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Project Brief**Evaluation of the Labrador Innu Comprehensive Healing Strategy**

Timeframe: October 2002 - July 2003

Coverage: The purpose of the interim evaluation of the Labrador Innu Comprehensive Healing Strategy ("the Strategy") is to assess progress against plan for each of its five main components:

- Community Health;
- Mushuau Innu Relocation;
- Registration and Reserve Creation;
- Programs and Services - education, social assistance, and child and family services; and
- Community Policing.

The purpose was also to assess the strategy's ongoing relevance, early success and cost-effectiveness.

This is required to report back to Cabinet in the fall of 2003 and seek on-going funding for future years.

Initial funding for the Strategy covered a three-year period, from 2001-2002 to 2003-2004. Recognizing that it would be impossible to assess many of the Strategy's expected outcomes this early in its implementation, the evaluation focussed on measuring progress to date in key areas and providing answers to broad evaluation questions.

Evaluation activities were conducted in headquarters, the regional office and in Newfoundland and Labrador. The evaluation was directed by an Evaluation Steering Committee composed of federal, provincial and Innu representatives.

**General
Assessment:**

One of the central conclusions of the evaluation team is that little concerted effort was made at the beginning of the Strategy to involve the Labrador Innu in its planning and development. There is agreement among respondents from the federal government and Innu communities that the Innu were not consulted prior to or during the development of the Strategy, and that they had limited involvement in its planning. The result has been a division and polarity of opinions that have had an impact on all aspects of the Strategy. From the Innu perspective, which tends to focus more on relationships and processes, the Strategy does not represent a substantial change from the approach they have experienced in the past. From the federal government perspective, the Strategy incorporates some very innovative and significant features.

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The evaluation notes that the polarity of opinions between the federal government and the Labrador Innu regarding the nature of the Strategy is the primary obstacle to achieving successful outcomes. Resolving these differences lies at the heart of the future success of the Strategy. There is a need to establish common ground as a priority. The evaluation recommends that the perspectives and approaches of the two parties be integrated into the Strategy through the development of a "blended model" via a 10-step process.

In terms of general observations, the majority of evaluation participants felt that the Strategy addresses Innu needs, which are numerous, and is therefore relevant. While federal government respondents stated that many of the Innu's healing needs have been identified and are in the process of being met, Innu respondents maintained that none of the short-term needs identified by them at the time of the 2001 gas sniffing crisis have been met.

Collaboration between the parties involved in the Strategy (the Innu, the federal government and the provincial government) is another issue that is understood differently by the various groups. Most respondents from the federal and provincial governments appeared satisfied with the extent and nature of collaboration to date. Respondents from the Innu communities were generally less satisfied with the level of collaboration and felt that collaboration had only taken place over the last year. The majority of respondents agreed that the extent of existing capacity within the communities and federal government departments was not adequately considered when planning and developing the Strategy.

The evaluation does not include a rigorous cost-effectiveness analysis because the financial information provided by the federal departments was of a very general nature and was not in a format where actual expenses could be compared, line by line, with budgeted costs.

Lastly, the evaluation team found no evidence of a systematic data collection system being implemented across all Strategy components. Considering its importance, the level of commitment by the federal government and the need for sound baseline information to conduct a thorough evaluation, it is essential that a process of identifying and collecting all important "indicators" for each component be jointly designed and implemented by the federal, provincial and Innu parties.

Key Findings: The key findings described below are as of January-February 2003; some elements have changed in status since.

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Relocation Component

- Several delays were experienced in implementing the relocation component. The original relocation target date established in 1996 as part of the Mushuau Innu Relocation Agreement (MIRA) was fall 2001. In October 2001, a new relocation target date was established for the fall of 2002. However, the first Mushuau Innu families relocated to Natuashish in December 2002. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) reported a number of reasons for the delays, including problems related to the selection of a project manager, re-design requirements arising from requests for larger facilities and strained relationships between some of the parties.
- Other challenges have included:
 - inadequate forecasting of demand for housing in Natuashish;
 - poorly planned training opportunities for Innu community members;
 - and concerns about the long-term impact of and satisfaction with the relocation (i.e. lack of a social and economic reconstruction plan in the relocation component).
 - As of mid-February 2003, 105 of the 135 planned houses were completed. By March 2003, virtually all of the families in Davis Inlet had moved to Natuashish. This was made possible by families whose houses were complete offering space to families whose houses were not yet finished.
 - The extent and nature of the consultations with the community appears to have varied throughout the implementation phase; in the opinion of some respondents, they deteriorated between the initial consultations done in the context of MIRA and the actual relocation of the community.
 - The capacity building opportunities associated with the implementation of the relocation component have fallen short of the expectations of all respondents. Although 70 to 90 Innu were involved in the construction of Natuashish, only six have received sufficient training to continue to maintain the community without assistance. The contractor who will be hired for the on-going maintenance of Natuashish will be required to undertake capacity development activities such that the Innu are able to take on complete responsibility for operations and maintenance of the community within three years.

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Registration and Reserve Creation Component

- The Registration sub-component did not progress as rapidly as originally expected because more community awareness activities regarding the registration process were required than were anticipated. Nevertheless, the registration sub-component has now been completed. Orders-in-Council for the registration of Bands for the Mushuau Innu and Sheshatshiu Innu were ratified on November 21, 2002. Two public consultation meetings took place in Sheshatshiu and three took place in Davis Inlet. Registration Officers reported having met with all members of the community to explain the registration process and its implications to the Innu.
- The Reserve Creation sub-component has also been delayed due to a combination of delayed completion of the registration process (upon which reserve creation is dependent) and complications in the transfer of land title from the province (in the case of Sheshatshiu). The current target date for INAC to have satisfactory title for Sheshatshiu lands is mid-2003; reserve creation is therefore not expected before September 2003.
- While the Innu leadership understands how registration and reserve creation will affect the communities, people at the community level do not clearly understand these implications, except that they now had tax exemption privileges. More needs to be done to improve consultation with community members in regard to the implications of registration and reserve creation.

Programs and Services Component (Education, Social Assistance, and Child and Family Services)

- Phase 1 of this component is complete: bilateral agreements have been established to ensure that there will be no interruptions in services and to ensure continuity in federal funding to the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador for the on-going provision of education, social assistance and child welfare programs until they are transferred to the Innu.
- However, it was found that various interpretations surround the negotiation of bilateral agreements which are, at best, contradictory and confusing. Except in the case of education, there does not seem to be any clear indication of how, when or by what means the transitional measures will become permanent. Consequently there is a high level of confusion and, in the case of the Innu, distrust concerning the process.
- Government respondents in general thought that the consultation process was improving. The Innu, however, expressed concern about their exclusion from meetings on the bilateral funding agreement negotiations.

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- Federal and provincial government respondents indicated that the committees established to deal with specific sub-components of programs and services are good examples of collaboration between the parties. For example, the Working Group on Educational Outcomes has worked together since January 2002 and has made progress in developing a work plan to devolve education to the community. As a result of the ongoing work of the Educational Outcomes Working Group, the Innu Education Authority (INEK) has been established, which has three Board members from the Mushuau Innu and three from the Sheshatshiu Innu. In consultation with the federal and provincial governments, INEK has produced a set of prerequisites for the transfer of control of education to the Band Councils. Prerequisites cover the areas of governance, education standards, school improvement, human resources, Innu program resourcing, professional services and protocol. No funding has been allocated to INEK yet.
- Respondents from the federal government also thought that the Income Support Committee established in November 2002, which is designed to devolve social assistance to the communities, is an example of successful collaboration among the parties. Federal government respondents on the committee express confidence that social assistance will be delivered by the Innu as soon as the reserves are declared.
- Collaboration between the federal and provincial governments and the Innu in meeting community requirements for Child and Family Services has been more challenging at the community level. Respondents from Health Canada and the provincial government expressed concerns about unclear jurisdictional responsibilities and overlapping mandates with respect to children's issues.
- According to government interviewees, INAC is working with both communities to determine how the three sub-components of the Programs and Services component will ultimately be delivered to the community; many government interviewees expressed concern that the communities currently lack the capacity to independently implement these programs and services. Innu respondents have stated that for Programs and Services in general, the current capacity of the Innu – particularly among the Sheshatshiu Innu – has not been sufficiently acknowledged.
- Training requests have been made by the Innu in various areas of capacity development. However, as of January 2003, no Innu reported being trained or taking training in social work even though this has been recognized as an important need in both communities.

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- Adequate, trained and professional staffing is an issue for both communities. The lack of facilities in the communities, isolation and the need to relocate, working conditions and burnout are all obstacles to the retention of "outside" social workers staying in the Labrador Innu communities for extended periods of time. This is compounded by the high level of social and health problems in the two communities.

Community Health Component

- The elements of the Community Health components were developed quickly in response to a crisis response. Therefore, they are not based on comprehensive consultations with the Innu on their healing needs. While the response to the gas-sniffing crisis that led to the development of the Strategy was very collaborative, the quality of the collaboration appears to have declined since the initial response to the crisis. The Labrador Innu and Health Canada (HC) staff share the view that the working relationship between the two parties has been less than satisfactory. However, evidence of renewed collaboration efforts by the federal government can be found in a recent proposal by Health Canada for a joint planning process between the Sheshatshiu Innu Band Council (SIBC), the Director of the Sheshatshiu Innu Health Commission and the Director of the Family Treatment Program.
- Positive changes identified with this component include:
 - a more structured approach to setting budget and priorities (i.e less crisis-driven);
 - availability of a comprehensive range of services;
 - establishment of a range of significant partnerships;
 - and establishment of the Labrador Health Secretariat (including the hiring of professional staff) within two years.
- Strategy funding (HC) enables the communities to offer community-based programs which are managed and directed by the Innu. The Mushuau Innu reported that participants in all five of the funded Aftercare Programs deemed them to be successful and helpful in healing the community.
- The Innu Nation states that the community has made significant efforts in the area of community health planning but that the Strategy has made no significant contribution to this area. The community health planning element of this component was still in progress at the time of the evaluation.
- While the Government of Canada and the province originally made commitments to establish a medical detoxification facility for the Innu, they have since revised their commitment given the success of the family

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treatment programs in Sheshatshiu and the mobile treatment programs in Natuashish that offer safe houses in the communities with detoxification capacity. No progress has been made in establishing the safe houses because there is no clear jurisdictional responsibility for building and operating them.

Community Policing Component

The community policing activities funded under the Strategy include negotiation of a tripartite police service agreement under the First Nation Policing Policy and the building of a police detachment in Sheshatshiu. The Tripartite Policing Agreement has not yet been signed. There is an impasse in the community policing component: whereas the province is prepared for the establishment of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) in the two Innu communities, the Innu (based on past experience with the RCMP) want a First Nations-administered policing service. There is also a difference of opinions between the province and Solicitor General regarding the Innu's ability to develop their own police force in the short term. Unless this impasse is resolved, the Innu will not be satisfied with the policing in their communities.

The design of the Sheshatshiu detachment has been finalized; it will be a multi-purpose building shared with Health Canada. It has been designed to be a "community building" to help build better relationships with the community, which will hopefully result in less disruption. The building will include a community room where restorative justice can be practised. Elders and youth can also use the room for various meeting purposes.

Implications: This interim evaluation was conducted to meet the need for a report back to Cabinet in 2003. However, many deep-rooted issues were brought to the surface during the course of the evaluation that had an impact not only on the conduct of the study but on the future success of the Strategy. Many of the report's 23 conclusions and 33 recommendations are framed within a proposed step-by-step process (or implementation plan) of creating a "blended" model which, in the view of the evaluation team, is key to the future success of the Strategy. In addition, there are conclusions and recommendations regarding individual components. While important in and of themselves, they are, in the opinion of the evaluation team, of secondary importance to the conclusions and recommendations related to the implementation plan.

The steps in the process include developing common objectives and a process for achieving them, defining the elements of a new relationship, enhancing the Innu's status as partners (including joint responsibility and accountability,

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enhanced decision-making authority, improved information dissemination and communication, and enhanced capacity building), and developing the next evaluation jointly with the Innu.

**Corrective
Actions:**

A number of steps have already taken place to address some of the issues brought out in this interim evaluation. There have been a number of meetings, including an Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM)-level meeting as well as working group meetings with INAC, Health Canada (HC), Solicitor General (SolGen) and the RCMP to discuss the scope of the next Memorandum to Cabinet, based in part on the evaluation findings. HC has held a number of consultation meetings with the Innu leadership and members of the community to obtain information on what they hope to see included in the second phase of the Strategy. INAC, who has participated in those meetings, has also started its own consultation process where Health Canada, SolGen as well as the Innu are participants. These consultations were held in part to address the evaluation findings that the Innu communities were not consulted early enough in the development and planning of the first Strategy. In addition, a working group composed of federal and Innu representatives (and, possibly, of representatives from the province) will be put in place to jointly assess and prioritize the conclusions and recommendations made in the evaluation report.

Background:

The Labrador Innu are Naskapis and Montagnais Aboriginal people who reside in two separate communities. The Mushuau Innu (Naskapis) lived in Utshimassit (Davis Inlet) until December 2002 but have been relocated to the new community of Natuashish (Little Sango Pond). The Shetshatshiu Innu (Montagnais) reside in the community of Shetshatshiu.

The Innu have experienced social disorders such as alcohol and solvent abuse, family violence and suicides. In November 2000, following an appeal by the Innu leadership to deal with increased levels of gas sniffing amongst their youth, Ministers Tobin, Rock and Nault committed the government of Canada to a number of measures to respond to the crisis facing the Innu. These commitments, together with the earlier commitment to relocate the Mushuau Innu of Davis Inlet, form the heart of the Labrador Innu Comprehensive Healing Strategy, developed by INAC, in cooperation with Health Canada and Solicitor General. The Strategy was approved by Cabinet on June 15th, 2001. Its prime objective is to address the current health and socio-economic conditions of the Innu.

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The Strategy is composed of five main components:

- Community Health;
- Mushuau Innu Relocation;
- Registration and Reserve Creation;
- Programs and Services (education, social assistance, and child and family services); and
- Community Policing.

Each is led by one of the participating departments. These five components aim to address the wide-ranging spectrum of issues facing the Innu. Three major themes regroup these issues and have been developed to capture the intent of the Strategy:

- restoring health and hope;
- creating strong communities; and
- ensuring a future for the Innu.

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