



Indigenous and  
Northern Affairs Canada

Affaires autochtones  
et du Nord Canada

## ***Final Report***

# ***Evaluation of the Emergency Management Assistance Program***

***Project Number: 1570-7/16122***

March 2017

Evaluation, Performance  
Measurement,  
and Review Branch  
Audit and Evaluation Sector



**Canada**

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## ***List of Acronyms***

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EMAP – Emergency Management Assistance Program

EPMRB – Evaluation, Performance Measurement and Review Branch

INAC – Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada

# EVALUATION OF THE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

An evaluation of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada's (INAC) Emergency Management Assistance Program (EMAP) was conducted in 2016-17 by the Department's Evaluation, Performance Measurement, and Review Branch. The purpose of the evaluation is to provide a credible, reliable, and timely evidence-based assessment of the program. The evaluation found that while there have been significant accomplishments within the program over the last five years, some adjustments could be considered to enhance the Department's capacity to address the increasing emergency management needs on-reserve.

## THE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

### PROJECT PROFILE

EMAP promotes the protection of the health and safety of on-reserve First Nations residents as well as their lands and critical infrastructure. It promotes a four pillar approach to emergency management including: mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. Through its role as the primary federal funder of emergency management on-reserve, EMAP supports the efforts of First Nations, provinces and territories, other federal departments, and emergency management organizations.

### EVALUATION SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

The evaluation focused on the coordination of roles and responsibility among different emergency management stakeholders and partners, the effectiveness of the program's funding structure, and the achievement of expected outcomes. Evaluation results are based on information collected through document and literature review, administrative and financial data analysis, key informant interviews, site visits, and a case study.

## The Four Pillars of Emergency Management

- **Mitigation** - Actions taken to eliminate or reduce the impact of emergencies in order to protect lives, property, the environment, and reduce economic disruption.
- **Preparedness** - Actions taken to be ready to respond to an emergency and manage its consequences through measures taken prior to an event.
- **Response** - Actions taken during or immediately before or after an emergency to manage its consequences.
- **Recovery** - Actions taken to repair or restore conditions to an acceptable level through measures taken after an emergency.

**KEY  
FINDINGS**

### Continued Need for EMAP

There is a continued need for a coordinated federal approach in order to effectively address emergencies on-reserve through an INAC mandated emergency management on-reserve program.

### Coordination of Roles and Responsibilities

Within INAC, there is a need to further improve collaboration and coordination between INAC's EMAP and capital portfolios in order to better harmonize efforts between structural mitigation (which may include facilities and assets) and non-structural mitigation (which may include policies, procedures or guidelines).

Between INAC, provincial and territorial governments, and Indigenous communities, the establishment of a formal emergency management service agreement along with the working relationships that accompany them, is key to the successful delivery of emergency management on-reserve. In provinces and territories where no service agreement exists, alternative arrangements, often involving third-party emergency service organizations, help to ensure effective provision of emergency management services to First Nations.

While service agreements are being signed between INAC and the provincial or territorial government, there is recognition that First Nations need to be engaged on the development and implementation of these agreements.

### Effectiveness of Funding Structure

Although financial contribution to emergency management is made through an initial allocation, INAC has had to make annual funding requests to the Treasury Board Secretariat's Management Reserve in order to fully address the costs associated with emergency management on-reserve. This funding process, along with the Department's cash management approach and program reallocation strategy, poses a challenge for an effective and efficient funding process. The Department's process for reimbursing eligible emergency response and recovery costs could be made more efficient. Program participants and partners do not appear sufficiently informed on funding processes and timelines. These challenges have an impact on the overall program performance and its perception by the emergency management community.

### Achievement of Expected Outcomes

EMAP has been able to address response and recovery activities despite the complexity and challenges of these two pillars. The Department's focus on mitigation and preparedness has been limited although there has been a noticeable increase in these areas. Evaluation evidence suggests that many First Nations are not sufficiently prepared for an emergency event and are not adequately engaged in mitigation and preparedness activities.

## EVALUATION RECOMMENDATIONS

**1.** Continue to ensure that the establishment of formal emergency management service agreements, or ongoing updating or adjustment to agreements be done in collaboration and with input from First Nation representative organizations.

**2.** Continue to review and revise reimbursement procedures for eligible expenses to ensure they meet department standards and the needs of First Nations, provinces and territories as well as other service providers.

**3.** Increase support to First Nations risk reduction efforts and resilience under the mitigation and preparedness pillars in accordance with the Government of Canada's all-hazards, four-pillar approach to emergency management.

# ***Management Response and Action Plan***

**Project Title:** Evaluation of the Emergency Management Assistance Program

**Project #:** 1570-7/16122

<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsible Manager (Title / Sector)</b>	<b>Planned Start and Completion Dates</b>
<p>1. Continue to ensure that the establishment of formal emergency management service agreements, or ongoing updating or adjustment to agreements, be done in collaboration and with input from First Nation representative organizations.</p>	We concur.	<p>Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Regional Operations</p>	Start Date: immediate
	<p>As part of the Government of Canada's commitment for a renewed nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous Peoples, INAC is pursuing the negotiations of formal emergency management service agreements in collaboration and with input from First Nations stakeholders.</p>		<p>Completion Date:  Completed</p>
<p>2. Continue to review and revise reimbursement procedures for eligible expenses to ensure they meet departmental standards and the needs of First Nations, provinces and territories as well as other service providers.</p>	We concur.	<p>Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Regional Operations</p>	Start Date: in progress
	<p>A draft Program Control Framework is being finalized which will describe a risk-based financial approach to processing funding requests and claims approval that will help increase the Department's timeliness in providing needed resources to ensure emergency management services are provided without any undue delays.</p>		<p>Completion:  Completed</p>
<p>3. Increase support to First Nations risk reduction efforts and resilience under the mitigation and preparedness pillars in accordance with the Government of Canada's all-hazards, four-pillar approach to emergency management.</p>	We concur.	<p>Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Regional Operations</p>	Start Date: Immediate
	<p>The EMAP program will further intensify the proactive nature of the proposal solicitation process for its non-structural mitigation and preparedness funding stream to ensure that communities of greatest need have access to program funding and in doing so, will consider alternative approaches that may contribute to disaster risk reduction in First Nations communities.</p>		<p>Completion:  Completed</p>

**I recommend this Management Response and Action Plan for approval by the Evaluation, Performance Measurement and Review Committee**

*Original signed by:*

**Shannon Townsend  
A/Director, Evaluation, Performance Measurement and Review Branch**

**I approve the above Management Response and Action Plan**

*Original signed by:*

**Lynda Clairmont  
Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Regional Operations**

# 1. Introduction

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## 1.1 Overview

This document represents the final report for the evaluation of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada's (INAC) Emergency Management Assistance Program (EMAP), undertaken by the Department's Evaluation, Performance Measurement, and Review Branch (EPMRB). The purpose of the evaluation is to provide a credible and evidence-based assessment of the EMAP, with a specific focus on the EMAP's relevance and performance.

The evaluation was conducted pursuant to Treasury Board Secretariat's *Policy on Results*. Further, given that the EMAP provides grants and contributions funding through Funding Authority 330, Contributions for Emergency Management Assistance for Activities on-Reserve, it was conducted in accordance with Section 42.1 (1) of the *Financial Administration Act*, which requires that an evaluation of the relevance and effectiveness of all ongoing programs of grants and contributions be conducted every five years. Finally, the information contained in this report is meant to support INAC in responding to its key mandate commitments as well as the Results Agenda outlined by the federal government.

## 1.2 Report Structure

The report includes seven sections: Section 1 introduces the Emergency Management Assistance Program; Section 2 outlines the evaluation methodology; Section 3 to 6 detail evaluation findings; and Section 7 provides a summary of the main conclusions and recommendations arising from the evaluation.

## 1.3 Program Profile

### 1.3.1 Background and Description

EMAP supports First Nations to ensure they have access to comparable emergency assistance services available to other residents in their respective provincial or territorial jurisdiction. EMAP promotes a four pillar approach to emergency management including: prevention/mitigation; preparedness; response and recovery. Through its role as the primary federal funder of emergency management on-reserve, EMAP supports the efforts of First Nations, provinces and territories, other federal departments, and emergency management organizations in ensuring First Nations have access to emergency management services.

The main roles and responsibilities of INAC in First Nations emergency management are threefold:

- act as a funding and oversight mechanism for the reimbursement of eligible, on-reserve, emergency management costs;
- provide timely and efficient situational awareness products such as notifications and weekly summaries to senior officials within INAC and the emergency management community; and,
- develop policies to support on-reserve emergency management.

In November 2013, the Government of Canada announced a new approach to address all four pillars of emergency management for First Nations on-reserve. In support of this new approach, INAC has been pursuing formal, comprehensive service agreements with provinces and territories and has been implementing a single federal funding window for emergency management on-reserve.

### ***1.3.2 Objectives and Expected Outcomes***

EMAP is linked to INAC's Infrastructure and Capacity Program. The Infrastructure and Capacity Program contributes to The Land and Economy Strategic Outcome by supporting First Nations communities to have a base of infrastructure that protects their health and safety, and enables their engagement in the economy. The Strategic Outcome for the Land and the Economy is to enable the "full participation of First Nations, Métis, Non-Status Indians and Inuit individuals and communities in the economy." EMAP feeds into these higher level expected results.

The overall purpose of EMAP is to protect lives and maintain resilient, sustainable on-reserve First Nations communities and infrastructure through effective emergency management. As reflected in the EMAP Performance Measurement Strategy, the expected results of EMAP are to support First Nations in their efforts to mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies. EMAP's activities in support of the expected results are defined in the four pillars of emergency management:

- ***Prevention/Mitigation*** activities aim to identify possible issues and emergencies, recognize vulnerabilities, and take proactive measures to prevent or reduce the consequences of emergencies. EMAP mitigation activities are centered on funding non-structural mitigation projects (includes planning, research, and social measures such as risk assessment, hazard mapping, land-use planning and regulation, environmental studies, etc.) and identifying and communicating risks to First Nations.
- ***Preparedness*** activities are designed to encourage all-hazard planning for response recovery during emergencies as well as training and exercising of emergency management plans. EMAP also negotiates emergency management service agreements, supporting First Nations' emergency management at the community level and engaging stakeholders such as the Assembly of First Nations and provinces and territories, among others.
- ***Response*** activities include agency response, resource coordination, organizational structure, protection and warning systems, and communications, all of which are designed to help manage and minimize the short-term negative impacts of an emergency. EMAP also monitors and report on emergency events and, in certain regions, coordinates emergency management.
- ***Recovery*** activities aim to restore conditions to an acceptable level that existed prior to an emergency. As with response, recovery functions are a fundamental component of the program. EMAP's primary function for recovery is to support First Nations in the identification of damage and the development of eligible recovery requests.

### 1.3.3 Program Governance (Management), Key Stakeholders and Recipients

The EMAP is managed by INAC's Emergency Management Directorate, Sector Operations Branch, Regional Operations. At the regional level, each region has at least one designated Emergency Management Coordinator.

The INAC emergency management governance structure relies on coordination at the regional and Headquarters levels between INAC, First Nations, provincial and territorial emergency management organizations, third party service providers, and other federal government departments as required.

### 1.3.4 Program Resources

The federal government provides ongoing A-base funding to EMAP, including transfer payments that are specifically assigned to wildfire management services (formerly referred to as forest fire suppression). The Department has, in the past, reallocated existing resources assigned to other programs (such as infrastructure projects) for any additional financial resources needed to support its activities. This approach was not sustainable because of the detrimental impact on other critical programs, and therefore, the Department has been seeking supplemental funds from the Treasury Board Secretariat's Management Reserve on an annual basis for over a decade now. Table 1 presents EMAP expenditures for 2012-13 to 2015-16, as well as main estimates for 2016-17.

**Table 1: EMAP Expenditures and Resources (\$000)**

Authority	2012-13		2013-14		2014-15		2015-16		2016-17
	Funding	Actual	Funding	Actual	Funding	Actual	Funding	Actual	Funding
Contribution	56,230	56,307	71,847	77,129	104,755	105,299	111,211	111,982	64,978
Enhanced Benefit Program	380	317	297	326	297	306	322	279	255
Operation and Maintenance	311	186	385	223	469	301	394	431	395
Salary	1,903	2,044	1,488	2,038	1,488	1,984	1,611	1,836	1,530
<b>Total:</b>	<b>58,826</b>	<b>58,855</b>	<b>74,019</b>	<b>79,718</b>	<b>107,011</b>	<b>107,891</b>	<b>113,540</b>	<b>114,529</b>	<b>67,158</b>

**Funding Authority: Contributions for emergency management assistance for activities on-reserve (Authority #330)**

## **2. Evaluation Methodology**

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### **2.1 Evaluation Scope and Timing**

The evaluation examined activities undertaken between 2012-2013 and 2016-2017. *Terms of Reference* were approved by INAC's Performance Measurement, Evaluation and Review Committee in June 2016. Fieldwork was conducted between June 2016 and January 2017.

### **2.2 Evaluation Issues and Questions**

As outlined in the *Terms of Reference*, the evaluation focused on the following key issues. These issues are intended to address the relevance and performance of EMAP:

- Is there a continued need for the EMAP?
- Are the roles and responsibilities associated with emergency management on-reserve clearly identified and understood?
- Does the current EMAP funding structure contribute to efficient program delivery?
- To what extent is EMAP achieving its expected outcomes?

### **2.3 Evaluation Methodology and Data Collection Methods**

The evaluation findings and conclusions are based on the analysis of information gathered from literature and media reviews, document, data and file reviews, key informant interviews, site visits, and a focused research study. A total of 24 federal key informants were interviewed representing INAC Headquarters (n=nine), INAC regional offices (n=10) and other federal departments with a role in on-reserve emergency management (n=five). In addition, there were another 31 key informants included from field sites external to the federal government, including municipal emergency management organizations, first responders such as the Red Cross and other Indigenous organizations.

A total of three site visits were conducted in British Columbia, Alberta, and the Atlantic region. The sites were selected in close collaboration with INAC's Emergency Management Directorate and the selection reflects diverse emergency experiences and various status levels of the negotiation of emergency management service agreements. At each site, the evaluation team interviewed representatives from provincial governments, provincial emergency management organizations, selected First Nations, and First Nation representative groups. A fourth proposed site visit in northern Ontario was treated as independent focussed research due to timing and travel limitations. It focuses on the unique experience of the community of Kashechewan in dealing with repeated floods and long-term evacuees.

## **2.4 Considerations and Limitations**

A departmental audit of the EMAP was conducted in 2016, concurrent with this evaluation. Both the audit and evaluation involved fieldwork conducted at a time when the emergency management community, at both the national and the regional levels, were faced with a high level of emergency situations across the country. The audit and evaluation teams collaborated to minimize impact on the program. In light of evaluation timelines and the inability to interview key partners during ongoing and new emergency events, fieldwork in some locations was limited. To mitigate this, the evaluation team ensured advanced consultation with INAC officials to identify and engage potential respondents.

This evaluation gathered information on, but did not specifically visit certain hard-to-reach communities in Manitoba, Ontario and Alberta. This was because of the concerns and logistics involved in travelling to areas that had recently undergone floods (as in Manitoba and Ontario) or evacuations due to fire (as in Alberta).

## 3. Evaluation Findings - Relevance

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This section provides an overview of Canada's emergency management system and examines the Government of Canada's role with respect to emergency management on-reserve.

***Key Finding 1: There is a continued need for INAC to support on-reserve First Nations in their effort to mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies through effective emergency management.***

### 3.1 Canada's Integrated Emergency Management System

In 2004, Canada issued its *National Security Policy*. It is a strategic framework and action plan designed to ensure that Canada is prepared for, and can respond to, current and future threats and hazards.<sup>1</sup> The policy requires that federal entities work together in a coordinated manner while being fully connected to key partners, including: provinces and territories, communities, first line responders, the private sector and Canadians.<sup>2</sup>

The *Emergency Management Act* came into effect in August 2007. It requires the Minister of Public Safety to be responsible for “exercising leadership relating to emergency management in Canada by coordinating, among government institutions and in cooperation with the provinces, territories and other entities, emergency management activities.” It also defines emergency management to include the prevention and mitigation of, preparedness for, response to and recovery from emergencies.<sup>3</sup>

Using a risk-based approach, Public Safety Canada's emergency management program addresses all emergency events stemming from natural, human-induced or technical causes. This is done through leading and coordinating emergency management across all federal departments and agencies. When emergencies escalate, the involvement of other federal departments may be required. Section 6 of the *Emergency Management Act* states, “the emergency management responsibilities of each minister accountable to Parliament for a government institution are to identify the risks that are within or related to his or her area of responsibility” and to prepare, maintain, test, implement and exercise emergency management plans in respect of those risks.<sup>4</sup>

### 3.2 All-Hazards Emergency Management Approach

Under the leadership of Public Safety Canada, the federal provincial and territorial ministers responsible for emergency management jointly developed an Emergency Management Framework for Canada. The Framework outlines Canada's approach to emergency management, which is characterized as a comprehensive all-hazards approach in every jurisdiction in Canada.

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<sup>1</sup> Public Safety Canada. <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/ntnl-scrnt/scrng-en.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> Government of Canada. (2004). Securing an Open Society: Canada's National Security Policy. <http://publications.gc.ca/collections/Collection/CP22-77-2004E.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Government of Canada. (2007). *Emergency Management Act*. <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/PDF/E-4.56.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

The all-hazards approach addresses vulnerabilities exposed by both natural and human-induced hazards. It recognizes that the actions required to mitigate the effects of emergencies have similarities that, irrespective of the nature of the event, allow for the optimization of scarce planning, response and support resources.<sup>5</sup> It increases efficiency by recognizing and integrating common emergency management elements across all hazard types and supplementing these common elements with hazard specific sub-components as required.<sup>6</sup>

All-hazards does not literally mean preparing to address any and all potential hazards identified. Rather, it emphasizes the leveraging of synergies common across hazards and maintaining a streamlined and robust emergency management system. By assessing the risks associated with all hazards in an integrated way, efforts may be broadly effective in reducing the vulnerability of people, property, the environment and the economy.<sup>7</sup>

### **3.3 INAC's Emergency Management Responsibilities**

INAC has accepted the responsibility for providing emergency management support to on-reserve First Nations communities. In 2011, the Deputy Minister of INAC approved the Department's National Emergency Management Plan.<sup>8</sup> The Plan provides a national framework for the roles and responsibilities of emergency management associated with mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery activities in First Nations communities across Canada.

In November 2013, the Government of Canada announced a new approach to emergency management on-reserve. The approach includes a new single-window for First Nations to secure funding for emergency costs, new A-base funding for response and recovery activities, as well as funding to facilitate negotiation of new or renewed service agreements with provinces and territories and support emergency preparedness activities.<sup>9</sup> On April 1, 2014, INAC assumed responsibility for costs for on-reserve emergency events, which previously may have been eligible for reimbursement under Public Safety Canada's Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements. This single window provides First Nations, provinces and territories with improved access to emergency funding when needed.

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<sup>5</sup> Public Safety Canada. (2009). Federal Policy for Emergency Management.

<https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/plc-mrgnc-mngmnt/plc-mrgnc-mngmnt-eng.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Public Safety Canada. (2011). An Emergency Management Framework for Canada. Second Edition, p.14.

<https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/mrgnc-mngmnt-frmwk/index-eng.aspx>

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> INAC. (2011). National Emergency Management Plan. <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1324572607784/1324572653216>

<sup>9</sup> INAC. (2013) Backgrounder – Emergency Management Assistance Program.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2013/11/backgrounder-emergency-management-assistance-program-emap.html?=&wbdisable=true>

### **3.4 Continued Need for EMAP**

In general, there is an anticipated future demand for EMAP. Today, an emergency can escalate rapidly both in scope and in severity. It can have a greater impact than in the past due to the growing complexity and sophistication of the infrastructures, which support First Nation communities. Global environmental trends, including climate change, have also increased the risks of disasters. As an increasing number of emergencies will be beyond the capacities of individuals, local or provincial authorities alone to address a federal response is required in order to address large-scale emergencies effectively and reduce the potential loss of life and property damage. In addition, disasters are currently disproportionately affecting First Nations communities due to factors such as isolation and geographic location, lack of resources and capacity, etc. Therefore, having an INAC mandated program specific for First Nations communities is appropriate and needed given recent emergency experiences.

## 4. Evaluation Findings – Coordination of Emergency Management Roles and Responsibilities

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Emergency management on-reserve involves a number of partners, stakeholders and agents, all of whom must work together to accomplish their respective tasks to support the overall objectives of emergency management. This section examines whether the different roles and responsibilities of the relevant partners and stakeholders are well coordinated in the context of emergency management on-reserve.

### 4.1 Coordination within INAC

***Key Finding 2: There is a need to further improve collaboration and coordination between INAC's EMAP and the Capital infrastructure programs to better harmonize efforts between structural and non-structural mitigation.***

INAC's Emergency Management Directorate, within the Regional Operations Sector, manages all of the Department's emergency management funding with the exception of the structural mitigation component. The structural mitigation component is delivered through INAC's Capital Facilities and Maintenance Program, which is jointly managed by the Community Infrastructure Branch, the Regional Infrastructure Delivery Branch and the regions. Structural Mitigation and non-structural mitigation are the two components of emergency management mitigation. Structural mitigation includes measures to strengthen infrastructure such as building floodways and dikes, while non-structural mitigation includes planning, research, and policy tools such as risk assessment, hazard mapping, land-use planning and regulation, environmental studies, etc.<sup>10</sup>

From an operational perspective, it is appropriate for structural mitigation activities to be undertaken under the Department's Capital authority. The Capital Facilities and Maintenance Program supports community infrastructure for First Nations on a much broader agenda, which also includes other priorities such as housing, education, water and wastewater systems, roads and bridges, etc. INAC officials interviewed indicated that a good working relationship exists between emergency management staff and capital staff at both national and regional levels. It was mentioned that the staff from the capital team were usually engaged at an early stage in providing support to emergency management activities that require infrastructure components, in particular for the recovery phase of emergency events when damaged infrastructure is repaired or rebuilt.

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<sup>10</sup> INAC. (2016). Retrieved on February 10, 2017 from <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1386012167936/1386012273685>

However, a functional division between structural and non-structural mitigation is seen by some key informants as an impediment to an all-hazards approach. Some mentioned receiving conflicting messages from the two teams and having to respond to different requirements, with the capital team focusing on infrastructure investment with a long term planning horizon and EMAP focusing on temporary emergency management activities. Some key informants suggested that better communication and collaboration are needed between the Emergency Management Directorate and the Community Infrastructure Branch.

## 4.2 Federal and Provincial/Territorial Coordination

***Key Finding 3: Having a formal emergency management services agreement in place is fundamental to emergency management on-reserve. In provinces and territories where no service agreement has been established, alternative arrangements have been made to ensure effective provision of emergency management services to First Nations.***

Provinces and territories are key partners to develop and sustain a robust emergency management structure that can tackle both localised and large-scale emergency events. Provinces and territories govern their respective emergency management organizations and coordinate response activities, conduct planning and research, provide training and administer and deliver the disaster financial assistance programs in their jurisdiction.<sup>11</sup> INAC provides assistance and support to the provinces to manage emergencies that have the potential to threaten the health and safety of First Nations communities and individuals. INAC enters into collaborative service agreements with provincial governments to provide First Nations communities with access to comparable emergency assistance services available to other residents in their respective province. Through these agreements, INAC is able to cover eligible costs related to emergency assistance in First Nations communities provided by the provincial government emergency infrastructure.

The territorial governments are funded via their Territorial Formula Financing, managed by Finance Canada, as most communities are not reserves or lands set aside so no reimbursements are necessarily triggered via INAC or Public Safety Canada. Under EMAP, the Department covers the two reserves in the Northwest Territories, namely Salt River and K'atloodchee, and lands set aside in the Yukon. According to INAC's National Emergency Management Plan, the Department collaborates with territorial emergency management organizations and other government departments to manage emergencies that have the potential to affect communities, lands, waters and the environment generally.<sup>12</sup>

There are substantive variations in how INAC operates from region to region depending on whether there is, or is not, a formal emergency management service agreement in place between INAC and the province or territory. The scope and scale of provincial and territorial emergency management services also vary. The service agreements are expected to streamline federal funding mechanisms, improve coordination between service providers and governments, and enhance emergency management for First Nations on reserves. The negotiation and development of the service agreements are at various stages. Four jurisdictions (Alberta, Prince Edward Island, Northwest Territories and the Yukon) have signed formal emergency management service

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<sup>11</sup> Draft Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada On-reserve Emergency Management Framework.

<sup>12</sup> INAC. (2011). National Emergency Management Plan. Retrieved on January 20, 2017 from <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1324572607784/1324572653216>

agreements. Agreements with three other provinces (British Columbia, Ontario and Nova Scotia) are anticipated within the next fiscal year. Further, all provincial jurisdictions without a formal agreement have entered into some form of alternative arrangement.

Many representatives from INAC regional offices stated that the establishment of a service agreement is fundamental, as it identifies emergency management roles and responsibilities, enhances communications between INAC and the region, supports the sharing of plans and processes, and ultimately enhance the region's relationship with First Nations communities. In provinces and territories where a service agreement is currently being negotiated, the establishment of an agreement is also seen as an opportunity to identify new ways for various emergency management partners to work together on a more collaborative basis.

A number of key informants mentioned that a formal service agreement can also help integrate INAC's four-pillar emergency management approach into regional operations. In some cases, the provincial/territorial government's emergency management services provided to First Nations have focused on the response and recovery pillar, with the mitigation and preparedness activities being covered by third-party emergency service providers. Such a segregation of emergency management operations, to some extent, can prevent the provincial/territorial government from establishing relationships with First Nations during non-emergency periods. It also increases the risk that First Nations communities might not be able to leverage the already existing mitigation and preparedness opportunities that may be available elsewhere in the province. A formal service agreement that expands the province's mandate to also include mitigation and preparedness responsibilities will help facilitate a better integrated service approach to meet First Nations' emergency management needs. As one key informant stated, it will help "install the practice aspect of emergency management rather than just the legislative aspect."

In March 2015, a ten-year emergency management service agreement was signed between INAC and the Province of Alberta. This agreement has facilitated successful delivery of emergency management services to First Nations communities. It is considered a good example that can be followed to work towards similar agreements with other provinces and territories. The Alberta government holds to the principle that "An Albertan is an Albertan" and therefore, all should receive comparable emergency services. Information gathered via interviews conducted as part of the Alberta site visit suggests the presence of a good partnership among various stakeholders and a fully integrated emergency management system in Alberta. In accordance with the service agreement, the Alberta Emergency Management Agency leads the coordination, collaboration and cooperation of all organizations involved in the prevention, preparedness and response to disasters and emergencies. A full suite of emergency management training and centralized workshops are provided to First Nations communities on a frequent or as needed basis. As a result, some key informants believe that First Nations are receiving emergency services comparable to those available to municipalities. The province has been effective in bringing needed resources to First Nations communities due to a close working relationship and well-established trust. Key informants also expressed the view that, in some cases, the province had gone above and beyond its emergency management obligations in supporting First Nations communities to build capacity and resilience.

In provinces and territories where no service agreement exists, the Department seeks to establish some form of alternative arrangement or informal understanding with the provincial or territorial government to ensure the provision of emergency management services to First Nations. Many of these provinces and territories have demonstrated a capacity to provide response and recovery services to First Nation in the absence of a formal service agreement. For example, the province of British Columbia currently operates under a 1993 Letter of Understanding for the provision of response and recovery services to on-reserve First Nations. Interviews conducted in British Columbia with the province's emergency management stakeholders suggest that each partner involved with emergency management in British Columbia clearly understands their roles and responsibilities, and the collective contributions from all partners are seen as essential to the success of emergency management within the province. In the Atlantic region, the provinces are actively involved in helping First Nations communities in emergency management planning and in providing assistance in the event of emergencies. Despite the fact that there is no formal service agreement in place in some provinces, costs incurred by provincial government are still being reimbursed. Also, according to a key informant, there have been cases where the provinces have absorbed certain costs related to providing emergency management services to First Nations communities.

While increasing its focus on negotiating service agreements, the Department has also engaged third-party service organizations to support the provision of emergency management services to First Nations. In Ontario, the province's emergency management involvement on-reserve is focused on the response pillar. INAC engages the Ontario First Nations Technical Services Corporation to assist in training, risk assessment, and the development, and exercising of Emergency Plans in First Nations communities. To help provide agreed upon guidelines to stakeholders during emergency operations such as large-scale evacuations, a Joint Emergency Management Steering Committee was established in Ontario, which comprises members from First Nations, relevant federal departments, provincial ministries and municipalities, in order to maximize the combined efforts of partners to support emergency management in First Nations communities. The Committee's Terms of Reference outlines the roles and responsibilities of each partner with respect to emergency management. The inclusive nature of the Joint Emergency Management Steering Committee process has enabled all relevant stakeholders to pool their resources and develop a culturally relevant emergency management response for First Nations in Ontario.<sup>13</sup> At the time of the evaluation, INAC was in the process of negotiating an emergency service agreement with Quebec.

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<sup>13</sup> Government of Ontario.

[https://www.emergencymanagementontario.ca/english/emcommunity/program\\_resources/FirstNations/firstnations.html](https://www.emergencymanagementontario.ca/english/emcommunity/program_resources/FirstNations/firstnations.html)

### 4.3 Engagement of First Nations

***Key Finding 4: There is an expressed need by First Nations to be involved in the negotiation of emergency management service agreements as well as a stated objective to increase their resilience and capacity for emergency management activities on-reserve.***

Effective emergency management starts at the local level. According to Canada's Emergency Management Framework, the first response in an emergency is "almost always by the local authorities".<sup>14</sup> First Nations members and/or governments are responsible for using local resources to provide the first line of response in the event of an emergency. As the scale of the emergency increases, the responsibility shifts to successive levels of government. As a key player in emergency management and the recipient of services provided by federal, provincial and territorial governments as well as third-party service providers, First Nations have an important perspective that should be considered.

Emergency management service agreements are currently negotiated between INAC and provincial or territorial governments on a bilateral basis. However, there is recognition that First Nations need to be engaged during the development and implementation of these agreements. Canada has also stated the need for First Nation involvement. Despite this, First Nations have expressed concerns that they have generally not been engaged on the development and implementation of the agreements. Some First Nations pointed out that they were not aware of the emergency management service agreement that was already put in place between INAC and the province they reside in. Some key informants perceived this lack of First Nation involvement as a major impediment to successfully implementing emergency management services in the provinces and territories. This view was shared by stakeholder groups. The practice of bilateral negotiation between Canada and the province/territory without involving First Nations was viewed by some as "paternalistic", and some stakeholder groups felt that only First Nations fully understand their own landscape, history, strength and challenges. Without the engagement of First Nations, local realities may have been overlooked, and certain unique experiences and traditional protocols important to the community may not be fully captured.

It is important to note that achieving First Nation involvement has proven to be a challenge for several reasons. First, in some provinces, there are many First Nations to be included in the discussion, which creates a complex logistical and negotiating environment. Second, many First Nations lack the capacity to actively participate since discussions may require specialized knowledge and a significant time commitment. Third, each provincial/territorial jurisdiction may present a different process for negotiation and involvement. For example, in some provinces, there is a request for a formalized tripartite process while in other provinces, involvement may be attained through a representative First Nation organization.

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<sup>14</sup> Public Safety Canada. (2011). An Emergency Management Framework for Canada. Second Edition, p.14. Retrieved on January 20, 2017, from <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/mrgnc-mngmnt-frmwrk/index-eng.aspx>

During site visits to First Nations communities, key informants expressed a strong desire to be more engaged, not only in the process of developing service agreements, but also in the actual operations of emergency management. First Nations have expressed that they want to develop their capacity and resilience in order to become more self-reliant in protecting their own community against disasters.

**Recommendation 1: Continue to ensure that the establishment of formal emergency management service agreements, or ongoing updating or adjustment to agreements be done in collaboration and with input from First Nation representative organizations.**

## **5. Evaluation Findings – Effectiveness of EMAP’s Funding Structure**

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This section explores the extent to which EMAP’s current funding structure effectively supports the achievement of EMAP’s expected outcomes. Specifically, it examines whether the current funding approach is appropriate and provides the required financial base to pursue all of the program’s goals and objectives, and whether the current funding structure adequately supports activities in all four pillars of emergency management.

### **5.1 Sources of EMAP Funding**

***Key Finding 5: New dedicated A-base resources have provided EMAP with a more secure funding base. However, costs related to on-reserve emergency management continue to exceed the Department’s EMAP budget, requiring annual funding requests to the Treasury Board Secretariat’s Management Reserve.***

One of the main roles of INAC’s Emergency Management Assistance Program is to act as a funding and oversight mechanism for the reimbursement of eligible emergency management costs for First Nations. INAC reimburses provincial and territorial governments, First Nations and third-party emergency services organizations for the cost of delivering emergency management services on-reserve.

INAC’s Emergency Management Directorate administers all emergency management funding except for structural mitigation costs, which is done through the Capital Facilities and Maintenance Program. In the past, due to lack of a dedicated source of funding, INAC “cash managed” by borrowing from other program areas, which may have impacted the delivery of other priority programs. In addition, the Department has had to access the Treasury Board Management Reserve annually to obtain supplementary (event-based) funding for response and recovery and until confirmation of obtaining these funds, has had to “risk manage” program costs.

In November 2013, the Government of Canada announced its commitment to strengthen emergency management support for First Nations. This commitment was reiterated in Budget 2014 with the provision of additional program funding. Starting in 2014-15, through a combination of internal reallocation and Budget 2014 funding, the Department secured a total of \$65 million of A-base contribution funding for on-reserve emergency management related costs. Annually, this funding is composed of three distinct streams. A portion of the budget is designated as a special purpose allotment for response and recovery costs only (\$29.33 million); a second portion is earmarked for the negotiation of provincial and territorial emergency management service agreements, as well as for the non-structural mitigation and preparedness proposal-based project funding stream (for a total amount of \$19.11 million); and a third portion is committed to wildfire management services provided by provincial and territorial organisations (\$16.54 million).

The cost of emergencies cannot be precisely forecast, therefore, planning for these costs in a federal budgeting environment can be challenging. Although dedicated funding has provided EMAP with a secure base, costs related to on-reserve emergency management often exceed the Department's EMAP budget and capacity to absorb, especially in years where significant emergency events impact on-reserve First Nations. In recent years, requests to the Treasury Board Management Reserve have been consistently higher than normal due to the exceptionally high number of emergency events on-reserve. Moreover, larger scale emergency events are trending upwards globally, which means increased emergency spending may now be a regular occurrence. This contributed to a continuing need for the Department to access to the Treasury Board Management Reserve to pay for on-reserve emergency management costs.

In 2014-15, INAC requested additional A-base funding from Treasury Board in order to create a comprehensive and sustainable approach to on-reserve emergency management. This request was for \$29 million of special purpose allotments to reimburse our partners for the costs of their response and recovery activities. Additionally, the Department sought and obtained \$40 million over five-years to advance structural mitigation activities on-reserve as part of disaster risk reduction efforts. Also, in 2014-15, INAC obtained another \$40 million from the Treasury Board Management Reserve to supplement unfunded response and recovery costs. In 2015-16, EMAP management made another submission to Treasury Board to obtain \$46 million for on-reserve costs incurred by provincial, territorial and First Nation governments as well as other emergency management organizations.

While the lack of a stable funding base for EMAP has required repeated requests to access the Treasury Board's Management Reserve for additional funding, this highlights the Department's challenge in terms of financing the EMAP internally and the consistent, annual shortfall that requires the program to seek, annually, supplemental funds from the Treasury Board; continuing in this fashion as the evaluation notes, is unsustainable.

## 5.2 EMAP Expenditures

Financial data examined from 2011-12 to 2015-16 showed that approximately \$416 million was spent on the four pillars of emergency management at INAC (see Table 2). This total does not include Search and Recovery, and Wildfire Management Services.

**Table 2: INAC Emergency Management Actual Expenditures (2012-2013 to 2015-2016)<sup>15</sup>**  
Fiscal Year by Pillar

<b>INAC Emergency Management 2012-13 to 2015-16 by Fiscal Year by Pillar (\$000,000)</b>					
<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Preparedness</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Recovery</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>
2012-2013	0.84	6.40	18.39	14.45	<b>40.08</b>
2013-2014	0.37	5.52	36.58	15.16	<b>57.63</b>
2014-2015	0.60	6.01	51.48	30.89	<b>88.98</b>
2015-2016	1.69	8.10	39.49	34.96	<b>84.24</b>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>3.50</b>	<b>26.03</b>	<b>145.94</b>	<b>95.46</b>	<b>270.93</b>

<sup>15</sup> Source: EMAP program financial information 2005-2015. Summary Table. Provided by EMD.

Table 3 illustrates how funds were allocated to each province and territory over the same period. What this data demonstrates is a high volume and cost of emergencies in three provinces in particular over the five-year period. Almost 83 percent of EMAP funding was spent in Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

**Table 3: INAC Emergency Management Actual Expenditures (2012-13 to 2015-16)<sup>16</sup>  
Region by Pillar**

<b>INAC Emergency Management 2012-13 to 2015-16 by Region by Pillar (\$000,000)</b>					
<b>Region</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Preparedness</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Recovery</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>
Atlantic	0.65	0.19	16.01	1.59	<b>18.44</b>
Quebec	0.06	0.99	1.33	0.00	<b>2.38</b>
Ontario	1.16	6.93	54.70	21.93	<b>84.72</b>
Manitoba	0.37	1.80	56.47	11.06	<b>69.70</b>
Saskatchewan	0.84	9.12	14.80	53.94	<b>78.70</b>
Alberta	0.35	2.82	1.54	4.47	<b>9.18</b>
British Columbia	0.07	3.15	0.98	1.35	<b>5.55</b>
Northwest Territories	0.00	0.07	0.00	0.00	<b>0.07</b>
Yukon	0.00	0.20	0.02	1.13	<b>1.35</b>
Headquarters-Regional Operations	0.00	0.84	0.00	0.00	<b>0.84</b>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>3.50</b>	<b>26.11</b>	<b>145.85</b>	<b>95.47</b>	<b>270.93</b>

\* Does not include expenditures for Search and Recovery or Wildfire Management Services.

### 5.3 EMAP's Funding Structure and Process

***Key Finding 6: INAC's current focus on mitigation and preparedness may not yet be sufficiently balanced to reduce overall emergency management costs in the long term.***

#### 5.3.1 Mitigation and Preparedness Funding

Under EMAP, mitigation and preparedness activities are funded through the proposal-based emergency preparedness program stream. All projects are scrutinized to ensure costs are defensible and justifiable, and clearly linked with EMAP's non-structural mitigation and preparedness areas of focus.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

As a result of the new policy approach in 2014, EMAP increased its funding for mitigation and preparedness from zero to \$19.1 million. In the fiscal year for 2015-2016, a total of 19 emergency management non-structural mitigation and preparedness projects were approved for funding by INAC. These projects supported local efforts in emergency prevention and preparedness through projects that First Nations communities identified as a priority. The projects were coordinated by the First Nation recipient communities that applied for funding from INAC. Some of the projects allowed First Nations to offer emergency management training to community members or may facilitate emergency management practitioners to develop risk assessments and emergency management plans to address identified threats and hazards from wildfires, flooding and other emergency situations. First Nation recipient communities applied for funding from INAC for these projects and were responsible for coordinating them locally. Table 4 details where projects were located and their value by region.

**Table 4: INAC Emergency Management Funded Mitigation and Preparedness Projects for Fiscal Year 2015-16** <sup>17</sup>

Region	Number of Projects	Dollar Value of Projects
Atlantic	0	0
Quebec	1	575,093
Ontario	3	3,178,453
Manitoba	1	94,095
Saskatchewan	2	2,031,500
Alberta	1	326,385
British Columbia	4	2,190,327
Northwest Territories	0	0
Yukon	4	3,110,000
National projects	3	559,133
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>12,064,986</b>

Mitigation and preparedness are critical to emergency management as they may reduce the risks related to, and disruption caused by an emergency event. From a system point of view, mitigation and preparedness can also contribute to a reduction, or help curb, the exponential growth of the costs of emergency management events and disasters over time. Although the cost benefits of mitigation and preparedness activities are difficult to measure, it is recognized that mitigation and preparedness activities can effectively help reduce emergency event costs. For example, literature suggests that mitigation measures are expected to provide an estimated \$4 in subsequent disaster loss reduction for every \$1 spent.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> For more details please see: <http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1457986011414/1457986041850>

<sup>18</sup> Godschalk, D.R. et.al. (2009). Estimating the value of foresight: aggregate analysis of natural hazard mitigation benefits and costs. *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*, vol. 52, no. 6, pp. 739-756.

As shown by program expenditure data in Section 5.2, despite the recent increase in the percentage of expenditures for mitigation and preparedness activities, especially since the introduction of the enhanced EMAP, more efforts are needed for these two pillars relative to the response and recovery pillars.<sup>19</sup> Although it is understandable that greater costs can be incurred during post-disaster phases, an increased effort to promote non-structural mitigation and preparedness could help establish a more proactive emergency management approach and potentially reduce response and recovery costs in the long term.

In addition to the percentage of funding spent on the mitigation and preparedness pillars, evidence collected from key informants also suggests that there are a number of challenges when it comes to effective disbursement of EMAP's mitigation and preparedness funding. First, the application process is seen by some as overly cumbersome and time consuming. Some proposals may have been rejected due to lack of supporting documents, which may be more a reflection of the community's internal capacity to develop funding proposals rather than its eligibility for the mitigation and preparedness funding.

Second, the timeliness of releasing mitigation and preparedness funding could be improved. A number of funding recipients indicated receiving project money in November, leaving them with only a few months to complete the project before the end of the fiscal year. It was suggested that the application and notification process be completed in the previous fiscal year to allow sufficient time for projects to commence at the beginning of the fiscal year.

Third, key informants pointed out that mitigation and preparedness projects are often time sensitive and require continuous planning. However, with EMAP's single-year funding cycle, it is difficult to ensure stability and to generate lasting impact. One First Nation community indicated that although they have developed a five-year emergency management plan, they had to re-evaluate their priorities based on annual call-for-proposals for mitigation and preparedness projects. Some third-party service providers also stated that, the single-year funding cycle, especially when compounded by funding delays, can erode the trust they had established with First Nations communities, which is key to their success in providing emergency management services to these communities.

Lastly, evaluators found a relatively low level of awareness of EMAP's mitigation and preparedness project-based funding stream. The First Nations communities included in the evaluation's site visit plan were mostly unaware that the EMAP provides funding for mitigation and preparedness projects. Key informants from one of INAC's regions mentioned that, in the most recent year, only 30 percent of the region's First Nations communities submitted proposals for mitigation and preparedness funding. This may be an indication that there is a lack of awareness of the mitigation and preparedness funding availability among the region's First Nations communities.

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<sup>19</sup> The recent audit undertaken by INAC's Audit and Evaluation Sector notes that the program has made significant progress toward increasing expenditures for mitigation and preparedness activities. This focus on increasing emergency preparedness programming in First Nation communities creates an opportunity that is expected to significantly contribute to strengthening and improving emergency management plans and emergency preparedness.

### **5.3.2 Response and Recovery Funding**

***Key Finding 7: The process with which INAC reimburses eligible emergency response and recovery costs could be made more efficient.***

Different from mitigation and preparedness funding, the funding for response and recovery is a special purpose allotment to reimburse eligible costs incurred only. INAC regional offices review response and recovery claims to ensure they are within the funding authority and constitute eligible expenses. Once this determination is made, a recommendation for funding will be made to the Regional Director General. This recommendation then goes to the Emergency Management Directorate for review and final approval.

The main area of concern raised by key informants with respect to response and recovery funding is the timeliness with which INAC reimburses First Nations, other levels of government and third-party emergency management organizations. Key informants from different stakeholder groups repeatedly pointed to the significant length of time it takes to reimburse eligible expenses. Under the Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements, one First Nation community mentioned that its emergency management eligible expense claims stood unpaid for five years. These outstanding claims may have been of small amounts, but have caused the community a significant amount of time and effort.

As First Nations communities are often under resourced to deal with the vast array of potential emergency situations, delays in reimbursing incurred eligible costs can have a detrimental impact on the delivery of existing programs and services. Evaluators were informed that, in some extreme cases, some First Nations communities had in the past been relying on high interest loans to cover emergency expenses. In addition, delays in reimbursing incurred emergency costs can also create amplified costs. For example, expenses related to evacuations and remediation work can be greatly reduced if reimbursement is provided in a timelier manner.

The evaluation found that the process for reimbursing response and recovery costs is sometimes complex and cumbersome. This may constitute a contributing factor to the delays. The claim review process can involve several parties and can place a heavy administrative burden on all parties involved. Some key informants described the process as passing detailed reports from one level of government to another, entailing provision of the same information in different formats. INAC regional key informants indicated that, although well supported by the Emergency Management Directorate at the Headquarters, they often struggle with the volume and complexity of response and recovery claims in addition to their responsibilities to support a great number of First Nations communities. As a result, the regional offices function more like a funding agency as opposed to a program unit.

***Key Finding 8: Program participants and partners do not appear to be sufficiently well informed of EMAP's funding parameters.***

Another major challenge of the reimbursement process is the lack of adequate information on the eligibility of costs and the claims process. Key informants from various stakeholder groups have expressed the concern that they do not know what types of emergency expenses are covered by EMAP and what supporting documents are required in order to submit the claims. Without such clarity, it is difficult for claimants to provide sufficient documents to support their claims. One key informant further elaborated on his experience in trying to obtain an understanding of EMAP's eligibility criteria, which involved a series of back and forth correspondences.

Evaluation evidence seems to suggest that, both expenditure claimants and the EMAP regional staff would benefit from a clear set of guidelines on expenditure eligibility and claim procedures. One example of such guidelines, provided to the evaluators by key informants in British Columbia, is the province's *Financial Assistance Guidelines for Response and Recovery for First Nations and Local Authorities*.<sup>20</sup> This guide is published on the provincial government's website and provides local authorities and First Nations in British Columbia with detailed information on the procedures required to maximize claims for financial assistance with emergency response and recovery costs. Another example is a document from Ontario's Joint Emergency Management Steering Committee on Service Level Evacuation Standards.<sup>21</sup> This document explicitly defines the types and levels of services required to meet the needs of First Nation evacuees within host communities and the associated procedures for the recovery of eligible costs by the participating ministries, municipalities, and other authorities.

A number of eligibility issues were also raised by some key informants as areas of concern. For example, in rural remote communities where food is much more expensive than in larger urban centres, evacuees are provided with the same amount of food allowance, which does not translate into the same purchase power. It was suggested that such a discrepancy be taken into consideration. Another example is that while relocation cost is considered an eligible recovery expense, certain expenditures associated with relocation, such as expenditures related to installing a septic system, may not be considered eligible.

In essence, the apparatus for administering payments was questioned by emergency management organizations, First Nations and INAC regional offices. The consistency of these comments across provincial jurisdictions and emergency sectors would suggest that the Department could benefit from a greater emphasis on communicating the program's funding parameters. This would allow program participants and partners to have a better understanding of expense eligibility and would also help improve the timeliness of the program's reimbursement process.

It is expected that, over time, the implementation of the new single window approach for funding emergency management on-reserve should allow for a simpler process for First Nations to obtain reimbursement for their eligible emergency expenses. In addition, the establishment of emergency management service agreement will also help address some of these concerns. By clearly outlining roles and responsibilities, levels of funding, expected results and accountabilities, the service agreements can help provide First Nations, provinces and territories, and other service providers with improved access to emergency management funding when needed and reduce the lag time for reimbursing incurred eligible costs.

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<sup>20</sup> Available at [http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/embc/dfa/financial\\_assistance\\_guide.pdf](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/embc/dfa/financial_assistance_guide.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> Joint Emergency Management Steering Committee, Service Level Evacuation Standards, April 27, 2016.

**Recommendation 2: Continue to review and revise reimbursement procedures for eligible expenses to ensure they meet department standards and the needs of First Nations, provinces and territories as well as other service providers.**

## 6. Evaluation Findings – EMAP Outcome Achievement

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This section explores the extent to which the expected outcomes of EMAP are being achieved and whether EMAP activities are aligned with the four pillars of emergency management: mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.

### 6.1 Mitigation and Preparedness

***Key Finding 9: Despite the Department's increased efforts on mitigation and preparedness as recommended by the 2011 INAC evaluation, there is still evidence to suggest that many First Nations are not sufficiently prepared for an emergency event and are not adequately engaged in Mitigation and Preparedness activities.***

In the all-hazards approach to emergency management, there is a great deal of overlap in mitigation and preparedness activities. These two pillars emphasize the importance of planning in advance of any emergency event occurring to identify risks and hazards and preventative measures that can be taken to minimize the impact of potential emergency events. This differs from the other two pillars of emergency management, response and recovery, which are triggered by the actual occurrence of an emergency event and involve the activation of emergency management plans and related consequence management activities.

In INAC's National Emergency Management Plan<sup>22</sup>, mitigation includes activities that either eliminate or reduce the severity of disasters with the goal of protecting, not only lives but property, the environment, as well as decreasing any potential economic disruption. Mitigation is classified as either structural such as the construction of floodways and dikes, or non-structural, which may include, among other things, building codes, land-use planning, and insurance incentives.

By contrast, preparedness includes activities undertaken in order to increase the readiness of a community to respond to an emergency event and manage its consequences, such as emergency response plans, mutual assistance agreements, resource inventories and training, equipment and exercise programs. Capturing and reporting information regarding emergencies is also an important component of preparedness.

In INAC's four-pillar approach to emergency management, mitigation and preparedness are key areas, which help prepare First Nations communities and other emergency management organizations to respond to future events. In order to assess systemic vulnerabilities, identify risks, elaborate, update, and test emergency management plans, mitigation and preparedness require an ongoing commitment in the form of procedures and protocol development, training, communication and testing of emergency plans.

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<sup>22</sup> INAC. (2011). National Emergency Management Plan. Retrieved on January 20, 2017 from <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1324572607784/1324572653216>

INAC has made significant strides in emergency management, in particular, in mitigation and preparedness since the new emergency management approach was adopted in April 2014. However, evidence gathered for this evaluation suggests that there is a continuing need to support and promote these two pillars beyond what the Department has accomplished to date.

EMAP's mitigation and preparedness funding is allocated on a call-for-proposal basis. Although the Emergency Management Directorate has the final approval authority, screening of project proposals are managed at the regional level. At the regional level, although INAC regional offices may be aware of the specific risks faced by certain First Nations, these risks are not rolled up to provide an overarching risk mapping for the region. There is also no mechanism in place to ensure that the most vulnerable communities have the necessary capacity to access funding for mitigation and preparedness activities.

Mitigation initiatives vary from region to region. Regional key informants described how the lack of an emergency management service agreement between the provincial and federal governments can become a barrier to investing in mitigation projects in First Nations communities. In some jurisdictions, mitigation and preparedness activities have been provided by third-party service organizations, such as the Ontario First Nations Technical Services Corporation and the First Nations' Emergency Services Society of British Columbia. These organizations have a strong relationship with the First Nations they serve, and their capacity to provide services relies heavily on accessing federal funding. In provinces or territories where service agreements are being negotiated, the need to incorporate existing First Nations emergency management or relevant technical emergency management organizations into the provincial network is an admitted and recognized principle. INAC evaluators learned that identifying the roles and responsibilities of multiple, varied emergency management partners, who may not share all the same objectives, remains a challenge.

Further evaluation evidence suggests that First Nations communities which have been more affected by emergencies tend to have a better awareness of the importance of mitigation and preparedness and tend to invest more efforts towards mitigation and preparedness activities. In some First Nations communities, mitigation efforts are also being integrated into emergency recovery activities, such as repairing and rebuilding homes according to construction standards beyond those required for restoring to pre-emergency condition. These are considered recovery mitigation measures that can help increase the community's resilience to future emergencies. The emergency events in Kashechewan represent a case in point. As part of the most recent repatriation efforts, the community rebuilt homes without basements, which have been raised from the ground on stilts. The new homes are also modular and transportable, which will allow them to be moved to another location if ever that was required. The evaluation also found that through continued horizontal cooperation with INAC's Capital Facilities and Maintenance Program, structural mitigation projects are being funded in communities that are most vulnerable.

During discussions with various regional offices, INAC evaluators learned that emergency management planning and preparedness is inconsistent across the country. Moreover, many First Nations communities may possess an emergency management plan, however is untested or out of date. For instance, an INAC regional representative in one province indicated that every First Nation in the province had an emergency management plan, it could not be confirmed if those plans were still up to date. A report from a provincial government organization found that while the majority of First Nation communities in the province had access to an emergency plan, the vast majority of plans had not been tested.

The importance of consistently updating and improving community emergency management plans was illustrated in the case of the Kashechewan floods. During the first mass evacuation in 2014, when evacuees arrived to the host city of Kapuskasing, an already challenging experience was exacerbated by the fact that many community members had not brought essential medication or medical devices (such as wheel chairs) with them. As well, there was confusion in regards to how to take care of household pets (which were not permitted on board evacuation military airplanes). The challenges posed by these issues could have been lessened had there been an emergency management plan in place that considered these factors.

The importance for First Nations communities to have updated and tested emergency preparedness plans is complicated by several factors. First, most communities do not have the capacity or expertise to develop and manage plans on their own. As a result, many choose to contract consultants to develop and help implement emergency plans on their behalf. This method, although more efficient, usually involves the creation of emergency plans that are not specifically tailored to the needs of a community. Second, evaluators heard from some communities that there is a need for an in-house emergency management coordinator to assist in the creation and maintenance of their own plan. Third, in the absence of an imminent emergency threat or identified hazard, there seems to be a lack of interest in engaging in preparedness activities. And finally, most community members seemed confused or unaware of their emergency point of contact and who is responsible for what during an emergency event.

One key informant recommended improving engagement between field officers and First Nation community leaders when planning for potential emergencies. Evaluators did not find direct evidence of any level of communication during non-events. Not having an adequate and updated emergency management plan, compounded by inadequate communication with First Nations communities on expected actions before an emergency event, substantially increases the risks to all community members and will most certainly have a negative impact on activities related to the response and recovery pillars of emergency management.<sup>23</sup>

## 6.2 Response and Recovery

***Key Finding 10: EMAP's delivery structure for aspects of response and recovery is sound and appropriate as it allows First Nations to access the needed resources and expertise provided by emergency management service providers immediately before, during and after an emergency event.***

The response pillar of emergency management involves certain key activities that are undertaken immediately before an event (public communication), during an event (such as medical assistance or evacuation support), or directly after an event (including damage assessment and reconstruction). Response activities involve consequence management intended to minimize the adversity and loss of an emergency event as it happens. Once the emergency event is considered over, or soon to be, the recovery phase can be initiated. Recovery activities include repairing, restoring or rebuilding post disaster conditions to a pre-emergency state or to a level deemed acceptable (including trauma counseling, return of evacuees, reconstruction, economic impact studies and financial assistance), while at the same time considering mitigation enhancements to reduce vulnerability to future similar

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<sup>23</sup> INAC. (2010). Evaluation of the Emergency Management Assistance Program. <http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100011392/1100100011397>

emergencies. According to the EMAP's Terms and Conditions, recovery is "the remediation of the community, their infrastructure and houses to the pre-disaster condition as rapidly as possible."<sup>24</sup>

INAC's Emergency Management Roles and Responsibilities web information sheet<sup>25</sup> indicates that local authorities (the affected First Nations communities) are almost always the first response in an emergency. If local capacity is exceeded, it is often the provincial or territorial emergency management officers who are called upon for assistance. Should these secondary responders also require resources, which exceed their capacity to cope, the federal government (through Public Safety Canada) will respond to requests for assistance.

The federal government's Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements, administered by Public Safety Canada is a means by which financial relief is provided to provincial or territorial governments. Assistance is triggered when a province's eligible expenses incurred in carrying out its own disaster Response and Recovery Program are above \$3.00 per capita of the population since February 1, 2015.

INAC relies on provincial and territorial governments as well as other emergency response organizations for the delivery of response and recovery services for First Nations communities. Documents reviewed state that INAC's current approach of having an emergency response regime for First Nations that leverage existing provincial emergency management organizations as well as arrangements with provinces or territories, is the most cost-effective and efficient delivery approach. This approach is also consistent with the Department's Emergency Management Plan, which describes the successive responsibility shifts to levels of government other than local, as the resources and expertise of each are progressively required.

As mentioned earlier, in provinces or territories where there is no formal service agreement, INAC has functional working relationships with provincial and territorial emergency management organizations and other partners, such as the Canadian Red Cross and the Société de protection des forêts contre le feu, to ensure that First Nations communities have access to emergency assistance.

EMAP documents and site visits demonstrate that, in spite of the many emergency situations across Canada, INAC has consistently been able to address response and recovery activities. For example, since April 2011, 58,264 of on-reserve First Nations people were evacuated from their homes due to emergency events, and the majority have been returned home as of May 20, 2016. Site visits to Alberta indicated that the response assistance provided by the provincial government during the 2013 southern Alberta floods was fast and influential on-reserve. Despite some initial setbacks during the transition from response to recovery due to unclear roles, responsibilities and authorities of the provincial and federal governments, the response and recovery activities associated with the 2013 floods were considered successful. For example, with respect to house repairs, all 62 damaged homes had been repaired in Eden Valley; in Morley, 80 out of the 83 damaged homes had been repaired; in Clark, 210 out of 210 homes completed; and 98 percent of houses completed for Bears paw. In Chiniki, though the data is conflicting (156 out of 159 homes were said to be completed whereas another figure indicates that only 110 out of 159), clear progress has been made. In these situations, recovery activities have included repairing or replacing tanks and cisterns.

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<sup>24</sup> INAC. (2016). Contributions for Emergency Management Assistance for Activities on-Reserve. Terms and Conditions. <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1386012167936/1386012273685>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1309372584767/1309372634626>

It is to be noted that the cost of interim housing may exceed the cost of purchasing permanent homes (depending on the time length of the recovery phase). In its Lessons Learned exercise, the Recovery Management Team called for a cost benefit analysis to be conducted in regards to this issue. INAC has no permanent capacity, especially where it has no service agreement, to support First Nations in recovering from emergency events as well as returning community members home after an evacuation. INAC's program analysis indicates that, in some cases, the costs of accommodation and per diems is higher than the repairs required. The Recovery Management Team also called for First Nations to complete community plans, maintain up to date recovery plans and be involved in all aspects of recovery planning.

The example of Kashechewan is further evidence of the Department's efforts to improve the management of response and recovery initiatives. INAC made a significant departure from past approaches to the annual flooding problems, which have beset the community. A coordinated partnership effort helped move Kashechewan residents out of danger preventatively, temporarily housed them in neighbouring communities and is now supporting the community to rebuild homes and repatriate its residents. Moreover, the repatriation strategy allowed the community to reduce the risks of future damage due to flooding by building homes on stilts. The strategy also kept an eye towards the future by building modular and transportable homes, while simultaneously addressing the residential overcrowding problem in Kashechewan by identifying funding from the Capital Facilities and Maintenances Program to build the additional homes required.

Recently, INAC obtained approval of its operational *Policy for Emergency Recovery Assistance*, which is designed to "provide a clear process and identify the requirements for eligible First Nations to receive Recovery Assistance through INAC's EMAP".<sup>26</sup> In addition, EMAP has a draft policy on "building back better" infrastructure. The purpose is to "clearly stipulate under what conditions INAC's emergency recovery assistance funding is eligible to be used towards building back housing and infrastructure on-reserve beyond pre-existing conditions." This will hopefully clarify and accelerate future reconstruction projects and help return long-term evacuees home sooner.

INAC has been working with First Nations communities, as well as provinces and territories to clarify roles and responsibilities during emergency events in order to set those out in agreements with provinces and in contribution agreements with First Nations and third-party service providers. In defining the roles and responsibilities of each party, a focus on leveraging existing expertise and streamlining processes and the elimination of a lack of clarity in responding to declarations of a local state of emergency on-reserve are a few of the expected positive results. Site visits also show that INAC regional staff responds to and effectively collaborates with their provincial emergency partners during the response and recovery phases of an emergency.

There are also differences between the response and recovery initiatives with respect to provincial or territorial disaster financial assistance programs, Public Safety Canada's Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements, and the EMAP. This is significant because these programs are applicable only in the following circumstances:

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<sup>26</sup> INAC. (2016). Audit of the Emergency Management Assistance Program. Draft Audit Report.

- only when the disaster is the result of a natural hazard;
- exclude insurable, insured, limit to pre-disaster condition and building codes;
- require ownership and principal residence for essential repairs;
- limited to appraised pre-disaster value;
- exclude regular salaries, purchase of assets, recovery at law; and
- flood plains and other considerations.

Response and recovery components of emergency management are time consuming. Key informants discussed how response and recovery activities could be mentally, physically and emotionally exhausting, and, in addition, they are often under-resourced. During site visits, Indigenous interviewees acknowledged that recovery entails psychosocial support integration. In Alberta, for example, the province and Stoney Nation have agreed to expand the funding of the Stoney Nation Flood Recovery Action Plan to include elements that were not aligned with the Alberta Flood Recovery Plan. While covering the costs of house repairs, the agreement includes rebuilding all houses damaged by flood in a safe area if the original site of the dwelling has been deemed to be a flood prone area. The province will also connect the Alberta Flood Recovery Plan with other current Government of Alberta programs and services where applicable, including but not limited to psychosocial programs. Evidence in Kashechewan reinforces this finding. For organizers, evacuated residents and host communities, there was notable stresses that caused frictions and required adjustments during the response and evacuation operations.

The Department, by reviewing the EMAP, is ensuring it remains sustainable in the long-term while more efficient and effective across all four pillars of emergency management. For example, program evaluations were undertaken in 2010 and 2012. In addition, to addressing the issues raised in these previous evaluations and reviews, INAC is pursuing negotiations for comprehensive emergency management service agreements with the provinces. Interviews with INAC officials and in the sites visited, as well as documentation reviewed confirm this. The evaluation research also verified that these service agreements are at varied stages. The service agreements are intended to strengthen EMAP's governance structure, help clarify roles and responsibilities as it relates to emergency management, in addition to demonstrating the need for more stable funding for the program. Furthermore, clarity with regard to accountabilities as well as provisions for dispute resolution will be assured.

INAC has also revised the EMAP's Terms and Conditions to provide greater clarity about expense eligibility and program management. The development of a new single-window approach to funding on-reserve emergency costs has also helped address some of the more pressing challenges related to the response and recovery pillars. For instance, as of April 1, 2014, INAC has assumed responsibility for costs for emergencies, which previously would have been eligible under the Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements only during large-scale disasters spanning both off the on-reserve.

**Recommendation 3: Increase support to First Nations risk reduction efforts and resilience under the mitigation and preparedness pillars in accordance with the Government of Canada's all-hazards, four-pillar approach to emergency management.**

## **7. Conclusions and Recommendations**

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### **7.1 Conclusions**

Today's emergency events are often beyond the capacities of individual communities, municipalities, and even provinces or territories to address on their own. There is an anticipated requirement for a coordinated federal approach in order to respond effectively to large-scale emergencies and to reduce the potential loss of life and property damage. Thus, it is appropriate to have an INAC mandated program that is specific for First Nations communities as disasters tend to disproportionately affect these communities.

INAC enters into collaborative services agreements with provincial and territorial governments to ensure that First Nations communities have access to comparable emergency assistance services available to other residents in their respective province. At the time of the evaluation, a number of provinces and territories had entered into a formal emergency management agreement with INAC, while the others are providing services under some form of alternative arrangement. These alternative arrangements, often involving third-party emergency service organizations, help to ensure effective provision of emergency management services to First Nations in the absence of a formal service agreement. While service agreements are being signed between INAC and the provincial or territorial government, there is recognition that First Nations need to be engaged on the development and implementation of these agreements.

Although financial contribution to emergency management is made through an initial allocation, INAC has had to make annual funding requests to the Treasury Board Secretariat's Management Reserve in order to fully address the costs related to emergency events impacting First Nations on-reserve. Such a funding process creates additional challenges to effectiveness and efficiency. In terms of reimbursing provincial and territorial governments, First Nations and third-party emergency management organizations for eligible emergency management expenditures, the evaluation found that the process for reimbursement could be improved to be more timely and efficient. In addition, program participants and partners do not appear to be well informed about funding processes and timelines. These challenges have a detrimental effect on the overall program performance and how it is perceived by the emergency management community. The emergency management service agreements being entered into with provinces and territories will provide the highest level of certainty in terms of service provision and help simplify the process for reimbursement of eligible emergency management costs.

The all-hazards emergency management approach requires that emergency management activities be aligned with the four pillars of emergency management. The evaluation found that EMAP has been successful with respect to response and recovery activities despite the complexity and challenges involved in these two pillars. However, as a significant portion of EMAP's support goes to the response and recovery pillars, there is a limited focus on the mitigation and preparedness pillars. Evaluation evidence suggests that many First Nations are still not sufficiently prepared for an emergency event and are not adequately engaged in mitigation and preparedness activities.

## 7.2 Recommendations

It is recommended that the Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Regional Operations, with the assistance of INAC:

1. Continue to ensure that the establishment of formal emergency management service agreements, or ongoing updating or adjustment to agreements be done in collaboration and with input from First Nation representative organizations;
2. Continue to review and revise reimbursement procedures for eligible expenses to ensure they meet department standards and the needs of First Nations, provinces and territories as well as other service providers; and
3. Increase support to First Nations risk reduction efforts and resilience under the mitigation and preparedness pillars in accordance with the Government of Canada's all-hazards, four-pillar approach to emergency management.