



ABORIGINAL HOUSING CONNECTION

TRIPARTITE REGIONAL COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

The 2005 Housing Initiative

I- Background

In its 2005 budget, the federal government announced an additional 295 million dollars for housing within First Nations communities throughout Canada. The financial assistance of the **2005 housing initiative** (2005 H. I.) was distributed in five (5) construction, renovation and infrastructure programs of the **Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC)** and of the **Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC)**. It covered two (2) or three (3) financial years depending on if it was an INAC or a CMHC program.

The launch of the 2005 H.I. coincided with the implementation of a new national social housing funds allocation formula (section 95) and of the CMHC's Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP). According to this new method, the Quebec region saw a reduction in the range of 35% to 40% of its relative share of national funds of these two (2) housing assistance programs.

Regionally, the announced additional investment was therefore combined to a confirmed reduction in the CMHC pro-

grams. What happens exactly, now that the 2005 H.I. is completed (at least, all the funds are committed)? What is the assessment of that initiative? At its February 2008 meeting, the Tripartite Regional Committee on Housing (TRCH) suggested that *"a report be done using a tabular form that would demonstrate the results achieved in the scope of the «2005 Budget» initiative vs. what would have been accomplished with a "regular" regime"** (excerpts from the minutes). That mandate was entrusted with the TRCH Working Group on housing needs.

2- Results of the Initiative

Note 1: 242 units built on average, annually, between 2000 and 2006 according to the AFNQL study (2006). The decrease of the CMHC regular construction activity is of ±45 units per year. The construction activity of the regular regime is therefore estimated at ±200 units per year.

Note 2: The INAC regular renovation activity is not included.

Note 3: The renovation units are allocated to activities linked to the health and security of the occupants, mainly in two priority cases in the region, namely dwellings insulated with vermiculite (Zonolite) contaminated with amphibole asbestos and mold.

Note 4: Excluding the regular renovation activity of INAC.

Note 5: Hypothesis: 1 housing unit = 1 lot.

Sources: Regional offices of INAC and of CMHC.

3-Year Activity (2005.06-2007.08)

		Construction units	Renovation units	Infrastructure INAC only
Regular Activity (approx.)		600⁽¹⁾	171⁽²⁾	600⁽⁵⁾
Additional Activity				
■ INAC	2005 H.I activity	220	76 ⁽³⁾	439
	Units re-allocated in Qc	10		24
	sub-total	230	76	463
■ CMHC	2005 H.I activity	334	82	
	Units re-allocated in Qc	93		
	sous-total	427	82	
■ Total INAC-CMHC	2005 H.I activity	554	158	439
	Units re-allocated in Qc	103		24
	Total additional activity	657	158	463
Total Activity		1,257	329⁽⁴⁾	1,063



Assembly of the
First Nations
of Quebec
and Labrador



Indian and Northern
Affairs Canada

Affaires indiennes
et du Nord Canada



IMPORTANT INFORMATION

FIRST NATIONS MARKET HOUSING FUND (FNMHF)

The Fund has been operational since May 5, 2008. A series of documents was distributed at the Assembly of Chiefs held in Montreal from June 10 to 12, 2008. With the implementation of the FNMHF, First Nations are presented with various opportunities, particularly in the area of capacity development. As of the second year, funds may be available for some First Nations to support training and mentoring activities related to the development of market housing.

In order to give the communities of Quebec and Labrador the best possible chance of benefiting from the various opportunities offered by the FNMHF, the Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador (AFNQL) will take the necessary steps to organize a regional meeting specifically on this topic. A presentation on the FNMHF, its operation, and other aspects by the Fund administrators could be followed by a workshop-type activity to help the communities' housing administrators familiarize themselves with the procedure and forms related to the Fund. This activity could be held in the fall of 2008, before the financial assistance for capacity development is made available. However, communities who so wish can forward their application to the FNMHF now. For more information, go to www.fnmhf.ca.

The meeting confirmation, date and location will be sent at a later date by the AFNQL. ■



(continued from page 1, "Report on the 2005 Housing Initiative...")

The 2005 H.I. has had for effect to increase, globally and in a specific manner, the construction – renovation activity of infrastructures in Quebec's First Nations communities. That increase is variable from one First Nation to another. This result could not have been attained if it had not been for the following factors:

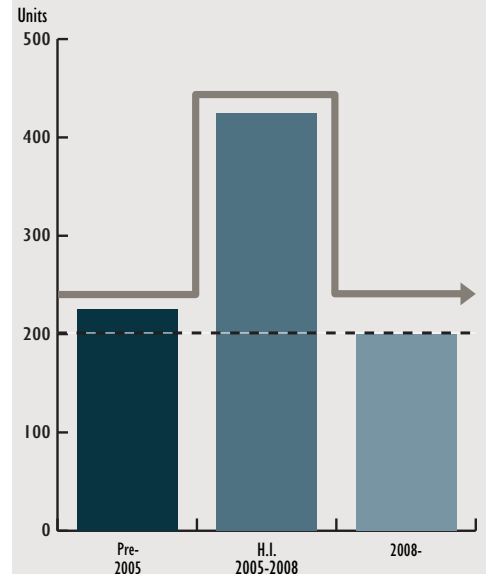
- The veracity of the housing needs of the First Nations of Quebec;
- The delivery capacity of the First Nations of Quebec;
- The continuous representation of the AFNQL at the national level;
- The representations of the regional offices of the CMHC and of INAC with their central administration for the obtaining of units and additional budgets;
- The strategies elaborated by the TRCH.

The construction of new units represents the greatest need of the First Nations in regards to housing. The activity in that field was doubled during the years of the 2005 H.I.. The return to regular regime should be construed, in fact, as an even slower construction pace than that of 2005-2006, considering the new distribution of the national budgets of the CMHC programs (sect. 95 and RRAP) that handicaps Quebec. These variations in the construction pace have an obvious impact on the response rate for the housing needs of the First Nations of Quebec. ■

* By regular regime, we mean the regular regional budgetary allocation starting in 2005-2006, thus using the new national allocation method.

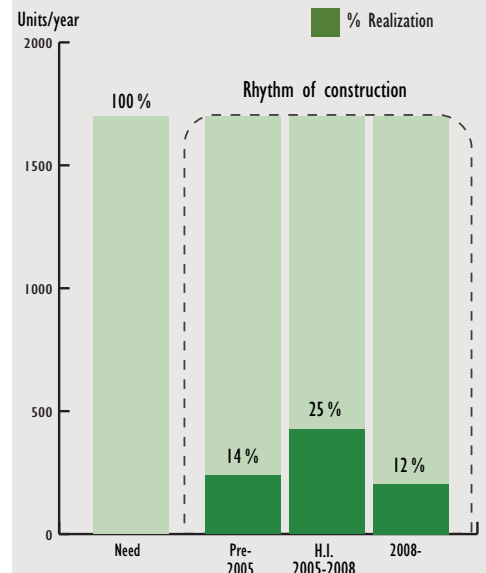
Construction Activity

Units constructed/year



Housing Construction vs Needs

There is a real need of 1700 units per year



Note : Subject to the impact of new programs or initiatives (funds of 300 M\$, regional approach of INAC, etc.).



MAINTAINING SENIORS' INDEPENDENCE THROUGH HOME ADAPTATIONS

As our health and lives change, so do our housing needs. Across Canada, the overwhelming majority of seniors prefer to continue to live safely and independently in their own homes for as long as possible. However, many homes are simply not designed to meet seniors' changing needs. **Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation** (CMHC) has a number of tips on how to adapt a home to keep pace with changing needs, so seniors can stay safe, independent—and in their own home—longer, including:

- Add a ramp to bypass existing steps.
- Install light fixtures or floodlights with easily accessible switches to illuminate entrances, steps and walkways.
- Install handrails on both sides of the stairways.
- Reduce the height of, or eliminate, high door thresholds at room entrances.
- Create a knee-space underneath sinks to allow you to work from a seated position (making sure to insulate any exposed hot-water pipes first).
- Install grab bars within easy reach of the bathroom sink and toilet and in the bathtub.
- Install non-slip flooring in the bathroom and in the bathtub.
- Install single-lever faucets to more easily control water flow and temperature.
- Lower rods or shelves in closets, and add off-floor shelves near entrances for shoes and boots.
- Consider installing easy-to-grasp handles and easy-to-operate locks on doors and windows.

For more information or free copies of the **CMHC Self-Assessment Guide Maintaining Seniors' Independence Through Home Adaptations** and the fact sheet **Preventing Falls on Stairs** on universal design ideas that can make your home safer and easier to live in, call CMHC at **1-800-668-2642** or visit CMHC's website at www.cmhc.ca. For over 60 years, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) has been Canada's national housing agency, and a source of objective, reliable housing expertise. ■

REGIONAL ALLOCATION FORMULA

For the second year in a row, communities were informed in April of their **CMHC** allocation amounts (Section 95 and RRAP). This is a definite improvement compared to previous years.

The Section 95 regional allocation formula continues to be based on needs and still has a socio-economic variable related to the capacity to pay of tenants. The concept of an annual reserve, to meet the one-time needs of some communities, was also maintained. However, it is no longer possible to reserve units for two or three years.

For communities experiencing financial difficulties, a support plan, which in some cases could lead to a decrease in the number of subsidized units in order to increase the subsidy amount per unit, will be put in place and subject to a follow-up.

As for the **RRAP**, the formula was revisited to take into account end-of-agreement units. Reallocations are now based on the performance of communities that deliver and complete their renovation projects quickly. ■



NEW REGIONAL APPROACH TO HOUSING

Housing is a priority for us all and particularly for the Quebec and Labrador First Nations. In partnership with the AFNQL and CMHC, INAC is introducing a regional approach aimed at helping find new ways to address issues faced by many First Nations.

This approach, which constitutes a pilot project for 2008-2009, could be extended until 2010-2011 should resources and interest be confirmed. The approach has **three components**:

- **component 1:** access to private property and the development of private entrepreneurship in housing
- **component 2:** maintenance of existing assets through preventative measures
- **component 3:** establishment of cooperatives

First Nations, who have already received information and application, are invited to take this opportunity and submit proposals. Technical assistance can be offered in the preparation of these proposals.

For additional information or to submit a proposal, please contact **Mr. André Dansereau** by phone at (418) 951-2224, by fax at (418) 648-3144 or by e-mail at dansereau@ainc-inac.gc.ca. ■

CMHC'S HOUSING QUALITY INITIATIVE

The **Housing Quality Matters** workshops are part of a general program called **"Housing Quality Initiative"** that is intended for First Nations. The goal of the initiative is to help First Nations deal with housing quality issues.

In co-operation with Aboriginal communities, CMHC organizes practical workshops where acquired knowledge is applied. The topics covered are related to indoor air quality and mold, various housing best practices and basic property management practices.

Some of the sessions are designed for the chief and council members, others for housing staff and still others for occupants in the various communities. All the sessions are of course customized to local realities and facilitated by a First Nations member, whenever possible.

For example, a two-day workshop was held recently at **Gesgapegiag** in the **Baie des Chaleurs**. A dozen local workers familiarized themselves with the **Builders' Series**. Through this workshop, participants can identify potential problems related to poor quality buildings and explore specific changes that can be made to improve the quality of future buildings.

According to Housing Director Maxime Condo, *"participants were very impressed by the training they received. I was surprised to see even the quieter ones be so enthusiastic about the concepts that were discussed. They are really eager to apply the techniques here at home"*.

For more information or to organize a training session in your community, please contact CMHC at **514-283-0793** or **514-283-2118**. ■

Your Views Matter: let us know what you think about the **Aboriginal Housing Connection** newsletter. Send us your questions, suggestions, or feedback at: housingconnection@cmhc.ca