joint Table will release a discussion paper that contains options to enhance waste management practices on reserve lands.
    - The discussion paper is expected to identify options on: Legislative and Regulatory Development, Capacity Development and Funding.
- The First Nations Waste Management Initiative (FNWMI)
  - The First Nations National Waste Management Conference was cohosted in May 2025 by ISC and the FNWMI National Advisory Committee
    - Attended by 266 participants (in-person and virtual). A What We Heard report will be finalized shortly.
  - ISC and the FNWMI National Advisory Committee are developing a Waste Initiative renewal proposal paper that will reflect First Nations' perspectives shared in at the conference.
    - The renewal proposal paper will inform a later ISC renewal budget proposal.
- Contaminated Sites On-Reserve
  - In 2024, Federal Contaminated Site Action Plan (FCSAP) Phase V (2025-2030) funding was approved.
  - ISC has received increased funding in Phase V, over 5 years to assess and remediate contaminated sites on reserve.
  - ISC will continue to work with other government departments to access any available funds to address contaminated sites on reserve.

**Wela'lioq! Miigwech!**  
**Merci! Thank you!**

## Approach – RLEMP Recalculation

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Recalculation of allocations for First Nations who receive funding through a fixed agreement\*

Based on the current funding formula, which considers instruments registered in the ILRS



Goal is to have allocations match the current workload of land offices by 2027-2028

Increases will take effect in **2026–27**

Decreases will be deferred until **2027–28**



Opportunity for participants to register interests in the ILRS, as funding will reflect workload