

Inuit Nunangat Housing Strategy



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Introduction

“For over 60 years, beginning with the first permanent settlements, Inuit have struggled with inadequate and unsafe housing conditions. High rates of overcrowding, long waiting lists for subsidized housing, and the number of homes in need of major repairs across Inuit homelands represents one of the most persistent and critical public health issues in this country. The lack of appropriate and adequate housing has, and continues to have, far reaching consequences for the health and well-being of Inuit communities. Unacceptable high levels of respiratory illnesses, infectious diseases and family violence can all be linked to poor housing conditions, as can the direct negative effects on children’s ability to learn and social relationships.”¹

**United Nations
Declaration on the
Rights of Indigenous Peoples
Article 23**

Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development. In particular, Indigenous peoples have the right to be actively involved in developing and determining health, housing and other economic and social programmes affecting them and, as far as possible, to administer such programmes through their own institutions.

Lack of access to appropriate and affordable housing in Inuit Nunangat is a national crisis. In 2016, over half (51.7%) of Inuit in Inuit Nunangat lived in crowded housing compared to 8.5% percent of non-Indigenous Canadians. In addition, more than 70 per cent of the communities in Inuit Nunangat do not have a safe shelter for women and children experiencing family violence and where they do exist, they are over-burdened.² The housing crisis, as demonstrated by consistently poor socio-economic outcomes, continues to represent a major impediment to healthy living, education and employment for Inuit.

Inuit have prioritized improving access to appropriate and affordable housing in Inuit Nunangat by advocating for increased and sustained direct government funding. In addition, Inuit seek collaborative work amongst all relevant partners to increase alternative housing options, leading to sustainable housing in Inuit communities and recognition of the direct role of Inuit governments and organizations in building and managing housing in Inuit communities. Inuit self-determination in the delivery of housing in Inuit Nunangat is key to improving and sustaining improved outcomes.

Having access to appropriate and affordable housing is critical for improving educational attainment, employment and physical and mental health as well for those seeking safety from violence. Investing in housing is an investment in the ability of Inuit to be self-sufficient and improved housing outcomes will invariably have a positive impact on Inuit health and socio-economic outcomes. (See Annex 1)

One of the most obvious linkages to significantly overcrowded and inadequate housing is the prevalence and persistence of tuberculosis in Inuit communities. The rate of tuberculosis faced by Inuit is almost 300 times that of non-Indigenous Canadians born in this country.³ The linkages between the spread of respiratory illnesses and diseases and overcrowded and inadequate housing are well documented. In March, 2018, the

1 We Can Do Better: Housing in Inuit Nunangat, Report of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Peoples, March 2017

2 Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada

3 Tuberculosis in Inuit Nunangat Map <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/hc-sc/documents/services/first-nations-inuit-health/diseases-health-conditions/tuberculosis/tuberculosis-resources-first-nations-inuit-aboriginal-health-health-canada/map-tuberculosis-inuit-nunangat/map-tuberculosis-inuit-nunangat.pdf>

Minister of Indigenous Services committed to the elimination of tuberculosis from Inuit Nunangat by 2030. In order to deliver on this commitment, addressing housing needs is of paramount importance. Addressing overcrowding will also have positive impacts on other shared priorities, including improving mental wellness and reducing of family violence.

In its March 2017 report titled “We Can Do Better: Housing in Inuit Nunangat,” the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples recognized the severity of the housing crisis in Inuit Nunangat and called upon the Government of Canada to do more to address Inuit housing needs. The Committee’s recommendations called for, among other things, direct funding to Inuit and the development of a funding strategy “to address the declining funding under social housing agreements, but also to provide adequate, predictable and stable funding so that regional housing authorities can plan for, and meet, long-term housing needs.”

Housing in Inuit Nunangat is characterized by high costs of construction, operation and maintenance and limited options. Due to limited resources, federal and provincial/territorial housing policies have not sufficiently focused on addressing all options along the housing continuum and the need for culturally appropriate housing built of high-quality materials suited to the harsh climate. When indirect federal funds, such as those transferred to provinces and territories, have been available, the funding criteria have not always resulted in appropriate housing solutions. This has led to Inuit missing out on potential benefits of these programs. In addition, when funding is available, there is usually little account for high construction and operations costs and demographic trends, including high population growth in Inuit Nunangat.

Thriving communities consist of a mixture of, and adequate supply of, housing types including social, affordable rental, privately owned, cooperative, supportive and transitional. However, expanding affordable alternatives to public housing faces a number of challenges in Inuit Nunangat including, lack of housing markets for resale, high costs and risks for individual and commercial developers and difficulties in obtaining financing. Many Inuit live in subsidized rentals for long periods of time given the lack of affordable housing options. Home ownership is a step many Inuit would take understanding the wealth generating opportunities that it provides, however, insurmountable barriers continue to exist.

The Nunatsiavut Government completed the construction of a housing prototype in Nain. Funding was provided by the Tasiujatsoak Trust and the Arctic Inspiration Prize, at a value of \$3.5 million. This prototype has six units with three allocated to elders and three allocated to youth. It will be monitored over a one-year period, for energy efficiency, ventilation systems and air quality, among other things. The results of this monitoring will be used to guide building codes and standards for Nunatsiavut, specifying design criteria for new housing builds. These codes and standards will be provided to successful proponents, and must be met as a condition of all contract awards for Nunatsiavut Government-funded projects.

There are innovative, more climate appropriate housing designs that incorporate cultural adaptations but, given the overwhelming housing need and historical lack of funding, resources have generally been directed toward less costly and less appropriate housing models. This has exacerbated an already significant and growing crisis in Inuit communities.

Despite the challenges, a significant and historic opportunity exists to eliminate the housing crisis in Inuit Nunangat and ensure future sustainability of housing development and delivery. Strong commitments to improve housing in Indigenous communities have been made by the Government of Canada. Significant, direct housing funding through recent federal budgets is being delivered by Inuit.

In recognition of the importance of improving Inuit housing outcomes and in the spirit of working collaboratively to address Inuit needs, housing is one of the priority areas of the Inuit-Crown Partnership Committee. The co-development of the Inuit Nunangat Housing Strategy is fundamental to establishing and sustaining a new partnership for addressing housing gaps between Inuit Nunangat and the rest of Canada.

Through the Inuit-Crown Partnership Committee, Inuit have worked with the Government of Canada to develop this Strategy with the goal of addressing and improving housing outcomes in Inuit Nunangat in line with outcomes for the rest of Canada. As set out in Canada's National Housing Strategy, "this collaborative work respects and strengthens the Inuit-Crown relationship and will help achieve the common goal of reducing the housing needs in Inuit Nunangat and developing long term solutions that reflect the Inuit way of life, traditions and culture. The approach being taken emphasizes the direct role of Inuit organizations and governments in addressing housing needs in their communities."

Context

The four regions of Inuit Nunangat are situated in two provinces and two territories, and each of the regions has a distinct legal and political reality including land claims and public governance (in the case of Nunavut) and self-governance (in the case of Nunatsiavut). Negotiations concerning governance continues in Nunavik and the Inuvialuit Settlement Region which will further define the evolving jurisdictional landscape.

Inuit have well-established and direct Inuit-Crown relationships as land owners, managers and rights holders, responsible for the well-being of Inuit. By entering into land claims and self-government agreements, the signatories committed to a series of obligations to further the goals of all parties. These goals include improving the social well-being and economic prosperity of Inuit; developing healthier, more sustainable communities; and promoting the participation of Inuit in Canada's political, social and economic environment to the benefit of all Canadians (Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, 2015).

A number of agencies in each region are involved in setting housing policies and in the delivery of housing programs on the ground. Provinces and territories design and deliver public and social housing programming, including shelters and transitional housing. Therefore, in some cases, local and provincial/territorial housing authorities operate simultaneously in Inuit communities.⁴ In all regions, Inuit, to varying degrees, are involved in housing delivery and/or in the development of housing policies. Within each region of Inuit Nunangat, capacity exists to further the direct involvement of Inuit in the design and delivery of housing to support a more sustainable, culturally appropriate approach to improved housing outcomes. Inuit, as land owners, can offer unique opportunities to directly enhance or complement housing provision in their communities. (See Annex 2 for more information)

The solutions for improving Inuit housing outcomes will not look the same for all regions. Each region is unique in terms of housing delivery, roles and responsibilities (regarding the nature of partnerships within each jurisdiction for the delivery of housing) and specific housing needs. Through direct and flexible funding, Inuit are looking to respond to Inuit-specific needs including increasing housing options to alleviate pressure on social housing and providing more durable, energy efficient and culturally appropriate housing. Inuit have worked to define specific needs to ensure the greatest impact of investments.

4 We Can Do Better: Housing in Inuit Nunangat, 2017

The housing needs in Inuit Nunangat are severe. According to the 2016 Census, over half (51.7%) of Inuit in Inuit Nunangat are living in crowded housing. The rate of overcrowding for the non-Indigenous population in Canada is 8.5%. In addition, 31.5% of Inuit in Inuit Nunangat live in homes that require major repairs. (More details on the needs are included in Annex 3)

Barriers and Challenges

The economy of Inuit Nunangat is characterized by volatile economic growth, high poverty rates, high costs of goods and services, and uneven distribution of economic opportunities that benefit primarily larger communities and those with extraction industry presence. This, along with significantly lower Inuit income levels, poses a serious challenge for many communities in terms of diversifying housing options.

Throughout Inuit Nunangat it is difficult to generate sufficient investment to support the amount of capital required to meet new housing demands and refurbishment of aging units. As a result, Inuit regions must rely to a greater extent on government funding.

Construction costs are high. Low average household income levels combined with limited local employment opportunities in many communities mean home ownership or market rental is out of reach for many without innovative purchasing arrangements. Even if one is able to purchase or build a home, banks are sometimes reluctant to provide mortgages given perceived risks (i.e., land tenure). Insurance, if accessible, is also very expensive given the assessment/assumption of greater exposure to risk that structures in remote communities in Inuit Nunangat face.

Due to limited transportation infrastructure in Inuit Nunangat, almost all communities rely solely on air and seasonal marine service for goods transport and passenger travel. Transportation infrastructure that does exist is largely aging and inadequate. This increases costs associated with any development, including housing.

High transportation, construction and operations and maintenance costs make northern operations expensive, significantly influencing the cost of living and doing business. In addition, the climate in Inuit Nunangat is dominated by long and cold winters, resulting in high heating costs and greater wear on housing units. When taken into consideration with the high cost of living and low income levels for many Inuit families, renting or owning a home, without significant subsidies, is out of reach.

The cold and changing climate significantly influence the building and construction season. Materials have to be delivered during the very short (mid-summer to early fall) shipping season. To meet sea lift schedules, material needs to be ordered many months in advance (i.e., the previous fall/winter). And because construction materials must be purchased before they can be shipped, funding must be in place within that timeframe as well.

To ensure effective construction seasons, lot development and foundation preparation can occur in the fall with construction of units starting in the spring if materials have been delivered in the previous summer/fall. As such, in many cases, units are built over a two-year period. As funding for housing is usually provided on a year-by-year basis this poses significant challenges to ensuring the effectiveness of investments. (An illustration of barriers can be found in Annex 4)

Climate change is adding to the challenges associated with housing design and development. Erosion and melting permafrost are posing significant risks to existing infrastructure and further limiting available land for development.

Improving the alignment of public investment cycles with housing construction project cycles would improve the effectiveness and efficiency of housing construction in Inuit Nunangat. Specifically, there is a need for flexibility and long-term commitments at various levels of government. The recent federal commitment of 10 years of Inuit housing funding through Budget 2018 will allow Inuit organizations and governments the flexibility required to overcome this challenge during this period.

Housing policies and programs must take into consideration the higher costs in Inuit Nunangat for all related items such as lot development, construction, operations and maintenance, transportation, climate change adaptation and, where applicable, should include commitments to work in collaboration to find innovative ways to reduce costs. These costs are much higher than those experienced in the south. Lot development, for example, given challenging terrain (including the need at times for land stabilization), the installation of infrastructure for water and sewer delivery as well as limited availability of land could easily exceed \$200,000 (“Building Sustainable Communities in Nunatsiavut Communities,” Inuit Housing Forum, 2016)

A significant barrier to improved housing outcomes and socio-economic outcomes generally, is the severe shortage of housing options along the housing continuum. Ensuring the availability of housing options along the housing continuum is maximized to the extent possible is crucial to sustainable housing provision. Not all options along the continuum are available in all communities, in fact, in many communities, public housing is the only viable option. At times, given severe shortages, public housing is provided to outside professionals moving to Inuit communities. As extensively set out in the report by the Senate Standing Committee on Aboriginal Peoples, titled *We Can Do Better: Housing in Inuit Nunangat* (March 2017), this adds to the already serious overcrowding faced by Inuit in those communities. Diversified housing options such as transitional and supportive housing, affordable private rentals or private homes and cooperatives are necessary for communities to flourish, supporting those in, and those moving to, the community. Communities with varied and available options are better prepared to respond to, and take advantage of, development opportunities.

Budget 2016 / Budget 2018 Federal Housing Investments

Canada's Budget 2016

Budget 2016 invested a total of \$156.7 million over two years across Inuit Nunangat to support Inuit housing; \$76.7 million for Nunavut, \$50 million for Nunavik, \$15 million for Nunatsiavut, and \$15 million for the Inuvialuit Settlement Region. These were welcome investments and investing directly with Makivik Corporation, the Nunatsiavut Government and the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation was an important, initial step in recognizing the direct role of Inuit in the management of housing in the respective regions.

Canada's Budget 2017 and Budget 2018

The Government of Canada recognized that Budget 2016 investments were just a start. As such, Canada's Budget 2017 included an additional \$4 billion investment over 10 years (starting in 2018/2019), "to build and improve housing, water treatment systems, health facilities and other community infrastructure" in Indigenous communities. Canada further added that "to maximize the benefits and long-term sustainability of these proposed investments, funding allocations will be determined in partnership with Indigenous Peoples." Budget 2017 also announced \$300 million for the territories, with \$240 million to support housing in Nunavut over 10 years.⁵ These investments are not required to be cost-matched.

In Budget 2018, Canada clarified that Inuit in Nunatsiavut, Nunavik and in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region would receive a total of \$400 million out of the \$4 billion investment for Indigenous infrastructure announced in Budget 2017, over 10 years.

As evidenced through Canada's Budget 2016 and Budget 2018 direct investments to Inuit, federal funding is used more efficiently and has a greater impact when it is provided directly to Inuit organizations and governments. Impressive work is being carried out, not only in terms of units being built but in the ability of Inuit to make positive economic and social impacts thanks to direct, flexible investments.

⁵ \$24 million will be provided to Yukon, and \$36 million to the Northwest Territories

Delivery of Current Federal Inuit Housing Investments

So far, investments have resulted in the construction of 183 housing units, including 15 in Inuvialuit communities (12 fully complete), 24 in Nunatsiavut, and 144 in Nunavik. This is in addition to several home renovation and energy efficiency projects. Investments are having a direct impact on local economic activity and helping alleviate social inequity. For example, in Nunatsiavut, two multi-unit complexes under construction will make it possible for young families to stay together and reduce the risk of having children placed in care due to lack of suitable housing. In Nunavik, there has been a strong focus on on-the-job training to build skills in the construction sector. As well, in 2017, \$50 million expended in housing (Budget 2016, plus \$25 million received under the James Bay and Northern Quebec tripartite agreement) represented \$27 million in revenue for local businesses. In Inuvialuit communities, 29 people are now adequately housed and 18 out of 21 firms contracted for new housing construction are local and Indigenous-owned.

Nunatsiavut

In Nunatsiavut, the Nunatsiavut Government is able to respond directly to the needs identified in the 2012 Nunatsiavut Housing Needs Assessment, as well as to the Nunatsiavut Government's five proposed strategic directions related to housing. As 74.3% of houses in Nunatsiavut were in need of major or minor repairs, the Nunatsiavut Government is implementing a targeted housing repair program as well as additional initiatives aimed at achieving affordable warmth and increasing home energy efficiency. For example, it is expanding its hugely successful "Affordable Warmth" pilot project by providing high efficiency wood burning stoves to more households in need. Geotechnical assessments have now been completed in all Nunatsiavut communities and these will inform lot development for future builds as well as determine if special foundation systems or other engineered solutions are required to ensure the sustainability of future infrastructure developments. A number of new, single family and multi-plex housing units are being constructed to help address the diverse and significant needs in Nunatsiavut communities. The Nunatsiavut Government was able to engage Inuit businesses for approximately 95% of the work completed during the 2016-2017 construction season. Local Inuit were employed and trained, creating further benefits for Nunatsiavut. Federal Ministers and Inuit leaders were able to see results firsthand during the Inuit-Crown Partnership Committee meeting in Nain, Nunatsiavut, in September 2017.

Nunavik

In Nunavik, Makivik Corporation's construction division continues its innovative model of building social housing units on a non-profit basis. Funding provided to Makivik in Budget 2016 enabled the organization, to begin to address the 813 housing unit backlog. In all, 144 housing units were delivered to Nunavik families by November 2017. This is one-month earlier than originally anticipated despite the narrow, two-year window for these investments. Makivik's non-profit housing construction model puts \$62,000 of every housing unit back into Nunavik businesses and its training and development of Inuit ensures maximum Inuit employment. While these units will improve housing outcomes for some Nunavik families, overcrowding with all of its consequent social and health implications continues.

Inuvialuit Settlement Region

In the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (IRC) is effectively delivering Inuvialuit-specific housing investments, partnering, as necessary, with the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. Twelve newly constructed units are fully complete, housing 29 people. Inuvialuit companies are leading all aspects of work related to Inuvialuit housing investments. Sanayut, an Inuvialuit-owned design and engineering company, is providing the design work and Nappaq, an Inuvialuit-owned construction company, is constructing the units. This allows Inuvialuit to ensure that economic benefits stay in Inuvialuit communities and local capacity, including the number of aspiring Inuvialuit tradespeople, is enhanced. This also permits the incorporation of design elements that ensure the units are culturally relevant and appropriate for the local environment. The IRC is improving the units by including more durable materials and components such as windows and framing at costs that are comparable to the NWT Housing Corporation unit costs. Recently, the IRC has agreed to carry out the demolition of old, uninhabitable public housing units operated by the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. This specific initiative is having a positive impact on the operations and maintenance costs associated with these units, freeing up land for the construction of new units and reducing the high cost of land development. Overall, Inuvialuit housing funding supports the objectives of the Section 16 Economic Measures provisions of the Inuvialuit Final Agreement.

Challenges Associated with Budget 2016 and Budget 2018 Investments

Although significant, direct Inuit housing investments have been made by the federal government in recent years, the delivery of these funds has posed a number of challenges. Direct funding announced in Budgets 2016 and 2018 have been slow to reach Inuit, resulting in housing delivery delays that erode the overall effectiveness of these investments. Significant, multi-year advanced planning and preparation is required for the construction of housing in Inuit communities. Investments must reach Inuit in a timely manner to ensure anticipated outcomes can be achieved.

In addition, funding is delivered inconsistently through contribution agreements or grant agreements, depending on what mechanisms happen to be in place to flow funding to respective Inuit organizations and governments. From an Inuit perspective, direct Inuit housing investments should be delivered through a grant that allows Inuit organizations and governments sufficient flexibility, certainty and transparency. This will help ensure that housing delivery meets the specific needs of Inuit communities.

Declining Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) subsidies to provinces and territories for the management of current public housing stock is having a detrimental effect on improving housing outcomes in Inuit communities. With the need to catch up, provincial and territorial housing authorities will have less flexibility to increase housing stock with new investments. Less funding may be available for operations and maintenance of existing and new social housing units, so that housing authorities may need to direct more of their own funding to existing units as opposed to building much needed new ones. However, it is expected that through bilateral agreements to be in place in 2019, provincial and territorial governments will commit to preserve and expand the number of community housing units in their respective jurisdiction. Provinces and territories can also support repair of the current stock. (See details below on the Canada Community Housing Initiative that will form part of agreements with provinces and territories.)

Nunavut – Direct Inuit Investment Gap

Canada's Budget 2016 and 2017 earmarked \$76.7 million and \$240 million to the Government of Nunavut toward housing in Nunavut. These investments were not available directly to Inuit organizations in Nunavut, however, they too seek direct investments to complement investments made by Canada and the Government of Nunavut. Given the enormous need in Nunavut, significant investments and innovative approaches are required to close the housing needs gap with the rest of Canada. Recent federal investments will help but, as described by the President of the Nunavut Housing Corporation, fall far short of what is required given the urgent and significant housing gap in Nunavut.

Inuit organizations in Nunavut, through their individual areas of expertise and collective strength, are keen to help address the severe housing shortage in Nunavut through an Inuit designed and delivered, long term “Affordable Housing” program. Creating a model of affordable home ownership tailored to Inuit individuals or families for whom traditional financing at current market values remains unattainable, is both a challenge and an opportunity. Complementing public housing provided through the Nunavut Housing Corporation, this program would deliver affordable home ownership as a means for Inuit to transition from government, business and private rental housing, promoting a sense of pride in ownership for individuals and families in Nunavut. The program would also support and promote home ownership as a means of wealth generation and career creation that would further lessen the financial burden on Governments.

To achieve its objectives, the Affordable Housing program would require a multi-year allocation by government(s) as the catalyst to ensure its success and in pursuing complementary private financing to augment program delivery. To further ensure success and sustainability, cost effective construction and delivery mechanisms would be developed or enhanced. Simultaneously, a diversified approach to educate and encourage first time homeowners regarding the benefits and opportunities associated with owning their own home would be developed and delivered.

Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated would take the strategic organizational lead in collaboration with Nunavut's Regional Inuit Associations for the general program development, while the Inuit development corporations in Nunavut would take the lead on program delivery, including the development of the delivery mechanism. Coordination with the territorial and federal governments would be sought to help ensure program success and sustainability.

The National Housing Strategy

On November 22, 2017, the Government of Canada announced a 10-year, \$40 billion National Housing Strategy that will help reduce homelessness and improve the availability and quality of housing for Canadians in need.

Notably, through a \$4.3-billion Canada Community Housing Initiative (CCHI), the federal government will support the provinces and territories as they protect and build a sustainable community-based housing sector. With some exceptions, provinces and territories are required to cost-match all funding under new agreements, including the CCHI.⁶ This level of funding will enable provinces and territories to protect affordability for the total number of households currently living in community housing administered by provinces and territories and supported by former federal programs. It will also support repair and renewal of the existing supply, and expansion of the supply of community-based housing.

⁶ From 2018-2019 to 2027-2028, the Northern Housing Funding of \$300 million (\$24 million to Yukon, \$36 million to Northwest Territories, and \$240 million to Nunavut) is not cost matched.

As part of the Canada Community Housing Initiative, provinces and territories must guarantee that the overall number of households currently supported by community housing in their province or territory will not be reduced. As a result, the Canada Community Housing Initiative is expected to maintain affordability for approximately 330,000 households in community housing nationally.

The National Housing Strategy has also set bold goals including:

1. Reducing chronic homelessness by 50 per cent
2. Removing or reducing housing need for more than 530,000 households
3. Creating four times as many new housing units as built under federal programs from 2005 to 2015
4. Repairing three times as many existing housing units as repaired under federal programs from 2005 to 2015
5. Protecting an additional 385,000 households from losing an affordable place to live

The Government of Canada has committed to working with Indigenous leaders to co-develop distinctions-based housing strategies that will be founded on the principles of self-determination, reconciliation, respect, and cooperation.

As stated in the National Housing Strategy, Canada is working closely with Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and Inuit land claims governments and organizations through the Inuit-Crown Partnership Committee. This collaborative work respects and strengthens the Inuit-Crown relationship and will help achieve the common goal of reducing the housing needs in Inuit Nunangat and developing long-term solutions that reflect Inuit way of life, traditions and culture. The approach being taken through the Inuit-Crown Partnership Committee and this Strategy emphasizes the direct role of Inuit organizations and governments in addressing housing needs in their communities.

Through the National Housing Strategy, Canada is also committing to work with other levels of government and various stakeholders to ensure the effective implementation of the commitments set out in the Strategy. To meet the objective of improved Inuit housing outcomes in line with the rest of Canada, a multi-faceted approach is required. This should include ensuring that the National Housing Strategy and the Inuit Nunangat Housing Strategy complement one another as appropriate. To operationalize this, it will be necessary that all relevant stakeholders commit to an ongoing process to track the progress of related initiatives and ensure their effective implementation.

Canada and Inuit are working together to help facilitate Inuit access to National Housing Strategy investments.

Inuit Nunangat Housing Strategy

Vision

The overall goal of the Inuit Nunangat Housing Strategy is to improve housing outcomes in Inuit Nunangat in line with outcomes for the rest of Canada. It builds on recent, direct federal investments which recognize the need for significant investments in the short to medium term and the direct role of Inuit in managing housing in Inuit communities. Sustaining progress requires solidifying an ongoing direct relationship between Inuit and the federal government for the provision of housing in Inuit Nunangat. This ongoing relationship is key to ensuring that the gains made in the short to medium term can be sustained for the long term, resulting in healthy, productive individuals, families and communities.

The shared objective of improving Inuit housing outcomes is being achieved to a certain extent, through Budget 2016 and 2018 Inuit housing investments. Recognizing that Inuit are best placed to make decisions that affect them, the Government of Canada and Inuit partners want to further strengthen Inuit self-determination and capacity in housing through the actions set out in the following pages.

Improving and sustaining outcomes will require reducing the reliance on social or public housing and increasing affordable alternatives, including affordable private rentals, home ownership and transitional and supportive housing. Sustaining progress will also necessitate improved and ongoing collaboration in the areas of capacity building and innovation and research to ensure Inuit have the necessary tools to develop sustainable and culturally appropriate housing, leading to reduced housing need overall.

Achieving the vision of the Strategy will also require meaningful engagement and ongoing collaborative efforts among all levels of government. This would include enhanced collaboration and partnerships with relevant provincial and territorial governments who have, and will continue to have, important roles and responsibilities for improving Inuit housing outcomes.

Expected Outcomes

The strategy sets out a comprehensive, Inuit-specific approach to achieving the shared vision through a number of key activities that would lead to:

- Recognition of the direct role of Inuit organizations and governments as primary partners in addressing housing needs in Inuit communities
- Direct and sustained federal investments through a specific grant mechanism
- Improved, flexible and, where possible, direct access to programs designed to reduce housing need, and related infrastructure development
- Increasing and improving the quality of housing by reducing overcrowding and the number of dwellings requiring major repairs
- Expansion of housing options in Inuit communities including increasing affordable rental and homeownership, as well as transitional and supportive housing to reduce reliance on social housing and to promote sustainable economic and housing security
- Effective inter-governmental collaboration
- Effective research and innovation, and statistics gathering

To ensure the lasting impact of recent and future Inuit housing investments, Inuit must continue to be directly involved in the delivery of funding and in housing-related decision making in Inuit Nunangat. There is an opportunity to build on Budget 2016 and Budget 2018 direct investments and delivery approaches to develop an ongoing housing funding and delivery model with Inuit organizations directly, an opportunity that can facilitate a more effective, holistic approach to addressing the housing crisis in Inuit Nunangat now and into the future. This approach would recognize the direct self-determining role of Inuit in the management and development of housing in Inuit Nunangat. An Inuit-specific housing funding grant would be key to improving and sustaining housing outcomes in Inuit Nunangat. Overall, working directly with Inuit organizations on the development of housing policies and programs will ensure they are more responsive to Inuit needs.

Increasing affordable housing options in Inuit communities is key to ensuring sustainability of housing in the long term. This will require joint work among all partners to reduce barriers to private homeownership and increase affordable housing alternatives such as affordable private rental and cooperative housing. Increasing supportive and transitional housing options will also be important for those requiring temporary housing alternatives while moving toward more permanent housing.

Expanding the use of innovative housing approaches by Inuit will help ensure that housing is culturally appropriate and sustainable. Effective, collaborative research building on recent best practices will help ensure that housing meets the distinct needs of Inuit. Evidence-based research will enable the measurement and assessment of the goals and objectives of the Inuit Nunangat Housing Strategy and ensure its effective implementation.

It is imperative that the federal government and Inuit organizations and governments work together directly to ensure that federal housing policies and programs are more reflective of and responsive to Inuit needs. Inuit and federal partners will also need to engage with provincial and territorial governments as well as with other partners to ensure the success of the Strategy. This engagement will help identify potential areas for collaboration to assist in the effective implementation of the Inuit Nunangat Housing Strategy given existing inter-relationships and housing programs and policies within each jurisdiction that impact Inuit.

A number of federal as well as provincial/territorial initiatives that are underway or have been recently announced have direct linkages to housing in Inuit Nunangat which, taken together, could help ensure a more holistic approach to improving socioeconomic outcomes and quality of life for Inuit. The success of these initiatives will be directly or indirectly impacted by the success of the Inuit Nunangat Housing Strategy. For example:

- The Government of Canada's commitment to eliminate tuberculosis in Inuit Nunangat by 2030 will only succeed if housing outcomes in Inuit Nunangat are significantly improved
- Canada's recently announced poverty reduction strategy "Opportunity for All" aims to lift 650,000 Canadians out of poverty by 2019. Inuit poverty reduction could help address, to a certain extent, housing affordability, for Inuit families
- Canada's "Reaching Home" homelessness strategy can complement the Inuit Nunangat Housing Strategy and other housing initiatives
- Canada's Budget 2018 new investments of \$161.2 million over five years for the Inuit stream of Indigenous Skills and Employment Training could have an important, positive impact on ensuring that Inuit are employed in housing construction and related fields in Inuit Nunangat.
- The Inuit Early Learning and Child Care Framework, announced in September 2018, with associated investments of up to \$111 million over 10 years, will help ensure that parents wishing to participate in skills development or employment opportunities in the housing sector are not held back due to limited access to child care.

To ensure success of linked initiatives, it will be necessary for the parties to coordinate efforts to the degree possible and leverage progress as appropriate through the implementation of the Inuit Nunangat Housing Strategy.

Inuit Nunangat Housing Strategy Actions

1. Assess the effectiveness of recent investments in housing in Inuit Nunangat

As highlighted earlier, through Canada’s Budget 2016 and 2018, significant investments are being made across Inuit Nunangat to support Inuit housing directly to Makivik Corporation, the Nunatsiavut Government and the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation and indirectly through the Government of Nunavut. No direct investments were available through Budget 2016 and 2018 to Inuit organizations in Nunavut. Inuit have maintained that in order to improve and sustain housing outcomes in Inuit Nunangat, significant short to medium term investments are required. Further, the impact of initiatives aimed at increasing housing options and sustainability over the long term is dependent on short to medium term investments to close the housing gap between Inuit Nunangat and the rest of Canada. In addition, the most effective investments are those that take into account the higher costs of construction and operations and maintenance in Inuit communities.

Recent and current federal investments in housing in Inuit Nunangat will have a significant impact on improved housing outcomes. The \$400 million direct investment over 10 years announced through Budget 2018 is a historic investment that, in many ways, will allow Inuit to effectively plan and implement Inuit-specific housing development in communities. However, challenges such as delayed and inconsistent delivery of funding, support for operations and maintenance funding and the lack of direct funding to Inuit organizations in Nunavut will need to be addressed in order to ensure that investments are as effective as possible and that the goals outlined in the Inuit Nunangat Housing Strategy can be achieved.

With the long-term view of closing the housing gap for Inuit in Inuit Nunangat, the impact of recent direct investments will need to be measured with any complementary investments that may also benefit Inuit, such as any direct or indirect investments through the National Housing Strategy and any provincial or territorial investments. It will also be important to assess the effectiveness of the access to and delivery of funding in Inuit Nunangat in consideration of the key Inuit objective of direct and sustained access to federal housing funding. Long term success is dependent on ensuring that short term investments are sufficient and delivered effectively and appropriately.

Action 1: Review recent and current federal Inuit housing investments to determine remaining resource needs for achieving the shared goal of closing the housing gap between Inuit Nunangat and the rest of Canada. This will include addressing any challenges in the access to and delivery of housing investments, including but not limited to:

- Direct access to federal housing funding throughout all of Inuit Nunangat
- Timely delivery of Inuit housing funding
- Inconsistencies in the delivery of Inuit housing funding
- Operations and maintenance funding

2. Develop a long term plan for direct federal housing investments in Inuit Nunangat

In addition to significant short to medium term investments, there is a need for direct access to long term, multi-year, stable housing investments to ensure that improvements to Inuit Nunangat housing outcomes can be maintained. The parameters of this plan, including the level of funding required, will be informed by recent and current investments such as those through Canada's Budget 2016 and Budget 2018 and identified gaps in funding and in the delivery of housing investments as set out above. Subject to the assessment in Action 1, it is expected that direct funding would continue to be required beyond the 10-year Budget 2018 funding to close any remaining gaps, maintain progress, account for population growth and maintain the self-determination delivery model for Inuit housing.

Longevity, predictability and flexibility of investments through grant funding arrangements will allow increased attention and investment by Inuit governments and organizations toward housing sustainability, cultural appropriateness and diversity of housing options.

Inuit are best positioned to determine how to target funding where needed most, based on distinct needs in the respective regions of Inuit Nunangat. Providing investments directly to Inuit avoids the historical challenges of federal housing investments reaching Inuit communities in a consistent or equitable manner. It also contributes to reducing the reliance on social housing, reducing costs over the long term and keeping related benefits within Inuit communities.

It is important to note that housing development is dependent on a number of other related matters including land development and preparation, transportation, water and sewer, power generation, etc. Direct access by Inuit to programs that support related infrastructure, where possible, or collaboration amongst various responsible partners will lead to efficiencies and better designed and delivered housing programs overall. Direct engagement with Inuit on related programs and policies can help ensure that infrastructure programs, generally, take into account the significant needs in Inuit communities and the significant challenges and barriers to improved Inuit housing outcomes.

Action 2 a): Guided by Action 1, establish a federal Inuit Nunangat Housing Grant mechanism; a long term, sustainable Inuit housing investment based on:

- Direct Inuit access to, and eligibility for, federal housing funding
- Longevity, predictability and flexibility
- Inuit self-determination

Action 2 b) Identify federal programs that support housing-related community infrastructure to develop recommendations for improved access by Inuit, where appropriate, and improved collaboration among responsible authorities.

3. Enhance research, innovation and statistics

To ensure the success of the Inuit Nunangat Housing Strategy, it will be important to work together to further develop sustainable and culturally appropriate housing designs, utilizing existing and future research and innovation programs and initiatives at various levels of government.

Currently, innovative housing designs are available, and in some cases being developed and tested on a relatively small scale. Expanding the development of these and other regionally developed and tested designs will ensure greater sustainability and appropriateness of units constructed in Inuit communities.

In Inuit Nunangat there are limited, yet successful housing programs in different areas such as strategic planning (community-based), housing engineering and construction, homeowner and tenant education, and community-based research. These programs involve researchers, policy-makers and communities. However, they are not always well studied and documented, and public information about them is not always readily available. Ensuring that this knowledge and experience is shared is important to improving and sustaining housing outcomes.

In addition, focussed and strategic research, building on existing data and tailored to Inuit-specific needs will be essential when measuring how current federal investments are achieving desired results.

- Action 3 a): Undertake a regional needs assessment in year one of the implementation of the Strategy, or as soon as practical, to develop a baseline and to better target investments to diverse regional need**
- Action 3 b) Document, evaluate, and disseminate pertinent information about successes and innovations in housing and support knowledge exchange and collaboration between housing administrators and experts.**
- Action 3 c): Develop, fund and implement an Inuit Nunangat Housing Research Plan. The purpose of the plan will be to assist in the implementation of actions 3 a) and 3 b) as well as to measure progress of housing investments in Inuit Nunangat and addressing research gaps.**

4. Reduce overcrowding and reliance on social housing while increasing affordable housing options and improving housing quality

A continuum of housing is crucial to sustainable housing provision, but not all options along the housing continuum are available in all communities, particularly when it comes to transitional and supportive housing, private homes (affordable ownership or rentals) and cooperatives.

In many Inuit Nunangat communities, public housing continues to be the only viable option for Inuit. Among other things, this can be attributed to extremely high costs associated with building and maintaining housing coupled with low income and high poverty rates faced by Inuit. Employer subsidized housing units may also be available but are generally only available to individuals relocating to these communities, not existing residents. In addition, there is a severe lack of transitional and supportive housing, which adds significant challenges for those requiring temporary shelter, including those escaping family violence.

Generally, housing markets are lacking in Inuit Nunangat, especially outside of larger centres. Where private (rental/ownership) markets exist, affordability is a major obstacle. This is particularly the case for Inuit as the average annual income of Inuit in Inuit Nunangat is approximately \$70,000⁷ less than non-Inuit in Inuit Nunangat, who often do not stay for long periods of time. Given the many challenges, developers who might be interested in investing in private housing in Inuit Nunangat perceive the investment as too risky.

In addition to the high costs of home construction and maintenance, home ownership is constrained by difficulties obtaining mortgage loans and affordable home insurance.

According to CMHC⁸, housing market growth may be constrained by remoteness and isolation, sparse population, lack of road access and extreme weather conditions, as well as by limited economic opportunities, unemployment and high housing costs. Increasing homeownership in Inuit Nunangat through reducing barriers and creating innovative approaches, is imperative to the sustainability of housing as well as the creation of wealth for Inuit.

To facilitate the expansion of housing options in Inuit Nunangat, all partners will need to work together, including through engagement with provinces and territories, to address the challenges and barriers to increasing market housing and other alternatives, such as supportive and transitional housing. Recent efforts in various regions, including challenges and successes, can be shared and studied to inform efforts in other regions.

⁷ Statistics Canada, 2016 Census

⁸ Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, November 2013. *Survey of Issues and Challenges to Providing Market Housing Finance in the Territories.*

Action 4 a): Work in partnership to understand gaps and share best practices in housing programs and initiatives that support alternative housing options, the reduction of barriers to increasing alternative housing options and improving affordability, including energy efficiency.

Action 4 b): Explore and support the piloting of new or existing innovative solutions to increasing affordable alternative housing options and improving energy efficiency, and ensure programs aimed at innovative housing solutions are directly accessible by Inuit, including:

- Identify and invest in innovative options to promote market alternatives to social housing
- Identify and invest in innovative and culturally appropriate housing designs to improve energy efficiency and climate change adaptability

Action 4 c): Continue to invest in new housing construction and undertake repairs and renovation, where required.

5. Enhancing capacity

Inuit housing responsibility and capacity have grown significantly in recent decades. Although there are differences among the regions in terms of what that management responsibility looks like today, each region has housing management and construction capacity as well as partnerships with various levels of government. As Inuit take on more direct responsibility for management of various programs, this capacity will evolve and grow. It will be important to ensure that, where capacity gaps exist, programs aimed at enhancing Inuit housing development and management capacity are responsive to Inuit-specific needs. In addition to building institutional and organizational capacity, eliminating the housing gap in Inuit Nunangat will also require building local skills and trade certification and capacity so that Inuit are better supported and equipped to participate in construction, and operations and maintenance projects.

Federally, there are few housing capacity development programs accessible to Inuit as well as general capacity development programs linked to labour market development. It is imperative to ensure that support for capacity development, both direct and indirect, is as accessible and effective as possible and responsive to the unique challenges and opportunities in Inuit communities.

Action 5 a): Develop, undertake and fund a labour force and skills needs assessment drawing on existing data through labour-related initiatives.

Action 5 b): Identify gaps and improve the awareness, understanding and effectiveness of capacity and skills development initiatives at the federal and provincial/territorial levels through targeted recommendations.

6. Enhance intergovernmental collaboration

As set out in the Inuit Nunangat Housing Strategy, Inuit and federal stakeholders should engage with provincial and territorial governments as well as other partners to identify areas for increased collaboration to help ensure the success of the Strategy.

The implementation of the Inuit Nunangat Housing Strategy will not be effective and will not achieve maximum benefit without engagement with and potential participation of provincial and territorial governments. Provinces and territories have and will continue to have an important role to play in the development and management of housing in Inuit Nunangat.

For their part, provincial and territorial governments manage various housing programs and policies that impact housing in Inuit communities, and in some jurisdictions, contribute significantly to operations and maintenance costs. Engaging with provinces and territories is important to ensure that these programs are aligned as much as practical with federal and Inuit programs and initiatives to ensure maximum efficiency and effectiveness.

Action 6: Building on existing partnerships and to the extent practical, engage provincial and territorial governments in the implementation of the Inuit Nunangat Housing Strategy to identify increased opportunities for collaboration and to discuss how best to work together to maximize partnerships and the impact of programming for Inuit communities.

Inuit Nunangat Housing Strategy Implementation and Evaluation

This Strategy sets out a common vision and direction to improve housing on a long-term and enduring basis in Inuit Nunangat. In order to actualize this vision and deliver results for Inuit, a detailed implementation plan is required.

Unless otherwise agreed, the implementation plan for the Inuit Nunangat Housing Strategy will be co-developed and overseen by the Inuit-Crown Partnership Committee through its mandate to report on progress of the various priority areas, including housing.

As part of the implementation of the Strategy, regional strategies will be elaborated to clarify Inuit specific plans for addressing housing needs, including the integration of innovative approaches, where possible. Regional plans will be informed by current initiatives as well as regional needs assessments.

The joint implementation plan will be informed by engagement with provincial and territorial governments, as well as more comprehensive gender-based-plus analysis to be conducted in collaboration with Pauktutit Inuit Women of Canada.

The parties will address, as appropriate, any actions not identified in the Inuit Nunangat Housing Strategy that are deemed necessary by the parties to support the achievement of the objectives of the Strategy.

To directly measure and evaluate progress, the parties agree to report on progress and results including common outcomes, key indicators, targets and other data, through the commitment on research and innovation that will be used as baseline statistics. Progress based on these indicators will be measured on a regular basis, the frequency of which will be determined by the parties. This measurement and evaluation will include gender-based considerations.

Annex 1

The Case for Improved Housing Outcomes

There is a direct correlation between investments in affordable housing and increased economic activity. In addition to the direct benefits of well-paying jobs, improved purchasing power enables additional local spending and supports other businesses through economic spinoffs (e.g., taxes collected, infrastructure spending, administration, and additional demand for utilities and services).

Housing construction, maintenance and management is a significant employer in Inuit Nunangat's economy, providing much-needed income to the Inuit labour force and opportunities for improving worker knowledge and skills. It further provides a foundation that proves that increased investment in affordable housing will create significant economic activity for the local labour force as well as position businesses to capitalize on resulting economic activity. In addition, the procurement of local labour and services resulting from housing projects stimulates the local and regional economies by recycling invested dollars.

The Canadian Home Builders Association estimated 35 homes constructed in Nunavut generated 93 jobs with a wage value of \$6 million on an investment of \$16 million. If broken down on an individual home estimate; a capital investment of \$457,100 for an average home generates \$171,400 in wages (37.5 per cent of capital investment) or 2.7 jobs per home (\$63,480/job). As such, \$1 million in capital investment generates \$375,000 in wages or 5.9 jobs at \$63,600/job. While many of these jobs are seasonal in nature, they are critical to providing much-needed income for Inuit families. The capital and operational investment in local housing also helps maintain local consumer demand for goods and services and employment of local workers who will spend most of their wages locally. Construction activity improves quality of life through employment, training, better homes, social cohesion in the community and household purchasing power.

Employment rates in Inuit Nunangat are low, ranging from 39 per cent in Nunatsiavut to 54 per cent in Nunavut and Nunavik. The current labour force will expand based on overall annual population growth of two percent and as the large population under the age of 15 years enters the workforce. Although the housing construction sector can provide well-paying employment opportunities, investment in education and skills development will be critical. This will enable local communities to capitalize on economic opportunities generated through the housing industry and create longer-term capacity to maintain and manage current and future housing. Without additional investment in training and education, there will likely be a shortage of local labour to meet the growing employment needs of the construction sector and a larger percentage of investments will leave the communities.

Direct investments to Inuit ensure that benefits, including employment and business opportunities, are going directly to Inuit. Longer-term investments, such as those announced in Canada's Budget 2018, will allow educational and employment planning and training that responds directly to the real and anticipated labour needs. This is a significant opportunity for improving employment outcomes in Inuit Nunangat.

“Housing is not only critical for meeting children’s basic needs; it can be a platform for improving education outcomes. Further, devoting more resources to housing now that improve educational outcomes could lead to improved employment outcomes, thereby saving money and boosting national productivity.”

Housing as a Platform for Improving Education Outcomes among Low-Income Children, Urban Institute, May 2012

Annex 2

Current Housing Delivery in Inuit Nunangat

Inuvialuit Settlement Region

In the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation is responsible for public housing in the territory and offers programs to support homeownership. Funding for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation comes from the Government of the Northwest Territories and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. The Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (IRC) is receiving housing funding from Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs (CIRNA) through Canada's Budgets 2016 and 2018. The IRC has worked with the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation on the delivery of Inuvialuit housing investments. The IRC is continuing to discuss and implement partnership opportunities with the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation and continues to consider all means and arrangements to maximize these investments for residents of the Inuvialuit Settlement Region.

Nunavut

In Nunavut, the Nunavut Housing Corporation is responsible for public housing in the territory and offers programs to support homeownership and repair. Funding for the Nunavut Housing Corporation comes from the Government of Nunavut and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Inuit organizations in Nunavut have expressed the need for direct funding from the federal government and direct access to housing-related programs. This would complement the Government of Nunavut's housing programs given the critical needs in the territory.

Nunavik

In Nunavik, through the Nunavik Housing Agreement, Makivik Corporation is directly responsible, through a non-profit model, for the construction of social housing units. Upon construction, the units are turned over to the Kativik Municipal Housing Bureau (KMHB), which manages the units. The Nunavik Housing Agreement is a tripartite agreement among the Inuit of Nunavik, Canada and Quebec. Quebec covers operations and maintenance costs associated with housing construction under this agreement. Canada is providing funding under this agreement to Makivik Corporation in addition to the funding announced under Budgets 2016 and 2018 for Inuit housing construction. The KMHB also delivers a variety of housing programs to the residents of Nunavik for homeownership, etc. Through its Plan Nord, Quebec contributed \$79 million to construct 300 social housing units over four years in 2012. Quebec's Budget 2018 committed \$39 million for housing and warehouses in Nunavik: \$22.1 million to replace three aging KMHB warehouses, \$15.9 million to help finance the construction of 45 private units and \$1 million toward a pilot project that would allow renters to buy the home they live in.

Nunatsiavut

In Nunatsiavut, the Torngat Regional Housing Association is supported by the Nunatsiavut Government, in part through limited self-government funding, to provide subsidised housing through a rent-to-own model in Nunatsiavut communities. The Nunatsiavut Government also funds programs, at times in partnership with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, to assist homeowners with home repairs or retrofit. In addition, the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation manages a number of social housing rental units in Nunatsiavut communities. The Nunatsiavut Government is receiving funding through Canada's Budgets 2016 and 2018, which is being used to build new and innovative housing based on Inuit-identified needs in the communities. Nunatsiavut Government maintains and operates these units and allocates the units to vulnerable sectors, such as elders, youth and families whose children might come into care due to lack of adequate housing.

Annex 3

Housing Tables

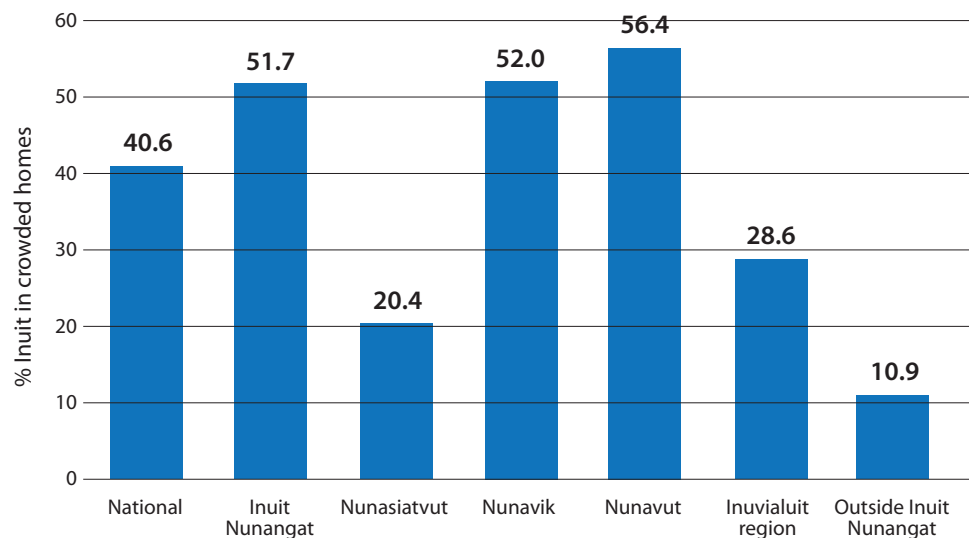
Regional Housing Needs

This generally sets out the housing needs in each of the four regions of Inuit Nunangat and the estimated cost to eliminate the overcrowding gap in each region, as at the end of 2017. It does not factor in population growth or other considerations that would contribute to increased need.

	Units Required	Cost per Square Foot ⁹	Total \$Millions ¹⁰
Nunatsiavut	196 ¹¹	\$480.00 ¹²	\$88.2
Nunavik	813	\$353.70	\$285
Nunavut ¹³	3,500	\$485.00	\$1,750 ¹⁴
Inuvialuit	144 ¹⁵	\$525.59	\$70.4

Percentage of Inuit living in overcrowded homes

(Statistics Canada, Census 2016)



9 Based on current construction costs in the respective regions

10 Estimated, to be revised via regional needs assessments

11 Nunatsiavut Housing Needs Assessment, 2012

12 Data based on information provided by Inuit regions. Includes geotechnical and engineering design

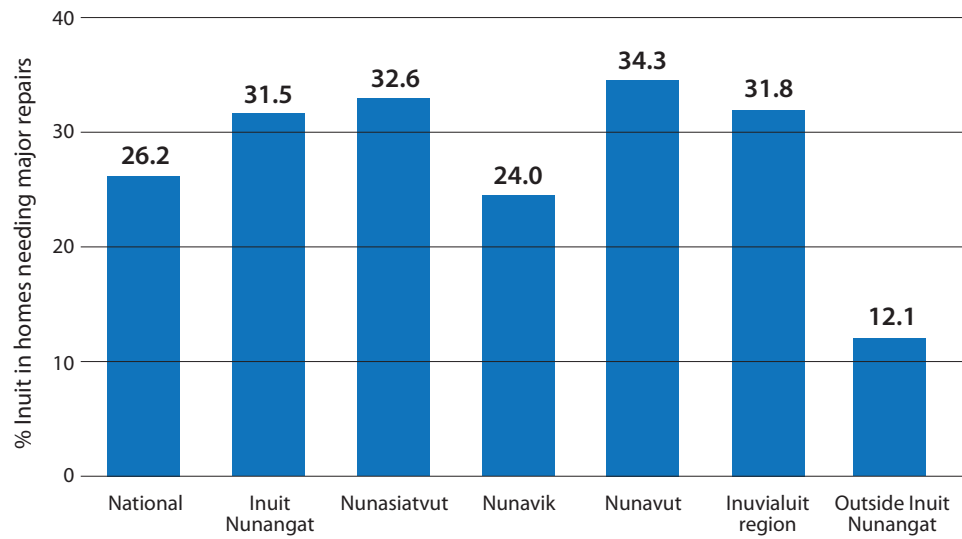
13 Represents the Nunavut Housing Corporation costs associated with the construction of public housing

14 Based on estimate of \$500,000 per unit

15 Based on housing waiting list

Percentage of Inuit living in homes needing major repairs

(Statistics Canada, Census 2016)



Annex 4

Barriers to Improved Housing Provision in Inuit Nunangat¹⁶



¹⁶ Barriers to Sustainable Housing Delivery in Canada's Four Inuit Regions (International Institute for Sustainable Development for ITK)



Canada