



**FIRST PEOPLES'**  
CULTURAL COUNCIL

# Indigenous Cultural Heritage Infrastructure Grant

2021-2022 Program Report



# FPCC ICHIG Report

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## Executive Summary

This study of the the First Peoples' Cultural Council (FPCC) Indigenous Cultural Heritage Infrastructure Grant (ICHIG) program (2021 and 2022)<sup>1</sup> examines how the program is relevant to the needs and objectives of First Nations in British Columbia, FPCC, the Province of British Columbia, and the conservation and revitalization of First Nations' cultural heritage.

The study examined program documents, including project applications and interim project reports, as well as literature on comparable grants. The main source of information came from nine interviews with individuals directly involved in projects that received ICHIG funding and four individuals working in a senior capacity in the related fields of tourism and cultural heritage. The study contributes qualitative information from interviews and readings to answer two important questions: "What were the overall outcomes of the ICHIG?" and "Does investment in B.C. First Nations' cultural heritage infrastructure help safeguard and increase the vitality of their culture and heritage?"

FPCC's ICHIG program has received three rounds of funding since being established in 2021. ICHIG 1 (2021) was initiated with a grant of \$4M from the B.C. government's Community Economic Recovery Infrastructure Program (CERIP). ICHIG 2 (2022) was financed through a \$7.5M 150 Time Immemorial grant from B.C.'s Ministry of Municipal Affairs. Funding for ICHIG 1 and 2 would not have been possible without the continuous support and advocacy of the Heritage Branch, who have been important allies in this work. The Heritage Branch staff have collaborated closely with FPCC on both ICHIG 1 and 2.

More recently, the new Heritage Infrastructure Program (HIP – formerly ICHIG 1 & 2) was created with \$5M in funding from the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation (MIRR) of the B.C. government, which is not included in this report. This report will only be focusing on ICHIG 1 and 2.

The ICHIG program supported projects to conserve, repair or develop Indigenous cultural heritage infrastructure, including:

- Historical and cultural places, archives, and cultural heritage collections that are of collective value to an Indigenous community
- Infrastructure such as buildings, trails and structures that support public and community access to:
  - Historic places and stories about them
  - Transmission of community memory and traditional practices, crafts and trades
  - Cultural materials that support telling stories about historic sites and the transmission of community memory and traditional practices, arts and trades

Eligible organizations included:

- B.C. First Nations band or tribal councils
- Not-for-profit societies registered in B.C. in good standing and governed by Indigenous individuals (at least 51% of directors identify as Indigenous)
- Indigenous-led museums and cultural spaces
- Urban and off-reserve organizations

A total of 28 projects were funded through ICHIG 1 and ICHIG 2.

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<sup>1</sup> To know more about the program: [Heritage Infrastructure Program - First Peoples Cultural Council \(fpcc.ca\)](https://www.fpcc.ca/heritage-infrastructure-program)

Evidence from the study shows that FPCC's ICHIG program served stated goals of both the Province of British Columbia and First Nations communities, and that it is unique and appropriate to the needs of First Nations in B.C. Key findings from the study are:

- ICHIG is unique in Canada in being a cultural heritage program administered and delivered by an Indigenous-led organization
- Grants are targeted exclusively to infrastructure, which is an area of funding that is under-served by existing grants for both First Nations and conventional cultural heritage
- FPCC's ICHIG program proves the importance of physical infrastructure to the safeguarding and vitality of First Nations cultural heritage
- The ICHIG program is directly relevant to achieving the high-level objectives of FPCC to strengthen First Nations' stewardship of their cultural heritage
- By choosing FPCC to administer the grants supported by B.C. funding, the province supported a further step towards First Nations autonomy over their cultural heritage
- Infrastructure developments and improvements supported by the ICHIG program were connected to sustaining and reinvigorating cultural heritage programs, such as a language protection, land-based healing programs, cultural centres and repatriation
- The ICHIG program has led to the creation of a network of individuals learning from each other and from FPCC and its advisors about cultural heritage ideas and solutions
- The ICHIG program helped stop the loss of First Nations cultural heritage in BC
- Funding of First Nations' cultural heritage infrastructure through the ICHIG program is being used to leverage funding from other sources for cultural heritage and tourism in communities
- In addition to employment and training in communities, the ICHIG program provided a unique opportunity to support the transfer of knowledge within a First Nation about the identification, conservation and sharing of First Nations cultural heritage

# 1 About the Study

## 1.1 Purpose

This study of the First Peoples' Cultural Council (FPCC) Indigenous Cultural Heritage Infrastructure Grant (ICHIG) program (2021 and 2022) examines how the program is relevant to the needs and objectives of First Nations in British Columbia (B.C.), FPCC, the Province of British Columbia, and First Nations' cultural heritage itself.<sup>2</sup> The study contributes qualitative information<sup>3</sup> for answering two important questions: "What were the overall outcomes of the ICHIG?" and "Does investment in B.C. First Nations' cultural heritage infrastructure help safeguard and increase the vitality of their culture and heritage?"

Most of the information used for the study came from interviews with grant recipients and individuals working in the fields of Indigenous heritage and tourism. They spoke of connections between infrastructure investments and the revitalization of all aspects of Indigenous cultural heritage, including language, repatriation, arts and living heritage. Interviewees also reflected on how funding for cultural heritage infrastructure can be impactful for First Nations communities in B.C.

## 1.2 Methodology

The study was conducted in three phases – desktop research and review of grant materials, interviews, and analysis and reporting. While the study was not designed as a program evaluation, which would consider the program's efficiency and test options to improve its performance, the study includes recommendations for adjustments to the program if it continues based on the interviews and other findings from the research.

### 1.2.1 COVID-19 Context

The program operated almost entirely within the window of time when COVID 19 restrictions were in place. Interviewees spoke about labour shortages and supply-chain disruptions related to COVID-19, but they found ways to address these challenges, often through a short extension to the project schedule.

### 1.2.2 Lines of Evidence

The report relied on four types of evidence:

- Discussions with FPCC staff assisting with the administration of the grants
- Interviews with grant recipients and representatives of cultural heritage and Indigenous tourism organizations
- Program documents, including project applications and available interim reports (about 14 in total) from successful projects, as well as literature on comparable grants
- The experience of the study lead<sup>4</sup> with cultural heritage infrastructure programs and Indigenous cultural heritage

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<sup>2</sup> When referring to FPCC's program, the term *B.C. First Nations* will be used to represent FPCC's mandate to support the revitalization of B.C. First Nations' languages, arts, culture and heritage. When referring to national and international efforts, projects and legislation to steward heritage, the term *Indigenous* will be used to represent First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

<sup>3</sup> A quantitative approach to answering the question was not attempted. The data available was very limited and did not include information such as the financial value of the infrastructure developed through the program, audits of spending or other measures that would be needed to determine a return on investment.

<sup>4</sup> Julie Harris is a professional member of the Canadian Association of Heritage Professionals with over 30 years of experience in the field of heritage conservation. For the past 15 years, she has served numerous Indigenous

### 1.2.3 Interviews and Input from FPCC

The study lead was in regular contact with FPCC, which assisted with setting up interviews and providing access to materials about the ICHIG program.

The project included interviews with nine people working in a project management or oversight capacity on projects funded through the ICHIG program and four individuals working for Indigenous or non-Indigenous heritage and tourism organizations, some of whom have been working in the field of Indigenous cultural heritage and Indigenous tourism for 30 years or more. Almost all individuals interviewed have extensive experience applying for grants for cultural heritage projects.

All interviews were done by videoconference (Zoom™ or MS Teams™) or by phone, depending on the technical preferences of the participants. An honorarium of \$100 was offered for each interview. The interviews were completed in August, September and November 2022. For most interviews, the study lead spoke to the interviewees with a representative of FPCC. The interviews conducted without FPCC representation showed that the responses concerning the administration and oversight of FPCC ICHIG were the same, whether the FPCC representative was present or not.

A generic interview guide was used to elicit information about :

- role of the interviewee in a funded project
- the scope of the funded project
- the recipient's experience of applying for and managing a project with FPCC funding
- perceptions of the value of the funded project to the community
- lessons learned by the project team on project management
- levels of job creation and local investments arising from the project
- relationships built through the project.

### 1.2.4 Program Documents and File Reviews

The study accessed grant applications to understand what types of projects were proposed, whether funded or not.

The documentation demonstrated that the ICHIG program had:

- Clear objectives
- Defined program parameters and eligibility criteria for projects and recipients
- A robust review system of applications, including peer review meetings to consider all applications that met the eligibility criteria
- A wide choice of eligible projects to fund

The study examined material about other grants that might serve as comparisons to the FPCC ICHIG program in terms of eligibility, value of the grants and purpose. No federal or B.C. grants, other than B.C.'s Community Economic Recovery Infrastructure Program (CERIP), which funded both FPCC and Heritage BC infrastructure programs, were identified as being comparable, so a broader scope of grants was examined, such as those administered by the Canada Council, Museums Assistance Program and others. The reviews sought to understand the unique and complementary features of FPCC's ICHIG program with other grants.

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organizations on cultural heritage and public history projects. She was also a co-researcher and analyst for the *Formative Evaluation of the Commercial Heritage Properties Incentive Fund* conducted for Parks Canada in 2007.

## 2 ICHIG Funding and Objectives

### 2.1 Objectives

FPCC's heritage infrastructure program (ICHIG 1, 2 and now HIP) has received three rounds of funding since being established in 2021. ICHIG 1 was initiated with a one-time grant of \$4M from the B.C. government's CERIP. ICHIG 2 was possible with a one-time \$7.5M 150 Time Immemorial grant from B.C.'s Ministry of Municipal Affairs with the support of the Heritage Branch. Funding for ICHIG 1 and 2 was made available to FPCC from the support and advocacy of the Heritage Branch. Without the Heritage Branch's support, it is likely this funding would not have been achieved. More recently, the new Heritage Infrastructure Program (HIP – formerly ICHIG 1 & 2) was renamed and created with \$5M in funding from the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation (MIRR) of the B.C. government. MIRR funding was provided in 2022 and will end in 2025, which offers three years of stable HIP funding for FPCC's Heritage Program.

The ICHIG program supports Indigenous peoples' efforts to be the rightful stewards of their cultural heritage, a fundamental principle set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). The fund is an essential initial step towards the reparation of past acts of colonization and assimilation that deeply fractured and attempted to eradicate Indigenous cultures and histories.

The ICHIG program is intended to support projects that conserve, repair or develop Indigenous cultural heritage infrastructure. This includes:

- Historical and cultural places, archives, and cultural heritage collections that are of collective value to an Indigenous community
- Infrastructure such as buildings, trails and structures that support public and community access to:
  - Historic places and stories about them
  - Transmission of community memory and traditional practices, crafts and trades
  - Cultural materials that support telling stories about historic sites and the transmission of community memory and traditional practices, arts and trades

### 2.2 Eligibility

Organizations were required to have a mandate or focus that includes Indigenous heritage. Eligible organizations included:

- B.C. First Nations band or tribal councils
- Not-for-profit societies registered in B.C. in good standing and governed by Indigenous individuals (at least 51% of directors identify as Indigenous)
- Indigenous-led museums and cultural spaces
- Urban and off-reserve organizations

The following types of projects were considered eligible:

- Repairs and upgrades to museums, archives and community collections storage and environmental quality
- Upgrades to collection shelving and storage
- Upgrades to building infrastructure, including doors, windows and lighting

- Construction of repository and archival spaces
- Installation of accessibility aids, such as ramps and docks
- Development and maintenance of culturally significant trails
- Construction and upgrades to longhouses, big houses, carving sheds, community meat freezers and meat processing stations

## 2.3 Applications

Applicants during ICHIG 1 (2021) could apply for grants of between \$100K and \$400K. For ICHIG 2 (2022) only projects between \$150K and \$400K were eligible, but they were required to show a minimum of in-kind or monetary contributions for up to 20% of the overall project budget.

A detailed list of eligible expenses was set out by FPCC as part of the grant application documentation. Examples of eligible expenses included construction costs, archaeological assessments related to an infrastructure project, professional fees, furniture essential to the operation of the project and Indigenous honoraria, when required.

Examples of ineligible expenses included liability insurance for directors, legal fees, hospitality costs, real property acquisition, stand-alone concept plans and feasibility studies, and overhead costs and salaries above 15% of the total budget.

### 2.3.1 Number of Applications

FPCC received 104 applications for ICHIG 1. Of these, 11 were successful through the peer review process. The remainder (93) did not receive a grant. Another project, made possible through a separate allocation of funding, was added to the program because it met all requirements.

FPCC received 64 applications for ICHIG 2, with 16 successful through the peer review process. The other 47 applicants were unsuccessful in receiving a grant. When additional funds were accessed by FPCC, one more project was added to the program.

### 2.3.2 Project Types

In the design of the program, eligibility rules were established for recipients and projects, as well as start dates and end dates. With a funding limit of \$400K, the ICHIG program was not intended or designed for large initiatives, such as new public museums or cultural centres.

Following is a summary of the types of projects that received funding through FPCC's ICHIG program (see Appendix 1 for the full list):

Category	Number
<b>Cemetery Renewal &amp; Restoration</b>	5
<b>Cultural Centre &amp; Trail Upgrade</b>	2
<b>Cultural Food Space</b>	4
<b>Cultural Learning Centre</b>	3
<b>Heritage Site Development</b>	3
<b>Interpretation &amp; Exhibit Renewal</b>	1
<b>Museum or Repatriation Facility Upgrades &amp; Construction</b>	8
<b>Outdoor Cultural Spaces &amp; Trails</b>	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>



Examples of projects that received ICHIG funding included renovations to increase the public safety, accessibility and cultural functions of a cultural centre and the pathways to the centre; renewing and adding interpretive elements to a cultural centre that also serves tourists; construction of a new cultural learning centre; and rehabilitation of a historic cemetery. For more information, see the CBC article “\$5.4M is funding to conserve, repair B.C. First Nations heritage infrastructure,” 25 November 2022 (<https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/bc-fpcc-heritage-infrastructure-funding-1.6664276>).

### 2.3.3 Grant Funding

FPCC received two contributions from the First Peoples’ Cultural Foundation (FPCF) to cover the costs of the ICHIG programs (ICHIG 1 in 2021 and ICHIG 2021-2).<sup>5</sup> FPCF is a First Nations–led registered charity that was established in 2000 to support the vitality of Indigenous arts, languages, cultures and heritage in B.C. FPCF’s Board of Directors includes three directors appointed by FPCC. FPCF manages the funds and FPCC administers the grants and provides ongoing support to recipients for project management, work plans and knowledge transfer.

Initial funding, which was applied to ICHIG 1 in 2021, came from the Heritage Branch (the Province of British Columbia) through funding to FPCF under the Unique Heritage Infrastructure (UHI) stream of CERIP.<sup>6</sup> The purpose of CERIP was “to support economic resilience, tourism, heritage, and urban and rural economic development projects in communities impacted by COVID-19.” CERIP funding provided to FPCF was considered to be “unprecedented” in supporting cultural and heritage infrastructure, rather than programming.

The UHI stream of CERIP positioned the FPCC as “the lead agency for Indigenous applicants.” Indigenous groups could apply for grants through other organizations, including Heritage BC, but potential applicants were directed to FPCC for further information about the program. For Indigenous heritage, the project also proved to be meaningful, as discussed in this study, but for different reasons than for non-Indigenous heritage projects.

Through CERIP funding, ICHIG 1 was able to distribute grants totalling \$3.75M to 11 projects. With the exception of one project that received 96% of the funding requested, the projects received the total amount requested. Another project (for a total of 12) was added to the ICHIG program through a separate contribution of \$.23M from the BC Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation.

ICHIG 2 was made possible by an initiative led by the BC Ministry of Municipal Affairs, in collaboration with the Heritage Branch, to advance reconciliation and a diverse and inclusive society. This initiative included the allocation of \$30M to FPCF from the BC 150 Time Immemorial program. FPCF provided \$7.5M to FPCC, of which \$5.4M was used by the ICHIG 2 program to fund 16 projects.

### 2.3.4 Project Distribution

The 28 projects funded through the ICHIG program were located in First Nations in all parts of B.C.

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<sup>5</sup> A third transfer, from the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, occurred after this study was underway.

<sup>6</sup> British Columbia, Community Economic Recovery Infrastructure Program, Local Government Grants & Transfers, online at <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/local-governments/grants-transfers/grants/cerip>, accessed 2 October 2022.

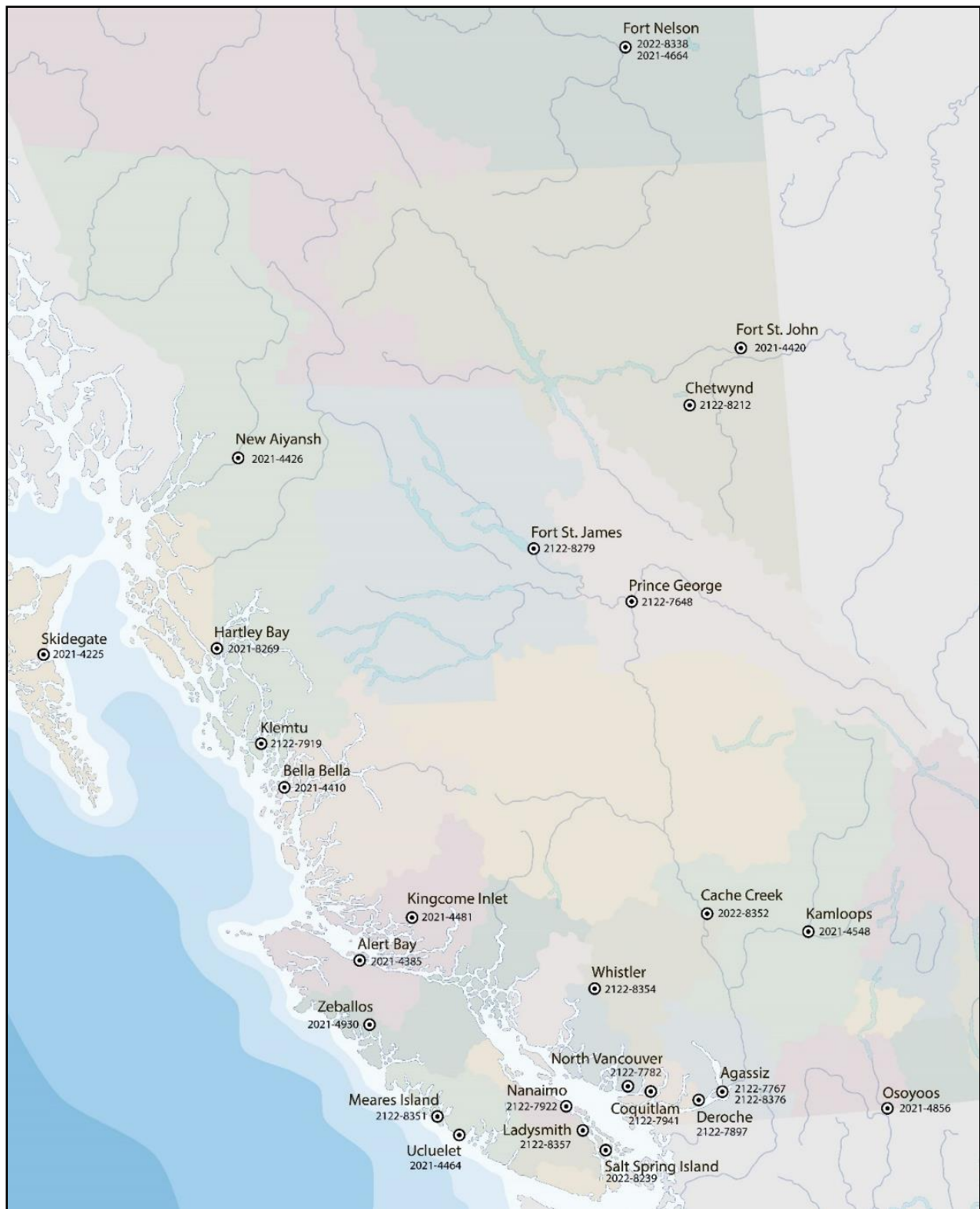


Figure 1: Geographic distribution of projects funded in both program phases, from Fort Nelson, in the north, to Skidegate in the west, to Salt Spring Island in the south, and to Osoyoos in the east.

### 3 Comparisons with Other Grants and Contributions

#### 3.1 Consistency with UNDRIP

No other cultural heritage infrastructure programs reviewed for this study demonstrated such close alignment with UNDRIP as the ICHIG program. In funding such a wide selection of culture and heritage projects, such as cemeteries, repatriation facilities, language centres and museums, the ICHIG program responds to the right expressed in UNDRIP in Article 12 for Indigenous peoples to “to manifest, practise, develop and teach their spiritual and religious traditions, customs and ceremonies; the right to maintain, protect, and have access in privacy to their religious and cultural sites; the right to the use and control of their ceremonial objects; and the right to the repatriation of their human remains.”

#### 3.2 Definition of Indigenous Cultural Heritage

The ICHIG program is about safeguarding and protecting the vitality of Indigenous cultural heritage as defined by FPCC as including “physical, emotional, mental, kinship and spiritual components. It includes both tangible (physical) objects and places, as well as intangible aspects. Each of these concepts is inextricably linked, holding intrinsic value to the well-being of Indigenous Peoples and affecting all generations. All are the *belongings* of Indigenous Peoples.”<sup>7</sup>

All other grants reviewed for the study use definitions of cultural heritage – with words and phrases such as “artifacts,” “historic places,” “artistry” and “interpretation” – that emphasize connoisseurship and formal recognition as being the most meaningful markers about whether cultural heritage exists. Under the FPCC’s ICHIG program, First Nations, both applicants and peer reviewers, demonstrate what culture and heritage mean and how they are to be safeguarded and celebrated.

#### 3.3 Addressing the Importance of Infrastructure to the Safeguarding and Celebration of Indigenous Cultural Heritage

Many projects funded through FPCC’s ICHIG program would not have been eligible for other grants. The Indigenous Heritage stream of the Museums Assistance Program<sup>8</sup> of the Department of Canadian Heritage, for example, does not provide funding for capital projects, while Canadian Heritage’s Canada Cultural Spaces Fund is intended for large, capital projects (up to \$15M) related to professional arts and heritage programming.<sup>9</sup> The few grants that could be used by cultural heritage organizations would also need to show that they are tourism operators.<sup>10</sup>

Interviewees with experience accessing grants for cultural heritage projects of all types consistently said that FPCC ICHIG programs address numerous gaps in cultural heritage funding. The two most commonly cited gaps were 1) funding for projects that address deferred maintenance of existing infrastructure and 2) projects that were not tied to tourism or revenue-based cultural programs. Further information about how FPCC’s ICHIG program addressed funding gaps is discussed below.

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<sup>7</sup> First Peoples’ Cultural Council, *Indigenous Cultural Heritage Stewardship Toolkit*, online at <https://heritage-toolkit.fpcc.ca/what-is-indigenous-cultural-heritage/>

<sup>8</sup> Canadian Heritage, Indigenous Heritage – Museums Assistance Program, online at [www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/funding/museums-assistance/indigenous-heritage.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/funding/museums-assistance/indigenous-heritage.html)

<sup>9</sup> Canadian Heritage, Canada Cultural Spaces Fund, online at [www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/funding/cultural-spaces-fund.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/funding/cultural-spaces-fund.html)

<sup>10</sup> The Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) offers several types of support in the areas of tourism development, marketing, sales and training, but no funding for tourism infrastructure. See the website of the ITAC at <https://indigenoustourism.ca/programs-services/>.

### 3.4 Protecting and Accessing Indigenous Cultural Heritage Places as Defined by First Nations

Some projects funded through the ICHIG program focused on the conservation of physical places, such as archaeological sites, buildings and trails, to support the protection and appreciation of Indigenous knowledge, Knowledge Keepers and history. Unlike other programs for place-based heritage, such as the National Cost-Sharing Program for Historic Places offered by Parks Canada,<sup>11</sup> the ICHIG program did not require a community to use an external process to validate that a protected place met the criteria of being “heritage” by the granting agency. Communities determined for themselves whether a place was of cultural heritage significance and value to them and how it should be protected. ICHIG did not require First Nations to provide part of the costs for a proposed project, which also made that program much more practical and accessible for communities with small projects.

### 3.5 Other Gaps Filled by the ICHIG Program

In summary, FPCC’s ICHIG program addresses gaps in heritage funding programs by allowing for:

- Unrestricted participation by qualified individuals working on projects in communities, whether they have post-secondary training or not
- A definition of Indigenous heritage that aligns with the broader understanding of the meaning and importance of “heritage” and “culture” by First Nations
- Projects that are outside conventional, non-Indigenous definitions and policies concerning conservation and culture, such as language-learning facilities and places where Elders and youth can meet for cultural learning
- Projects that respect Indigenous autonomy by supporting projects that may be intended for the community only, rather than for sharing cultural knowledge with outside groups
- A recognition that food preparation and sharing are critically important cultural heritage practices
- Repairs and upgrades to existing infrastructure to address deferred maintenance

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<sup>11</sup> The National Cost-Sharing Program for Historic Places is only open to owners and eligible lessees of national historic sites, heritage lighthouses, and heritage railway stations, all of which are designated through an evaluation by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. See <https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/culture/designation/financement-funding/ppf-csp>.

## 4 Relevance

### 4.1 FPCC Goals for the Program

The study found that FPCC's ICHIG program is relevant to achieving the high-level objectives of FPCC to strengthen First Nations' stewardship of their cultural heritage; take an important step towards reparation of past acts of colonization and assimilation that deeply fractured and attempted to eradicate First Nations' cultures and histories; support the conservation of First Nations' cultural heritage; and sustain and build infrastructure to support First Nations' cultural heritage.

The list of projects (Appendix A) demonstrates that the program has contributed to the protection and enhancement of First Nations' cultural heritage, but the list is only part of the story. Most importantly, none of these projects could have been completed without access to the ICHIG program. Some of the examples of necessary costs that would not have been eligible for funding through other grants include honoraria for Elders and other community members to share knowledge essential to design, build and operate cultural spaces; archaeological work in advance of project development or to support interpretation; upgrades related to maintenance of existing infrastructure; and projects designed and built by the community without the involvement of technical specialists such as landscape architects and engineers.

### 4.2 FPCC Cultural Heritage Goals and UNDRIP

FPCC goals are consistent with the principles and objectives of UNDRIP and decolonization. The ICHIG program helps ensure that First Nations "have the resources needed to develop and administer their own cultural heritage laws/legal traditions, policies and practices."<sup>12</sup>

By choosing FPCC to administer the grants supported by B.C. funding, the province supported a further step towards First Nations autonomy over their cultural heritage. FPCC set eligibility requirements for applicants and projects, established a system to assess applications and determined how to handle day-to-day administration and communications with applicants and grant recipients.

### 4.3 Strengthening First Nations Cultural Programs

#### 4.3.1 Vitality

Infrastructure developments and improvements supported by the ICHIG program were connected to sustaining and reinvigorating cultural heritage programs, such as a language protection, land-based healing programs, cultural centres and repatriation. In some cases, the infrastructure allowed for programs and experiences that would not have been possible otherwise. Infrastructure development led to positive impacts on the efficiency and impact of related programs. Some projects funded through the ICHIG program served as physical "launch pads" for on-the-land-activities that allowed essential skills to be taught, learned and conserved.

#### 4.3.2 Safeguarding First Nations' Culture and Heritage

Some projects were critical to safeguard First Nations' culture and heritage. Without new infrastructure, culture and heritage were likely to be lost. For example, a community that received funding to digitize its

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<sup>12</sup> David M. Schape, George Nicholas and Kierstin Dolata, *Recommendations for Decolonizing British Columbia's Heritage-Related Processes and Legislation*, First Peoples' Cultural Council, December 2022, p. 4-5. Online at <https://fpcc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/FPCC-Decolonizing-Heritage-Processes-and-Legislation.pdf>.

language program lacked a suitable space to record Elders and catalogue archived recordings. The ICHIG program funded construction of a centre to be used for recording, teaching and learning.

#### 4.3.3 Establishing a Community of Practice

The ICHIG program has led to the creation of a network of individuals learning from each other and from FPCC and its advisors about cultural heritage ideas and solutions. This community of practice grew through webinars, meetings (such as meetings of the recipients of grants to care for cemeteries) and informal exchanges of information.

### 4.4 Needs of First Nations Communities

Interviewees strongly agreed that FPCC's ICHIG program supports their communities and organizations seeking to care for their First Nation's heritage. Key points they raised are discussed below.

#### 4.4.1 Overwhelming Need

Interviewees were very clear in stating that their projects had been on their community's wish-list for a long time, but there was no funding to implement the projects. As a result, both knowledge of cultural heritage (stories, language, practices, relationships and legal traditions) and physical forms of cultural heritage were being lost. Museum exhibits required updating, historic structures were degrading and sensitive sites, such as cemeteries, were deteriorating or disappearing.

#### 4.4.2 Administration by a First Nations-led Organization

Every interview included a discussion about FPCC as the administrator and manager of the ICHIG program. Interviewees spoke highly of FPCC, but they also explained that accessing funding through a First Nations-led organization was an important factor in making their experiences so positive. They spoke of "trusting" FPCC, feeling that they were being heard and knowing that FPCC understood the contexts in which the projects would be planned and implemented, including challenges around schedules and the balancing of multiple priorities within communities. This level of understanding was evident in the low-barrier application process, accountability through check-ins that also serve as opportunities to exchange information and ideas, speed of approvals to process funds, and the passion for First Nations solutions and cultural heritage.

One interviewee said that the government's choice to use First Nations organizations to administer and manage programs was part of a process of building resilience and self-reliance, and it was an important step towards the implementation of UNDRIP.

#### 4.4.3 Sensitivity to Community Conditions

Several projects were located in remote areas accessible only by water, air or long drives. The cost of sustaining infrastructure in these locations is high. The ICHIG program supported upgrades and repairs to existing infrastructure, filling a gap in previous funding programs.

Equipment and skills funded through the program were used to complete multiple tasks. As an example, a lift and scaffolding required to upgrade a museum exhibit was also used to conduct conservation assessments of poles and to change lighting to a high-efficiency system. In another case, a photographer required for exhibit design also produced photographs that will be used in a tourism promotion campaign.

#### 4.4.4 Consistency with the Need for Greater First Nations Autonomy

The ICHIG program is designed to put communities in charge of determining their own needs and solutions. As one example, a recipient spoke of a project that would have been slightly cheaper to build

in a central location in a community. The ICHIG grant allowed the community to build the centre on a vantage point overlooking water, which is a key part of the community's identity and cultural activities.

#### 4.4.5 Returning Community Spaces to Their Intended Purposes

Projects to create spaces specifically for language and cultural programs helped reduce or eliminate requests to use school gyms during in-class times, an issue that is almost unique to First Nations, where schools are used in multiple ways, sometimes to the detriment of learning.

### 4.5 Leveraging Investments and Income Opportunities

#### 4.5.1 Leveraging Existing Cultural Heritage Infrastructure Investments

Some projects added new elements to infrastructure developed for other purposes. For example, one project added to a waterfront improvement initiative, while others reinvigorated and added visitor opportunities to cultural centres.

#### 4.5.2 Accessing New Investments

In general, interviewees were optimistic that the infrastructure developed through the ICHIG program could be leveraged in the future for additional funding from other sources, including regional and local governments, the federal government and the private sector. They mentioned that some projects will attract new visitors to existing opportunities and lead to greater spending on user fees and in gift shops. One interviewee, when asked about leveraging other funding, said, "Absolutely. We can leverage the funding for the project to demonstrate our capacity for the next projects. Funding applications need to be super-clear about capacity and experience. We have that now."

#### 4.5.3 Income Generation

Through infrastructure development, recipients were able to establish a physical space suitable for hosting tours and cultural awareness programs for government agencies and private companies that will provide much-needed income in support of cultural heritage programs in the community.

#### 4.5.4 First Nations Tourism Development

First Nations tourism is based on the understanding that tourism needs to have positive impacts beyond financial growth. Tourism should contribute to the well-being of the host community.<sup>13</sup> The types of projects funded through the ICHIG program directly tied to tourism were also developed to support cultural heritage in the community. Examples include opening new spaces in cultural centres and museums to be used by the community for cultural programs and learning. In contrast, tourism grants are almost always provided to businesses.

Many communities that received funding through the ICHIG program are investing in tourism development in multiple ways but have been unable to monetize tourism enough to support infrastructure development. Infrastructure funding provides them with the boost needed to prepare for further investments by others, including tourism operators in their communities. Some interviewees said that cultural tourism is a next step guiding the community's investment decisions.

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<sup>13</sup> These points were emphasized by Gail Joe and Henry Tso of Indigenous Tourism BC in conversation with Julie Harris and Ursula Pfahler, 28 September 2022.

## 4.6 Employment, Training and Transferable Skills

### 4.6.1 Transfer of Knowledge

Every grant provided a unique opportunity to support the transfer of knowledge within a First Nation about the identification, conservation and sharing of First Nations cultural heritage. While almost all projects had direction from Elders or Knowledge Keepers involved in the project planning stage, some projects involved Elders or Knowledge Keepers working alongside the individuals. Examples of this kind of knowledge transfer can be seen in projects involving construction of places to care for belongings repatriated to a community, construction or restoration of First Nations–designed structures and cemeteries, and determining the alignment of trails.

### 4.6.2 Mentorship in Conventional Heritage Skills

The ICHIG program supported mentorship and direct employment to First Nations individuals in areas of conventional heritage expertise, such as archaeology, interpretation and exhibit design.

### 4.6.3 Direct Employment and Training

Benefits from the projects included employment and mentorship opportunities in project management, trades and technologies. One example was the experience gained from a project by a community member who learned about lighting design and will be continuing in that field through apprenticeships and training. A second example was a construction worker whose experience on the project led to the decision to become an electrician.

### 4.6.4 Engaging Youth through Direct Involvement in the Design of Infrastructure

Youth in communities were encouraged to participate in projects in many ways, including construction. Several projects also involved youth in creating artworks for spaces created or improved through the ICHIG program.

## 4.7 Sharing History and Cultural Heritage

Some projects aimed to showcase or share a community's history and cultural knowledge. For example, some projects to protect and explain archaeological and paleontological sites will also be used by school groups and others with direct oversight by the community.

## 4.8 Sustainability and Ecosystem Conservation

Some interviewees drew direct connections between their projects, sustainability goals and ecosystem conservation. While these links could be expected for projects related to food harvesting, they were also present for projects such as flood mitigation, archaeological site protection and new building construction. Multiple projects funded through the ICHIG program were designed to reduce carbon footprints and support ecosystem conservation.

## 4.9 Achieving the Aims of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act

Placing responsibility for the design and oversight of funding targeted to First Nations' communities with the FPCC is a step towards achieving the aims of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (2019). The action plan for the declaration calls on the Province of British Columbia to address the objectives of UNDRIP, including self-determination and self-government, full enjoyment of inherent rights, ending Indigenous-specific racism and discrimination, and exercising distinct rights to maintain, control, develop, protect, and transmit their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, languages, food systems, sciences and technologies. The B.C. government rightly recognizes the role of FPCC in achieving these objectives.



#### 4.9.1 Relevance to UNDRIP Article 11

Article 11 of UNDRIP states:

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to practise and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs. This includes the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archaeological and historical sites, artifacts, designs, ceremonies, technologies and visual and performing arts and literature.
2. States shall provide redress through effective mechanisms, which may include restitution, developed in conjunction with indigenous peoples, with respect to their cultural, intellectual, religious and spiritual property taken without their free, prior and informed consent or in violation of their laws, traditions and customs.

The ICHIG program directly responded to this article. First, there is a direct connection between the development of infrastructure and revitalization of First Nations' cultural heritage. As multiple ICHIG projects demonstrated, people need places to practise, create, enjoy and celebrate culture. Without these places, cultural practices can disappear. Second, several projects, as listed in Appendix A, involved the development of infrastructure for repatriation programs.

#### 4.9.2 Relevance to UNDRIP Article 31

Article 31 of UNDRIP states:

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions.
2. In conjunction with Indigenous peoples, States shall take effective measures to recognize and protect the exercise of these rights.

The ICHIG program directly responded to this article by allowing for projects defined by the communities themselves as being about culture and heritage without requiring projects to demonstrate value to tourism or transactional culture, art and heritage.

## 5 Summary and Recommendations

### 5.1 Summary of Benefits

The interviews and the review of program documentation provide evidence that FPCC's ICHIG program has been and continues to be relevant at all levels at which it operates, and that it serves goals of both the Province of British Columbia and First Nations communities. This evidence is considered in turn below.

1. The ICHIG project is unique in the following ways:
  - a. It is administered and delivered by a First Nations–led organization that understands the context, capacities and Indigenous Rights of the First Nations eligible for the grants.
  - b. The grants are targeted exclusively to infrastructure, which is an area of funding that is under-served by existing grants for both First Nations and conventional cultural heritage.

- c. Applicants are not required to demonstrate that they have funding from other sources, which eliminates the needs for a First Nation to show that it has been vetted and approved by another government or a non-Indigenous funding source.
  - d. The costs of non-construction items, such as cultural heritage services from Elders and other Knowledge Keepers, can be funded through the program.
  - e. Some projects were funded that were ineligible for other grant projects due to a focus on culture and heritage outside the narrow definitions commonly used by museums and historic sites. FPCC's definition of culture and heritage includes "physical, emotional, mental, kinship and spiritual components. It includes both tangible (physical) objects and places, as well as intangible aspects. Each of these concepts is inextricably linked, holding intrinsic value to the well-being of Indigenous Peoples and affecting all generations. All are the *belongings* of First Nation Peoples."<sup>14</sup>
2. The program demonstrates the importance of physical infrastructure to the safeguarding and vitality of First Nations cultural heritage.
  3. With a maximum annual grant value of \$400K, the current three-year program reaches a broad segment of B.C.'s First Nations through a mix of projects that are strongly supported in their respective communities.
  4. The maximum value of an individual grant administered by FPCC aligns well with FPCC staff capacity to provide oversight of the program, adjudicate grant applications and support grant recipients.
  5. FPCC's administrative approach, which includes adjudication through peer reviews, webinars offered to groups applying for grants and intermediate webinars for recipients to share ideas and solutions, is consistent with goals of self-determination and sharing knowledge.
  6. There is a natural fit between the program and the work of FPCC because the mandate of FPCC is "to assist B.C. First Nations in their efforts to revitalize their languages, arts and cultures." No other provincial organization has this mandate and has developed the expertise to address those needs.
  7. Through the communities of learning created from the ICHIG program, the immediate benefits of a single grant can be multiplied. Interviewees expressed gratitude to FPCC for webinars and individual meetings that helped the recipients overcome challenges and learn from other projects.

## 5.2 Recommendations for the Future

This study of FPCC's ICHIG program was not designed or intended as a program evaluation. Nonetheless, interviewees and reviews of program documentation revealed some challenges with the program that might be considered when planning its extension.

Opportunities exist to deepen the benefits of the ICHIG program in various ways, as described below.

1. Through these projects, the vitality of B.C. First Nations could be more widely communicated and celebrated. FPCC could encourage recipients to share information about their projects to the broader community and region through various means, including media releases and invitations to local groups and elected officials.

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<sup>14</sup> First Peoples' Cultural Council, *Indigenous Cultural Heritage Stewardship Toolkit*, online at <https://heritage-toolkit.fpcc.ca/what-is-indigenous-cultural-heritage/>

2. Catalyst funding to support project plans and feasibility studies could bring more projects to “shovel-ready” status.
3. FPCC could consider training for staff involved in administering infrastructure grants to provide support to applicants universal accessibility and disability inclusion.<sup>15</sup>
4. FPCC could consider strategies, such as partnerships with organizations that retain technical staff, to increase funding levels to include a small number of major capital projects per year (more than \$1M).
5. Explore strategies to include multi-year agreements, especially for projects that may require construction and testing over multiple seasons.

#### 5.2.1 Applicant Readiness and Pre-Application Planning

Some grant recipients underestimated the complexity of building new structures requiring a full suite of technical requirements, from plumbing to information technology retrofitting to specialized carpentry. The most common challenge related to the time required to manage projects. Recipients resolved challenges with advice from FPCC, but lessons from the experience with two rounds of grants shows that FPCC might consider asking applicants to demonstrate that they have calculated the time required to oversee the project, including project planning, communications, managing bids, contracting, hiring and renewing staff, safety training, etc.

A webinar series on project planning could be helpful for potential applicants.

#### 5.2.2 Risk Analysis

Many infrastructure projects include health and safety risks. FPCC might consider providing guidance and recommendations to funding recipients about opportunities to engage in health and safety training for project managers.

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<sup>15</sup> A well-known and highly regarded online course on accessibility and disability inclusion is offered by the Rick Hansen Foundation through Athabasca University. See <https://powered.athabascau.ca/product?catalog=Accessible-Spaces-101>

## 6 Acknowledgements

### 6.1 Interviews

The following individuals (community members, staff or project managers) shared their insights into FPCC's ICHIP grants and similar funding programs.

- Kirsten Clausen, Heritage BC
- Curtis Fullerton, Kwikwetlem Cemetery Project
- Sarah Gamble, Tse'k'wa Cultural Heritage Centre
- Gail Joe, Indigenous Tourism BC
- Juanita Johnson, U'Mista Cultural Society
- Larry Jorgensen, Kunsoot Wellness Society
- Robyn Jyn, Yuulu?il?ath Cultural Centre
- Lana Lowe, Fort Nelson First Nation
- April Moi, Northern BC Tourism Association
- Dawn Nicholson, Dzawada'enuxw First Nation
- Morgan Ritchie, Sts'ailes
- Henry Tso, Indigenous Tourism BC
- Mel Wooley, Mk'Mip Desert Cultural Centre

### 6.2 FPCC Personnel

Individuals working for FPCC as staff or to support the ICHIG program were generous in sharing their insights into the program. Karen Aird provided guidance throughout the project. Ursula Pfahler assembled materials, helped schedule interviews, answered multiple questions and reviewed the draft report. Lucas Roque provided the researcher with access to materials.

## Appendix 1: List of ICHIG Projects

<b>ICHIG 1 Projects (2021)</b>			
<b>Recipient</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Description (Full or Abridged)</b>	<b>Type</b>
Dzawada'enuxw First Nation	Traditional Big House Restoration	Restoration of a more than 130-year-old big house through reinforcement and stabilization of totem poles and beams	Heritage Site Development
Ehattlesaht Chinehkint Tribe	Wisdom Bench – nawaayisim	Path and outdoor gathering space that also shelters four dugout canoes	Outdoor Cultural Spaces & Trails
Fort Nelson First Nation	Chalo Trades and Cultural Education Centre	Renovation of existing under-utilized adult trades centre to co-house a cultural education space that includes a community meat freezer and food preparation area, plus a computer upgrade to access the community's online learning portal	Cultural Food Space
Haida Gwaii Museum Society	Saahlinda Naay – Saving Things House	Repair and revitalize/rehabilitate the museum's infrastructure	Museum or Repatriation Facility (Upgrades or New Construction)
Kunsoot Wellness Society, Heiltsuk	Kunsoot Land-Based Healing Centre	Installation of dock, aluminum ramp and float; building of food processing facilities; building of traditional plant food security facilities; building of a learning space	Cultural Food Space
Nisga'a Lisims Government/Nisga'a Museum	Nisga'a Museum – Safeguarding the Ancestors' Collection	Improving environmental conditions for permanent collections and facility accessibility	Museum or Repatriation Facility (Upgrades or New Construction)
Nk'Mip Desert Heritage Society, Osoyoos Indian Band	Nk'Mip Desert Culture Centre Renewal Program	Restoration and expansion of the Sy'ilx winter and summer villages and replication of a community-style Pit House as part of a larger, multi-phased project	Cultural Centre & Trail Upgrade
Tk'emlups te Secwepemc	Secwepemc Museum Environmental Control	Improvements to the HVAC and electrical systems in the Secwepemc Museum	Museum or Repatriation Facility (Upgrades or New Construction)
Tse'k'wa Heritage Society, Doig River First Nation and Treaty & Tribal Association	Tse'k'wa Cultural Heritage Centre	Installation of a protective gate to the cave site; the construction of a dome to house and display artefacts; the renovation of a garage structure to house less-sensitive cultural materials; the development of a virtual exhibit	Heritage Site Development
Ucluelet First Nation	Yuulu?il?ath Cultural Centre	Construction and installation of a scaled big house to showcase repatriated artefacts, upgrades to another space for conserving cultural objects, and improving space to share and revitalize cultural heritage	Museum or Repatriation Facility (Upgrades or New Construction)

U'Mista Cultural Society, Kwakwaka'wakw Tribes	Old Is New Again	Upgrades to HVAC and plumbing systems	Museum or Repatriation Facility (Upgrades or New Construction)
<b>ICHIG 2 Projects (2022)</b>			
Bonaparte First Nation	McAbee Fossil Beds Site Interpretive & Research Centre Design and Water, Septic, Utilities Works	Project to service land for the McAbee Heritage Fossil Site and engage with the Secwépemc Nation to incorporate cultural elements into the design of the interpretive centre and research facility	Heritage Site Development
Fort Nelson First Nation	Drum Arbour & Moose Camp Upgrades	Improvements to the drum arbour site with accessible washrooms, new dance floor and redeveloped moose camp area	Cultural Food Space
Gitga'at First Nation	Gitga'at Museum at the Marine Emergency Response and Research Facility (MERRF)	Construction of the Gitga'at Museum at MERRF and a shared repatriation facility	Museum or Repatriation Facility (Upgrades or New Construction)
Kitasoo Xai'xais Stewardship Authority	Klemtu Museum and Archives Upgrades	<i>pála</i> (work), care and attention for the nation's big house and museum. The museum is home to irreplaceable treasures (masks, regalia, original artwork, artifacts, etc.) that serve as physical embodiments of Kitasoo Xai'xais cultural heritage.	Museum or Repatriation Facility (Upgrades or New Construction)
Kwikwetlem First Nation	Support Flood Prevention Measures & Site Improvements to the Kwikwetlem Historical Cemetery	Cemetery site improvements and construction	Cemetery / Mortuary House Renewal & Restoration
Leq'a:mel First Nation	Leq'a:mel Cemeteries Restoration & Reclamation Project	Improvements to the community's cemetery and development of cemetery policy under the community's Land Code	Cemetery / Mortuary House Renewal & Restoration
Saulteau First Nations	Cemetery Upgrade & Beautification Project	Restoration and preservation of the cemetery and its associated cultural elements	Cemetery / Mortuary House Renewal & Restoration
Seabird Island Band	Seabird Island's Cemetery Infrastructure Project	Shxwoxwelstexw ye Silelyólexw (Honour Our Elders of Generations) is a project to renew and restore a cemetery.	Cemetery / Mortuary House Renewal & Restoration
Snuneymuxw First Nation	Long House Expansion	Construction of an additional room on the side of the existing longhouse for accommodation during cultural initiation practices	Cultural Learning Centre
Spo7ez Cultural Centre and Community Society	Squamish and Lílwat Cultural Centre Storyboard Project	Renewing and adding interpretive elements at the Squamish Lílwat Cultural Centre	Interpretation & Exhibit Renewal

Stqeeye' Learning Society	Shtataxus Learning Centre Infrastructure Project	Construction of an outdoor learning centre, canoe/carving shed and shoreline environmental assessment	Cultural Learning Centre
Sts'ailes	Sts'ailes Heritage Facility	Construction of a facility to conserve the remains of currently unprotected ancestral Sts'ailes–Coast Salish plank houses on the Sts'ailes reserve, Harrison River	Museum or Repatriation Facility (Upgrades or New Construction)
Stz'uminus Education Society	St'l'ul'iqulh Q'ulets' Thuthiqut Shelh	Renewal of a trail with interpretation	Outdoor Cultural Spaces & Trails
Takla Nation	Takla Cultural Restoration Infrastructure Initiative	Construction of a community-accessible food preparation site and upgrades to the Red Rock Trail	Cultural Food Space
Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations	Mears Island Cultural Centre (MICC) and the Mears Island Cultural Path (MICP)	Renovations and upgrades to increase the safety, accessibility and cultural function of the cultural centre and cultural path	Cultural Centre & Trail Upgrade
Tl'azt'en Nation	Returning to 'Utsoo's Yoh, Grandma's House	Construction of an outdoor teaching and learning space dedicated to multi-generational teaching and learning in a safe and protected space	Cultural Learning Centre
Tsleil-Waututh Nation	Tsleil-Waututh Nation Mortuary House	Construction of a mortuary house structure to facilitate repatriation of Ancestral Tsleil-Waututh human remains	Cemetery / Mortuary House Renewal & Restoration