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September 10, 2021

Mr. Patrick Wruck
Commission Secretary and Manager
Regulatory Support
British Columbia Utilities Commission
Suite 410, 900 Howe Street
Vancouver, BC V6Z 2N3

Dear Mr. Wruck:

RE: Project No. 1598990
British Columbia Utilities Commission (BCUC or Commission)
British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority (BC Hydro)
Formative Evaluation of the Indigenous Communities Pilot: Summary Report

BC Hydro is writing to submit the Formative Evaluation of the Indigenous Communities Pilot: F2017-F2019 Summary Report. During the Fiscal 2020 to Fiscal 2021 Revenue Requirements Application proceeding, BC Hydro committed to make this report available once it was completed.¹

This evaluation report assesses the Indigenous Communities Pilot work that BC Hydro conducted between fiscal 2017 and fiscal 2019. The pilot was intended to provide insight on how BC Hydro can effectively work with Indigenous communities to advance conservation and energy management and support the design and delivery of conservation and energy management programs to better serve Indigenous customers.

In May 2021, BC Hydro circulated a draft copy of the report to interested Indigenous communities that participated in the pilot. Feedback on the report was invited over a month-long comment period; however, no further feedback was provided to BC Hydro.

BC Hydro is responding to each of the recommendations contained in the evaluation report. BC Hydro's response is ongoing, with some recommendations already implemented in existing programs and others being considered in ongoing program development. Key aspects of BC Hydro's response are as follows:

¹ Refer to BC Hydro's response to Zone II IR 2.48.3 (Exhibit B-13) and to Transcript Volume 15, page 2868.

- BC Hydro acknowledges systemic bias and will make efforts to identify and address it in our conservation and energy management programs for Indigenous Communities;
- BC Hydro has created a new position (Demand Side Management Lead – Indigenous Relations) and allocated additional staff resources to support new DSM program offers for Indigenous and remote communities;
- BC Hydro's Indigenous Communities Conservation Program (**ICCP**) launched in fiscal 2020 reflects a strengths-based approach and alternative delivery methods modelled on the pilot initiative activities;
- A pilot with FortisBC, the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, and Community Energy Association is also currently in development and is anticipated to launch in fiscal 2023 to jointly support Indigenous community energy planning and implementation;
- BC Hydro will continue to explore training opportunities for local installers and continue to work in partnership with internal and external stakeholders to identify and leverage opportunities that enable Indigenous communities to advance conservation and energy management activities; and
- BC Hydro is in the process of developing a performance measurement framework for the NIA program, which it expects to use to report on how the program is addressing community goals and barriers. We plan to engage Indigenous communities in developing this framework.

For further information, please contact the undersigned.

Yours sincerely,



Chris Sandve
Chief Regulatory Officer

jm/rh

Enclosure

Copy to: **Zone II Ratepayers Group**
Attention: Jana McLean
jana@irislegal.ca



Formative Evaluation of the Indigenous Communities Pilot: F2017-F2019

Summary Report

September 2021

Prepared by:

BC Hydro Conservation and Energy Management

This report was written on the unceded traditional territories of the
Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations.

Introduction

BC Hydro's Conservation and Energy Management Key Business Unit ran the Indigenous Communities Pilot from fiscal 2017 through fiscal 2019. The pilot was intended to provide insight on how BC Hydro can effectively work with Indigenous communities to advance conservation and energy management and support the design and delivery of conservation and energy management programs to better serve Indigenous customers.

A formative evaluation was completed by BC Hydro at the end of the pilot. Formative evaluations are used to inform the development and implementation of programs and influence design decisions while they are being made. Formative evaluations explore what participants think, identify what is not working well and why, and suggest or implement changes based on those findings. A formative evaluation was appropriate in this case to inform BC Hydro's ongoing development and implementation of Indigenous community programs. BC Hydro is using the preliminary key findings and recommendations of the formative evaluation, as presented below, to improve its programs serving Indigenous communities.

Program Overview

Indigenous customers are eligible for many of BC Hydro's residential and commercial conservation and energy management programs. However, BC Hydro recognizes that Indigenous customers, particularly those in remote communities, face unique barriers that may contribute to them being underserved by existing programs. The following categories of barriers were explored at the outset of the pilot:

- **Awareness:** Lack of awareness about energy use and energy -related concepts in general, including, but not limited to, conservation and energy management;
- **Acceptance:** Indigenous communities may be reluctant to have BC Hydro or people from outside the community in their homes, which leads to a lack of acceptance of current program delivery models that make use of external contractors. Additionally, the benefits of conservation and energy management may not be evident to communities that have not experienced them firsthand;
- **Affordability:** Some rural and remote areas have less access to economic opportunities and may face lower income levels as a result. In some areas, housing conditions may lead to disproportionate spending of income on power and heat, and/or compromising on comfort and convenience;
- **Accessibility:** Due to their rural or remote geography, smaller populations and internet connectivity, information, technologies and services related to energy efficiency may be limited or inaccessible in some Indigenous communities; and
- **Availability:** Availability was not seen to be a barrier at the outset of the pilot because the products and services exist in the market. Energy efficient products or services may be less affordable and/or accessible in rural and remote locations.

The purpose of the pilot was to work with Indigenous communities to explore barriers and develop approaches that might effectively reduce or eliminate them. This was done with communities connected to the integrated grid and those in the Non -Integrated Area (**NIA**) of BC Hydro's service territory.

The main components of the pilot were broadly defined and included: community information sessions; education and training; alternative program design and delivery models; energy-focused staff positions; and community energy planning. Specific activities were rolled out as part of the pilot and adjustments made to better suit each community.

Evaluation Approach

The evaluation sought to address the following five evaluation objectives:

1. Determine the effectiveness of the delivery methods and tools meant to increase understanding of energy-related concepts and build awareness of conservation and energy management;
2. Determine the extent to which support for human resources, educational and training activities helped to increase community (band) capacity for conservation and energy management;
3. Examine the effectiveness of pilot activities in improving implementation of conservation and energy management opportunities within Indigenous communities;
4. Examine the extent to which Indigenous communities have been able to undertake and implement community energy planning activities; and
5. Identify ways in which pilot program activities helped strengthen relationships between BC Hydro and Indigenous communities.

A variety of data sources were used to address the evaluation objectives, mostly qualitative. Qualitative research methods support in-depth exploration of design and delivery issues and experiences of participants, which suit formative evaluation. Qualitative analysis was used to identify key themes and provide anecdotal, experiential evidence. However, the results may not be representative of all participants or potential participants.

The main data sources used for this evaluation included: semi-structured interviews with members of a number of participating communities (including elected leaders, band administration, and community members); program tracking data; program reports and communications; post-participation feedback surveys for a planning workshop and an on-line course; and, secondary research conducted to support the pilot.¹ Interviews were also conducted with four BC Hydro staff (three Indigenous Relationship Leads and the Pilot Project Manager).

Community Recruitment

Recruitment of Indigenous communities for the pilot happened in two ways:

- Some of the communities were currently engaged in Relationship Agreement negotiations with BC Hydro. Pilot activities with these communities were largely delivered by working through staff in BC Hydro's Indigenous Relations Key Business Unit rather than being delivered directly by pilot staff; and
- Other communities were recruited through word-of-mouth and direct relationship-building between pilot staff and communities that showed interest and readiness to pursue conservation and energy management activities.

Thirteen Indigenous communities participated in one or more pilot activities. Participating communities are listed in Table 1.

¹ This research included a scan of community energy planning practices in North America, an in-depth review of 12 Indigenous community energy plan documents and interviews with 5 individuals involved in Indigenous community energy planning in B.C.

Table 1. Overview of Participating Indigenous Communities²

Community*	Overview ³
Akisq'nuk First Nation	- a community of about 300 members situated in southeastern B.C., in the northern part of the traditional territory of the Ktunaxa Nation (grid connected)
Aq'am First Nation	- a community of close to 400 situated in southeastern B.C., in the central part of the traditional territory of the Ktunaxa Nation (grid connected)
Dease River First Nation	- a community of 80 members situated in northern Nechako region of B.C., in the northern part of the traditional territory of the Kaska Nation (NIA)
Kanaka Bar Indian Band	- a community of approximately 70 full-time residents located 14 kilometres south of Lytton in the traditional territory of the Nlaka'pamux Nation (grid connected)
Kwadacha First Nation	- a community of 350 members situated in the northern half of the traditional Tse'Khene territory in northeastern B.C. (NIA)
McLeod Lake Indian Band	- a community of just over 500 in northeastern B.C., in the southern part of the traditional Tse'Khene territory (grid connected)
Nuxalk Nation	- a community of about 900 located in the central coast region of B.C. in the traditional territory of the Nuxalk Nation (NIA)
Okanagan Indian Band	- a community of close to 1,900 members located in the southern interior of B.C. in the traditional territory of the Squilxw Nation (grid connected)
Old Massett Village Council	- a community of approximately 555 members located on the northern shore of Graham Island, Haida Gwaii, off the central coast of B.C., in Haida Nation territory (NIA)
Saulteau First Nation	- a community of close to 400 situated in northeastern B.C., in the traditional territory of the Dunne-Za Nation (grid connected)
Skidegate Band Council	- a community of over 800 members located at the southern end of Graham Island, Haida Gwaii, off the central coast of B.C., in Haida Nation territory (NIA)
Tsay Keh Dene First Nation	- a community of about 300 members situated in northeastern B.C., in the traditional territory of the Tse'Khene (NIA)
Upper Nicola Indian Band	- a community of about 270 members situated in the southern interior of B.C. in the traditional territory of the Squilxw Nation (grid connected)

* Note that a few Indigenous communities that were minimally engaged in the pilot are not listed in the table

Pilot Activities

BC Hydro worked with participating Indigenous communities, two Indigenous organizations and one non-profit organization to trial different activities and approaches over the three-year pilot period. It is important to note that pilot activities were purposefully fluid in an attempt to better respond to the needs and characteristics of participating communities. The ways in which the activities were selected and implemented were community-specific. The main activities rolled out during the pilot are summarized below. The depth of engagement varied widely depending on the pilot activities in which they participated.

² The information in this table was amalgamated from various sources including: community websites; BC Assembly of First Nations; Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Statistics Canada Census, and <https://native-land.ca/>.

³ The community sizes presented in this table are, to the extent possible, considered to represent the number of people living on the reserve areas overseen by the band.

Community information sessions

Different delivery methods were used depending on the information being delivered and following the advice of band leaders and staff on the best approaches for engaging community members.

Participating Indigenous communities were at different stages of engagement in conservation and energy management, which was reflected in the number and type of activities undertaken. Table 2 summarizes the informational activities undertaken with Indigenous communities during the pilot.

Table 2. Summary of Pilot Activities to Increase Awareness and Understanding of Energy

Community	# Sessions	Delivery Method & Content Summary
Saulteau First Nation	1 session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-person community meeting to provide introduction and overview of Energy Conservation Assistance Program (ECAP), demonstration of energy savings products to be installed and introduction of local installer hired to support program delivery
McLeod Lake Indian Band (MLIB)	5 sessions, plus online outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-person presentations (2) to community members in Prince George and McLeod Lake to introduce and kick off ECAP and the community energy planning (CEP) process Open house and dinner in McLeod Lake to provide overview of ECAP and demonstrate energy savings products to be installed Community Outreach booth at two MLIB Annual General Assembly meetings (over 100 attendees at each) to provide info about ECAP and CEP process Provided Energy Champion with energy saving tips to post on community Facebook page
Skidegate Band Council	2 sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community meeting and dinner, focused on energy issues. Attended annual open house and set up a table with the Band Housing Manager to provide education on heat pump operations and maintenance and encourage community members to trade in old holiday lights for LED strings
Old Massett Village Council	1 session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community open house and dinner where other topics were being discussed, with a portion of the time devoted to discussions regarding energy.
Tsay Keh Dene	Multiple sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community dinner to introduce Energy Champion Door-to-door campaign for LED lightbulb exchange Community events and activities to support delivery of BC Hydro's Home Energy Report trial, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open House; LED holiday light exchange; and Community barbeque where Home Energy Reports were distributed at three different times of the year.
Kwadacha First Nation	Multiple sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrations using a kilowatt reader/home energy monitor to show how much energy is used by different lightbulbs and appliances Door-to-door campaign for LED lightbulb exchange LED holiday light exchange at band office Support for the development of a video to raise awareness about the ongoing home energy upgrade initiative in Kwadacha⁴

⁴ "A Home Warming Story: Energy Efficiency and Savings at Kwadacha First Nation" (May 2016), at <https://youtu.be/3sEHF9kSxfw>.

Community	# Sessions	Delivery Method & Content Summary
Aq'am First Nation	1 session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community meeting about the Nation's Housing Plan provided the opportunity to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present programs to support home energy upgrades; Profile MyHydro web portal as a tool for managing home energy use; Demonstrate opportunities for air sealing and insulation using a model wall assembly; and Provide one-to-one customer service support to community members interested in discussing their consumption and bills.
Ktunaxa Nation	1 session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attended Ktunaxa Nation Annual General Assembly with Community Outreach booth to talk to community members on a one-to-one basis about pilot activities with member Bands including Aq'am and Akisq'nuk

Support for energy-focused positions

BC Hydro explored how energy-focused positions at different levels (i.e., community, provincial, regional, Nation) might serve to increase capacity and knowledge to advance conservation and energy management in Indigenous communities. These positions⁵ were meant to champion energy conservation, assist community members in managing energy use and costs, support community participation in BC Hydro's conservation and energy management programs, and manage development and implementation of Community Energy Plans⁶. Table 3 outlines the energy-focused positions that were planned and supported through the pilot.

⁵ BC Hydro generically referred to these positions as Energy Champions. Participating communities and organizations were free to give the positions a title to fit their organizational and community contexts.

⁶ Community Energy Plans are long-term plans that include targets, goals and actions related to energy and climate action.

Table 3. Summary of Energy Champion Positions Planned and Supported Through the Pilot

Community/Organization	Scale	Details
First Nations Energy and Mining Council	Province	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salary support (co-funded with FortisBC) provided for a Community Energy Programs Specialist position to conduct outreach with Indigenous communities throughout BC and support the advancement of projects through utility programs.
Coastal First Nation Great Bear Initiative	Region and community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salary support provided for a Community Energy Facilitator for the Great Bear Initiative Society. This position serves all the Coastal First Nations. Salary support planned (co-funding with Natural Resources Canada and BC Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation) for Climate Action Coordinator positions on band administrations, including Skidegate, Old Massett, Nuxalk, Heiltsuk, Gitga'at and Metlakatla. These positions were not filled during the pilot, but have since been filled.
Community Energy Association	Nation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salary support provided towards the existing Community Energy Manager for the Regional District of East Kootenay to provide support to the Ktunaxa Nation and member bands to advance conservation and energy management initiatives, largely focused on home energy upgrades.
Kwadacha First Nation	Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salary support provided to the band to support an Energy Champion
Tsay Keh Dene Nation	Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salary support provided to the band to support an Energy Steward
McLeod Lake Indian Band	Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salary support provided to the band to support an Environmental Champion
Musqueam Indian Band	Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salary support (co-funding with FortisBC) provided for a Community Energy Coordinator position. This position was not filled during the pilot, but has since been filled.
Okanagan Nation Alliance	Nation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned, but did not go forward during the pilot program as the position was being negotiated as part of a Relationship Agreement and negotiations were ongoing.
Ktunaxa Nation Council	Nation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned, but did not go forward during the pilot program as the Nation wanted to get more input from their member bands before proceeding.

Education and training

As part of the pilot, BC Hydro delivered or supported a range of educational and training activities targeted at various positions within communities and community members. The activities and target groups are summarized in Table 4. BC Hydro also undertook additional knowledge sharing activities with all the Energy Champions to share concepts as well as information about the tools and programs available to support customers in reducing and managing energy use.

Table 4. Types of Training and Target Groups

Target Group	Type of Training
Energy Champions	Four onboarding sessions provided by BC Hydro program staff to introduce conservation and energy management concepts
Housing Managers and Energy Champions	Two one-day, in-person workshops on Managing Household Energy Use delivered by BC Hydro contractors
Housing Managers	Developed and provided funding support for the Energy Management for First Nations Housing Managers on-line course through Vancouver Island University
Installers and community members	Five one- to two-day, in-person, hands-on training sessions on how to assess energy saving opportunities in homes and how to install basic energy saving measures
Community members in training	Hired contractors to provide training on energy management to take advantage of ad hoc opportunities presented by bands that had trades training programs in place to support housing renovation and construction
Band leaders and administration; Climate Action Coordinators	Support for peer networks with opportunities for training and shared learning through Fraser Basin Council's First Nation Home EnergySave Program and through the Coastal First Nations Great Bear Initiative Capacity Building Project

Alternative program design and delivery models

BC Hydro implemented different approaches to provide programs and services to Indigenous communities to better suit some of their unique circumstances and needs. These approaches ranged from making minor adjustments to existing program application processes, communications and reporting for Indigenous communities, to assessing the potential for new energy saving opportunities in Indigenous communities, to exploring opportunities to work in partnership with bands to deliver programs to their community members. Table 5 provides a summary of the pilot activities undertaken and the participating communities.

Table 5. Approaches to Improve Access to and Implementation of Conservation and Energy Management

Approach	Pilot Activities	Participating Communities
Adjustments to existing programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Energy Conservation Assistance Program (ECAP) enhanced communications and reporting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Saulteau First Nation, McLeod Lake Indian Band, Okanagan Indian Band, Upper Nicola Indian Band
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Home Renovation Rebates bulk application process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skidegate Band Council
Exploring new program delivery models	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ECAP alternative delivery model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skidegate Band Council, Old Massett Village Council, Nuxalk Nation, Akisq'nuk First Nation, Aq'am First Nation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ECAP rebate model for Indigenous-led home energy upgrades 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kwadacha First Nation, Dease River First Nation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct install approach for commercial buildings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Saulteau First Nation
Investigating the potential for new energy saving opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ECAP enhanced assessments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Saulteau First Nation, Okanagan Indian Band, Upper Nicola Indian Band
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from communities participating in the ECAP alternative delivery model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skidegate Band Council, Old Massett Village Council, Nuxalk Nation, Akisq'nuk First Nation, Aq'am First Nation

Community energy planning

The pilot included work with Indigenous communities to support community energy planning initiatives that would embed consideration for energy into long-term community plans and policies and encourage the pursuit of conservation and energy management activities. This encompassed an array of planning and policy initiatives such as Community Energy Plans, Energy Management Plans (medium-term plans that focus on conservation and energy management opportunities in the community), design support for high performance new construction, and support for housing policies and guidelines (for new and

existing homes). Table 6 summarizes the community energy planning activities undertaken by participating communities as part of the three-year pilot.

Table 6. Summary of Community Energy Planning Activities with Indigenous Communities

Community	Activities related to Community Energy Planning
McLeod Lake Indian Band	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding for the development of a community energy plan (CEP) CEP implementation support (e.g., funding for Energy Champion position, delivery of ECAP in the community)
Kwadacha First Nation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding for the development of an Energy Management Plan (EMP) EMP implementation support (e.g., funding for Energy Champion position, support for home energy assessments and upgrades through ECAP Rebate Model, support for community engagement and training initiatives)
Tsay Keh Dene Nation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding for the development of an EMP EMP implementation support (e.g., funding for Energy Champion position, support for home energy assessments, support for community engagement and training initiatives) Funding for consultant to provide energy modeling of new home designs and provide a report documenting energy savings options for building envelope and mechanical systems, including costs, payback and recommendations
Nuxalk Nation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding to support Nuxalk Nation's new construction design guidelines and specifications, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Energy modelling; Airtightness testing; A report documenting recommendations for building envelope, mechanical systems and plumbing; and The development of a video series on building best practices for the "wet west coast".

Indigenous communities participating in the pilot had varying levels of interest and capacity in articulating and formalizing plans and policies related to energy use and management.

Preliminary Key Findings

A summary of the key findings related to the activities described above is provided below.

1. Collaboration between BC Hydro staff and elected Indigenous community leaders and administration staff was crucial to the successful delivery of informational sessions in the communities. Interviewees felt this resulted in the sessions being incorporated into Indigenous community events and the content being more relevant to the community situation. Delivering the sessions as part of community events helped to maximize attendance and provided opportunities for the community members themselves to be involved. In some of the larger communities, more than 100 individuals attended these events. Furthermore, being asked to present at a community event was also a way for leaders and staff to show their commitment to conservation and energy management to community members. The number of sessions delivered in a community varied from one to several depending on their preferences and circumstances. Most interviewees felt that print material was also a helpful way to relay information, especially in communities with limited in-home access to the internet.
2. Providing practical information and illustrative demonstrations at community events were considered the most effective methods of delivering information. This delivery approach helped to generate more awareness among community members due to the wider reach achieved through presenting at community events. Improvements to energy awareness, generally, and understanding of conservation and energy management, in particular, became noticeable after attending and participating in the information sessions. Energy Champions noted that community members were more aware of their energy use and more frequently reviewed their energy bills and asked questions about how to use less energy. There was anecdotal evidence of behaviour change, such as

turning down the thermostat when windows were open and community members becoming interested in installing energy saving measures such as weather stripping.

3. The approach used in the pilot allowed flexibility in the delivery of activities and in most cases, lessons learned along the way, such as how best to deliver information and training, were implemented while activities were still being piloted. As a result, the deployment of the pilot was slower than anticipated. BC Hydro's initial expectations around timing were not realistic and were based on assumptions and experiences developed through program delivery to non-Indigenous audiences. During the pilot, the project team adjusted expectations and activities to allow for things to roll out in a manner better suited to the communities.
4. Energy Champions were established in three communities and in three organizations (as identified in Table 3) and were key to engaging communities in conservation and energy management. Community members viewed the Energy Champion as someone who is independent and is there to help residents. Energy Champions often acted as the liaison between BC Hydro and the community, increasing general awareness of energy and building support for conservation and energy management among community members. The Energy Champion played an important role in communicating BC Hydro messages to community members and provided a single point of contact on matters related to conservation and energy management, including answering questions about electricity bills, saving energy and participating in BC Hydro programs. In communities experiencing ongoing impacts from BC Hydro's historical actions, the Energy Champion served as the face of BC Hydro initiatives, helping to address the acceptance barrier and build support for the practice of conservation and energy management in the community.
5. Overall the ECAP Alternative Delivery Model and ECAP Rebate Model proved to be successful ways to address the awareness, acceptance, affordability and accessibility barriers, and provided new training and employment opportunities for community members. The ECAP Alternative Delivery Model trained community members to be home energy assessors and installers. Well-trained local installers were critical to the successful delivery of home energy upgrades and having local installers was well received by community members. As explained by interviewees, community members generally trusted the local installers and were more willing to complete the upgrade. While availability was originally not thought to be a barrier, availability of energy savings products proved to be a barrier at times at the local level. Overall, the ECAP Alternative Delivery Model improved the availability of energy savings products and installation services within the pilot communities.
6. The pilot offered community members training, knowledge and skills development and created employment opportunities. Participating community members benefitted by developing new skills, enhancing and utilizing existing skills, and obtaining local employment. There were other positive social outcomes for some individuals who participated in training as well, such as contributing to their community or finding new employment. Several individuals who were interviewed, including installers and Energy Champions, suggested expanding the installers' role and skills by training them on other energy conservation measures. Energy Champions also expressed interest in receiving additional training and mentorship to enhance their role. Continued skills and knowledge development would help to maintain and expand the accessibility to, and availability of, conservation and energy management expertise within the communities in the future, as well as facilitate progression on related activities such as community energy planning.
7. Community energy planning requires a flexible approach to recognize that communities have different needs and varying degrees of readiness to take on community energy and climate action work. Some communities may benefit from focusing efforts on advancing housing assessments and upgrades, whereas others have implemented these opportunities and want to focus on planning for renewable energy opportunities. Common across all participating communities was that, to advance

energy planning and achieve the desired longer-term outcomes, bands require continued assistance to develop the necessary capacity to engage in and sustain community energy planning and implementation activities such as developing housing policy, implementing building energy upgrades and supporting members in reducing energy use and costs. Overall, a three-year pilot was not long enough to advance community energy planning activities in many of the communities.

8. Conservation and energy management initiatives appeared to be a way to promote and support stronger relationships between Indigenous communities and BC Hydro. There was little negative feedback about the pilot activities and the outcomes were generally viewed as positive. Where there were mixed outcomes with respect to strengthening the relationships, this generally related to the negative historical experiences of some communities with BC Hydro. In these communities, there remains considerable animosity towards and mistrust of BC Hydro.

Recommendations

A summary of the evaluation recommendations, based on the preliminary key findings, is provided below.

1. When working with the communities, recognize and be aware of the systemic bias against Indigenous peoples built into public sector structures and processes by ensuring community leaders and interested community members have the opportunity to contribute to the development of ideas, information sessions, communications/reporting and evaluation.
2. Work with community representatives to develop a performance measurement plan to collect data and information on an on-going basis for monitoring, reporting and assessing the success of programs and initiatives in addressing barriers and achieving objectives.
3. Take a strength-based approach⁷ to support the development of conservation and energy management practices in Indigenous communities, recognizing and building on the positive aspects and existing capacity of the communities (e.g., identifying and focusing on community members' skills and interests). This could include finding ways to communicate and celebrate successes of a community achieving milestones in conservation and energy management that are important to them.
4. Continue to work with Indigenous communities to research and develop the Community Energy Planning approach/guidelines to gain a deeper understanding of the barriers to planning. Identify effective and efficient ways to support planning and implementation activities such as developing housing policy and advancing energy upgrades in homes and community buildings.
5. Continue to adapt and incorporate alternative program delivery options, such as community installers and bulk rebates, in consultation with Indigenous communities to help address barriers to their participation in BC Hydro's conservation and energy management programs.
6. Expand capacity building opportunities to develop greater competency and continuity in energy-related positions within the communities, including Energy Champions, installers and others.
7. Consider working with other BC Hydro departments, partners (FortisBC) and different levels of government to integrate efforts at promoting conservation and energy management with other initiatives aimed at improving the housing/building infrastructure, community capacity for implementing projects, and economic development.

⁷ A strength-based approach does not focus on deficits, rather it builds on what is working well and the positive elements already in place (e.g., Foot & Hopkins (2010)).

8. Find ways that BC Hydro's Conservation and Energy Management and Indigenous Relations Key Business Units can partner to better support conservation and energy management initiatives in Indigenous communities, such as creating a shared staff position to support Indigenous communities in accessing conservation programs.
9. Design and delivery of new programs for Indigenous communities will require coordination of BC Hydro staff resources from across BC Hydro's Conservation and Energy Management Key Business Unit (i.e., Marketing, Operations, Engineering and Evaluation) to enable effective and efficient design and delivery of initiatives to Indigenous communities, adjusting resource allocation to suit community needs throughout the adoption of conservation and management practices.