REAL ESTATE Foundation OF BC

Transformative Actions for UNDRIP Advancement Annual Progress Report

2024–2025

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Acknowledgements

This report reflects the collective work of REFBC staff and partners, while nuance and diversity of views among the team may not be fully captured. This inaugural progress report was developed to be clear, concise, and faithful to the learning gathered across REFBC programs. Every page represents many conversations, drafts, and mindful edits from many contributors, who brought expertise and care to this work.

The TAUA framework and the evaluation and measurement framework were developed by Tara Marsden/Naxginkw. REFBC's Board of Governors received an early version of this report and approved it on receipt.

Prepared by:

Tara Marsden/Naxginkw, M.A.
Hlimoo Sustainable Solutions

Prepared for:

Real Estate Foundation of BC

About the cover art

Untitled
by Eliot White-Hill, Kwulasultun

This piece references an ancestral spindle whorl from Snuneymuxw.

We recognize and acknowledge the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations, as well as First Nations across BC, on whose territories we live, work, and learn.

Gratitude

One of the best things about this work is that none of it happens alone.

We offer deep thanks to the many Indigenous people and organizations whose mentorship and guidance have shaped our thinking and approach with grace, humour, and patience. The Circle on Philanthropy, First Nations Fisheries Council, First Nations Water Caucus, Right Relations Collaborative, and REFBC's Indigenous Community Leaders Circle are among those First Nations-led entities who have been instrumental in our learning.

We appreciate the encouragement, curiosity, and reciprocity from philanthropic organizations, government, and our networks across the real estate industry, business, and the non-profit sector. Our work is strengthened by partnerships with the Province of British Columbia's Ministry of Finance, BC Non Profit Housing Association, BC Real Estate Association, and the Real Estate Institute of BC, who appoint members to our Board of Governors.

Whether it's a municipal government or the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship; a managing broker, bank executive, or investment advisor; a funder or membership organization; or one of the hundreds of non-profit organizations journeying alongside us — we thank you.

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*Asterisks indicate individuals who are no longer with the foundation or who have recently completed their service as Governors.

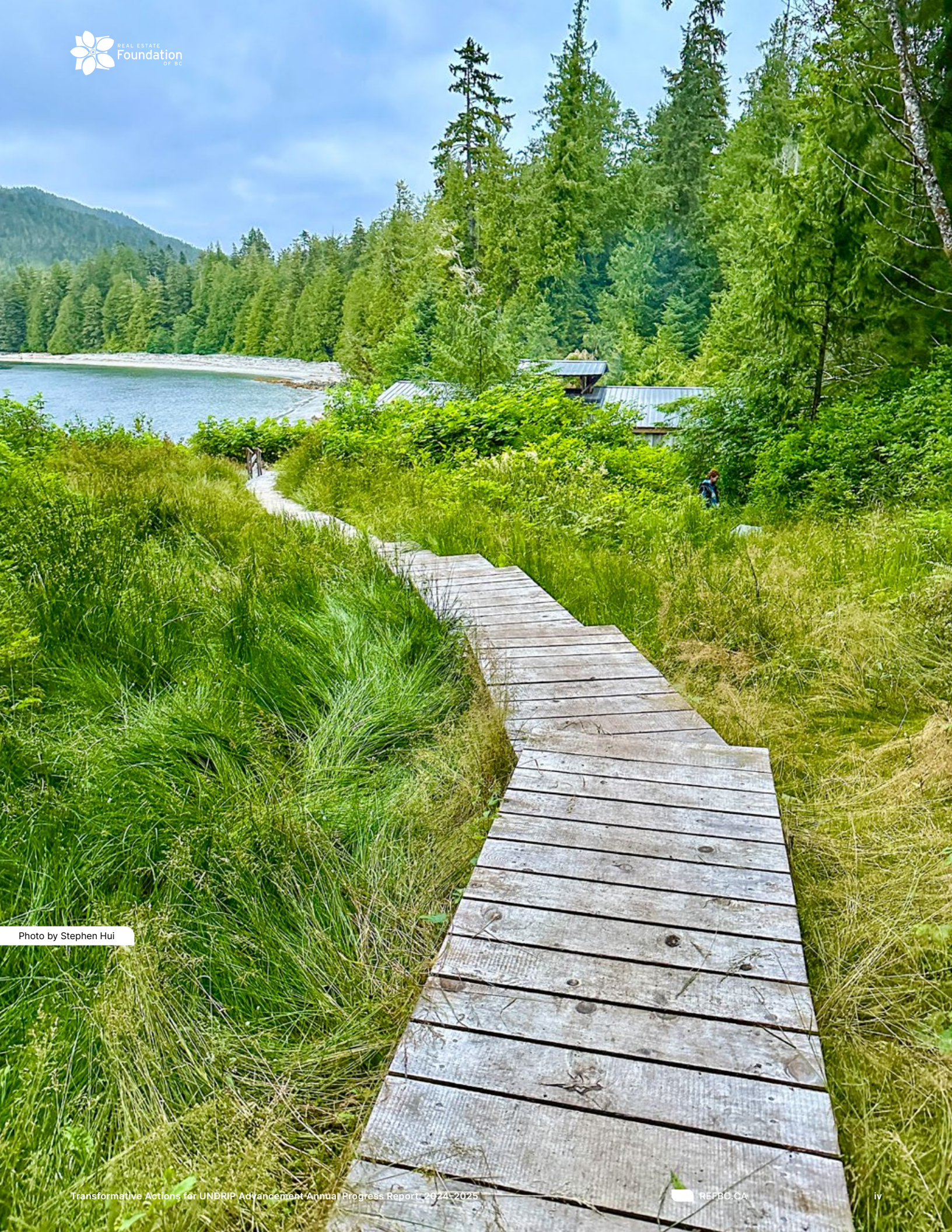

Photo by Stephen Hui

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Welcome

With the guidance of REFBC's UNDRIP Fellow, Tara Marsden/ Naxginkw and Hlimoo Sustainable Solutions, we're pleased to share the inaugural Transformative Actions for UNDRIP Advancement (TAUA) Progress Report.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) is a global document adopted by the United Nations in 2007. It sets out collective and individual human rights for Indigenous Peoples worldwide, and affirms rights to self-determination, culture, land, and self-governance.

In 2020 and 2021, in the context of a global pandemic, a widespread reckoning on racial justice, and growing public interest in repairing the harms of settler colonialism to Indigenous Peoples by provincial and federal governments, the Real Estate Foundation of BC (REFBC) began to deepen its commitments to upholding UNDRIP across its work and its ways of knowing and being. Importantly, in parallel, various levels of government were taking their own steps forward: the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA) was passed unanimously by the Province of British Columbia on November 28, 2019; on June 21, 2021, UNDRIP received Royal Assent and came into force in Canada; and the City of Vancouver adopted its UNDRIP Strategy in 2022 and in 2024.

In 2022, we co-created the UNDRIP Fellowship with Tara Marsden. Tara led the process of translating our commitments into measurable actions and transparent accountability to First Nations. A key outcome of this relationship is the report you're reading now. This document brings together what we've done to advance UNDRIP over the past year, and crucially, the journey ahead and the work that remains.

The results of our early progress are far from perfect, but they are encouraging us to further transform our grantmaking, operations, and governance. By making this work visible, we also hope settler-led organizations see actions they can take to reconcile and strengthen relationships with First Nations and Indigenous Peoples and uphold our shared responsibilities to the lands and waters we care for.

We are grateful to move through this work together. We couldn't do this without the humility and dedication of REFBC's Board of Governors, and the many people and organizations who comprise our community. We share this report in a spirit of humility, self-reflection, and a commitment to learning. Thank you for being part of this journey.

Mark Gifford
CEO, Real Estate Foundation of BC

As an Indigenous woman working to operationalize free, prior and informed consent and other key articles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, there are many obstacles and barriers at a personal and societal level.

The current backlash towards the advancement and recognition of Indigenous rights represents the cyclical nature of social change, and the struggle that settler society has with recognizing and accepting the hard truths of colonization in what is known as British Columbia.

In the face of these challenges, the Real Estate Foundation of BC has maintained its course for transformative change. The staff, Board of Governors, and CEO have committed to a long-term process for applying and upholding UNDRIP and have been willing partners and enthusiastic change-makers.

It has been my honour and privilege to provide guidance, develop evaluation frameworks, and train REFBC staff and Board in the history, purpose, and application of UNDRIP. In developing the 50 Transformative Actions for UNDRIP Advancement, I faced little to no resistance, and in drafting this progress report, witnessed a commitment to accountability that is rare amongst similar settler organizations.

In drafting the TAUA, we intentionally took a whole-of-organization approach, knowing that for truly transformative change to happen, it will take everyone, not just one staff, or one champion on the Board, but all staff and Board. The 50 actions live within each staff member, in the partnerships and relationships they form with First Nations and other Indigenous partners, and in the example they are providing for others in the philanthropic community.

Lastly, the progress made within the past year, again in a time of significant political upheaval with respect to Indigenous rights and social justice generally, is a true indicator of what is possible when a small group of people commit to transformative change. I welcome you, and especially First Nations within BC, to review this progress report, ask questions, and make suggestions in the spirit of transparency and accountability.

Tara Marsden/Naxginkw
Hlimoo Sustainable Solutions,
UNDRIP Fellow for REFBC

Background

The Real Estate Foundation of BC (REFBC) is a philanthropic organization working to advance sustainable, equitable, and socially just land use across what is commonly referred to as British Columbia. REFBC funds projects, builds relationships, and shares knowledge among Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities to advance a healthy environment that supports thriving, resilient, and liveable communities from one generation to the next.

The money that REFBC grants is a benefit from real estate transactions. When a deposit is made on the purchase of a residential property in British Columbia and placed in a brokerage trust account at a bank or credit union, it earns interest. Financial institutions are required to remit this interest to REFBC.

This money is pooled and invested in funds screened through an environmental, social, and governance (ESG) framework, as well as impact investments, to generate additional revenue. In turn, REFBC uses its revenue to fund projects and lead initiatives that benefit communities across BC.

While the existence of REFBC provides a community benefit linked to the purchase of a home, the foundation's money story is rooted in displacement and theft of lands from First Nations. REFBC recognizes that colonial systems of land use and property continue to undermine and infringe upon First Nations' rights, responsibilities, and relationships with their lands and waters.

As part of its commitment to reconciliation and upholding the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), REFBC launched its "Transformative Actions for UNDRIP Advancement: The Next $100 Million" (TAUA) action plan in September 2024. TAUA set the course for REFBC to meaningfully and transparently advance UNDRIP in its granting, governance, and operations.

TAUA was developed through a partnership between REFBC and the inaugural REFBC UNDRIP Fellow, Tara Marsden/Naxginkw.

Developing TAUA was inclusive, dialogue-focused, and data-driven. It prioritized Indigenous experience, knowledge, and direction. Once a draft had been completed, it was shared with First Nations in BC, the general public, and other stakeholders.

Based on feedback from this outreach and engagement, additional actions and commitments were incorporated.

Some Birds Strut III by Eliot White-Hill, Kwulasultun

This piece is part of a movement series of a transforming and dancing supernatural bird.

The TAUA framework was developed to guide REFBC's commitments to action, accountability, and transparency. As part of this framework, REFBC committed to reporting annually on progress toward each of the 50 actions. This inaugural report fulfills that commitment.

The Watershed Security Fund

On March 6, 2023, the Province of British Columbia and the BC-First Nations Water Table announced an initial $100 million investment to launch the creation of an independent Watershed Security Fund (WSF). The First Nations Water Caucus—with the First Nations Fisheries Council acting as its secretariat—partnered with REFBC to provide interim fund stewardship. The Province of British Columbia acts in an advisory role to the interim fund.

Together, the partners are designing and delivering initial programs and working to create a permanent co-governed organization to oversee, manage, and grow the fund over the long term. WSF provides a new and innovative platform through which REFBC is advancing its commitments to UNDRIP and the TAUA framework, in partnership with First Nations through a co-development and co-governance approach.

To learn more about the Watershed Security Fund visit: watershedsecurityfund.ca.

Transformative Actions for UNDRIP Advancement

Transformative Actions for UNDRIP Advancement sets the course for REFBC and its granting and investment community on how to meaningfully and transparently advance UNDRIP in its work. Its objectives are:

1.

Develop, in collaboration with BC First Nations and the REFBC grantee and advisor community, a short document that clearly articulates REFBC's commitment to UNDRIP in its granting work.

2.

Provide a roadmap for current and potential grantees on how to embody and carry forward this commitment in their projects.

3.

Identify a clear problem/challenge/opportunity nexus on unceded lands, Indigenous displacement, and redress as outlined in UNDRIP.

4.

Share a glimpse of the REFBC story in why and how this was developed, and encourage further inquiry, opportunities for peer learning and sharing more broadly in the funding community.

5.

Provide certainty and communicate commitments to institutional change to Indigenous (specifically First Nations) Peoples on the use of funds generated from their unceded lands in BC.

6.

Provide a starting point and incremental step towards broader transformative institutional change that engages First Nations leadership and communities as decision makers.

Photo by Stephen Hui

Photo by Stephen Hui

Cassie Allen, Tsa Tesli counting fence Babine Lake.

Photo by Stephen Hui

Photo by Alieska Robles

Fifty Actions

The TAUA contains 50 transformative actions in three categories:

Grants

An important way REFBC advances its mission is through delivery of grants programs and partnerships in five priority areas and, more recently, the Indigenous Grants Stream. As a philanthropic funder, there are numerous questions that inform the granting process and are especially relevant to Indigenous Peoples, their rights, and their lands and waters.

Governance

Governance actions relate to legislation, by-laws, policies, and procedures that guide the Board in its purpose, terms of reference, roles, and responsibilities, and approach to decision-making and delegation of authority. They speak to current formal relationships with the Province of British Columbia, appointing bodies, partnerships, and committees as well as potential future states.

Operations

From staff hiring and prerequisites, to communications, finance and investments, and ongoing learning and professional development, there are a multitude of opportunities to infuse UNDRIP throughout the foundation operations.

Each action was further classified into the following categories based on the time and effort required to implement them:

Early Action/In Progress

Actions which are more easily attainable and do not require significant additional resources or capacity to implement.

Longer-term Change

Actions which may take additional time to implement or build on Early Actions.

Transformative Change

Actions which will take additional time to implement and are significantly more transformative in nature.

Legislative Change Required

As REFBC is governed by the provincial Real Estate Services Act, some transformative change will require legislative change under the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act ("DRIPA")[1] process.

[1] Available here: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/indigenous-people/new-relationship/united-nations-declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to:

1.

Provide an account of progress on the implementation of the 50 transformative actions for UNDRIP advancement outlined in the TAUA.

2.

Hold REFBC accountable for its commitments, and systematize the transparency required to ensure this accountability.

3.

Share with First Nations the results of the progress and seek feedback on next priorities and any adaptations or amendments to the TAUA actions based on progress results.

4.

Share with the general public, the grantee community, other philanthropic organizations, and the real estate sector the continuation of the work outlined in the TAUA and offer an opportunity for feedback.

5.

Acknowledge achievements and address challenges in implementing the 50 actions outlined in the TAUA.

Photo by Stephen Hui

Approach and Methodology

This report describes progress on the 50 TAUA actions between September 2024 and September 2025. Given that it is an inaugural report, it also reflects the growth and development of our learning and commitments since 2020.

To inventory and evaluate the organization's progress, staff collaborated with REFBC's UNDRIP Fellow, who acted as facilitator and independent assessor. A facilitated workshop was held to reflect on progress and evaluate the status of each action (see Appendix 1).

Staff then added written comments, detailing the methods, activities, outcomes, and impacts related to each action. (If you are reading a print version of this report, you can find these details at refbc.ca/taua. If you are reading this as a digital pdf, these details are included in Appendix 1.) The UNDRIP Fellow reviewed and validated both the designated status and the comments for each action.

- **Not Started:**
  The action has not yet been initiated.
- **In Progress:**
  The action has been initiated and work to formalize and systematize the change is ongoing.
- **Complete:**
  The action is fully implemented with supporting policies and systems changes, which are permanent and formally recognized by the Board. Work remains ongoing to uphold and sustain this transformative action.

Year One at a Glance

In total, 82% (41) of the actions are either in progress or complete.

9 (18%)
of the actions are complete.

32 (64%)
of the actions are in progress.

9 (18%)
of the actions have not been started.

Some Birds Strut IV by Eliot White-Hill, Kwulasultun

This piece is part of a movement series of a transforming and dancing supernatural bird.

Insights, Impacts, and Imperfections

Details of our progress towards 50 actions through our grants, operations, and governance can be found in Appendix 1. As we document our progress, REFBC's staff and board wish to highlight some of the impacts on our individual and collective learning and development.

We hope that sharing some of these experiences and insights will give others confidence to take the next steps on their journey or inspire them to tag along with us on ours.

I. Transformative Approaches and Practices

We've made significant shifts within our grants and community investments, including increased funding to First Nations and Indigenous-led organizations. Compared to 2021, the REFBC core grants budget has increased from $3 million to more than $15 million, and from 5% to approximately 80% of that invested in projects led by First Nations or Indigenous-led organizations.

This process has involved several shifts in our practice. Some highlights:

- REFBC continues to strengthen the criteria for staff and advisors to evaluate the robustness of UNDRIP and FPIC within grant applications and partnerships. The I4DM Definitional Matrix developed by The Circle has been a key tool.
- We are adopting more trust-based, relational philanthropic practices by simplifying application processes, offering flexibility in funding terms, providing multi-year funding, removing matching requirements, and adaptable reporting.
- We are centering Indigenous expertise and shared decision-making. Every stage of

grantmaking features co-developed, co-governed, and shared decision making for WSF. For REFBC, our general grant recommendations are reviewed and vetted by Indigenous Caucus members. In 2022 and 2023, REFBC worked with the UNDRIP Fellow to incorporate a set of UNDRIP questions into both stages of the grant application process. The Indigenous Community Leaders Circle develops and approves all Indigenous Grants Stream funding decisions.

We are in the process of shifting our organizational culture, finance, and investments to better integrate UNDRIP commitments.

This includes:

- A refresh of human resource policies and practices to better integrate UNDRIP commitments, including expanding benefits for health and wellness, a coaching program, professional development, and cultural connections to ensure staff have support.
- REFBC now includes an orientation to TAUA and REFBC's journey as part of the onboarding process for new staff and board members.
- We are weaving UNDRIP and its actions into team meetings, check-ins, and learning activities, including hiring processes, staff and board orientations, and the annual performance review and goal setting process for both staff and REFBC as a whole.
- REFBC has made strides on integrating UNDRIP commitments into finance and investment planning and decision-making. In the case of WSF, a new portfolio was built mindful of goals to advance UNDRIP and TAUA actions. These include strict requirements for explicit First Nations support for real asset investments that are on or affect First Nations territories. The REFBC investment philosophy has been refreshed to describe UNDRIP commitments, and our impact investment portfolio now includes an increasing number of investments in Indigenous-led funds. In parallel, partnerships to support shareholder advocacy and capacity-building for First Nations trusts and investors have been strengthened.

We are in the process of aligning our governance practices to better integrate UNDRIP. We see this as both a structural necessity and a transformative and relational process.

Some highlights:

- Our 2022-25 strategic plan prioritized reconciliation, relationship-building, and advancement of UNDRIP as key aspects of advancing mission, vision, and values. It has been an important reference point for the board and staff in the integration of TAUA in annual operational plans and budgets.
- We are co-developing and co-governing the Watershed Security Fund with the First Nations Water Caucus and First Nations Fisheries Council (FNFC). This has been an opportunity to grow REFBC's governance approaches, as well as our grants and operational systems, to centre First Nations voices, experiences, and knowledge.
- We have supported the recruitment and retention of Indigenous and racialized people on the REFBC's Board of Governors. This has improved the diversity of experience, wisdom, and relationships that the Board brings to its work.

II. Navigating the Uncertain

The journey towards reconciliation and decolonization is a continuous process, not a destination. It requires humility, openness, and sustained effort.

Staff and board have also described feeling stretched for time, holding tensions between mindfulness and urgency, making mistakes and perfectionism, or prioritizing deliverables over relationships. Unpacking ways in which white dominant culture and colonialism has been baked into systems and ways of working can be heavy and emotional work. This work can have disproportionate impact and weight for Indigenous and racialized board members, staff, and advisors.

The journey towards reconciliation and decolonization navigates the very-much-alive-and-real story of colonialism, racism, and trauma. Creating the conditions for cultural and psychological safety of staff, board, advisors, and community partners is important, and particularly for those who identify as Indigenous or racialized.

Staff and board have participated in a range of valuable individual, team, and organization-wide training and learning opportunities. They are spaces that ask for vulnerability and humility and can sometimes be hard and uncomfortable for participants and facilitators. It's also work and learning that staff and board are committed to continuing.

III. Transformative Lessons and Outcomes

There remains significant work to be done to move governance actions forward, but some of the learning that will support our progress includes:

- Long-standing governance systems and architecture of REFBC has allowed for flexibility, but renovating to support new priorities, processes, and commitments has also highlighted structural tensions that we're working through. A governance review process has been initiated to identify opportunities for alignment in existing approaches and inform transformative long-term governance actions.

- Governance is not just about structure—it's about relationships. Strong partnerships with FNFC, the Water Caucus, and Indigenous advisors are essential to the success of the WSF. The REFBC Board of Governors has supported the growth and development of the Indigenous Grants Stream and work of the Indigenous Community Leaders Circle over the past several years.

- The co-development and co-governance of WSF is teaching us that while labour-intensive and complex, it is deeply rewarding. It is ongoing, and requires extensive communication, flexibility, and alignment across diverse partners.

- We're reminded that governance is a living process, shaped by ongoing collaboration, openness, care for people, and the diverse experience and wisdom they bring.

We carry the following transformative reflections and priorities with us as we move through this work:

- **Centering Indigenous experience and knowledge.** Our progress is indebted to the relationships, teachings, grace, and wisdom offered by a diverse group of Indigenous leaders and partners. Their expertise and perspectives are essential to advancing and shaping meaningful change.

Photo by Stephen Hui

- We are regularly reminded that **relationship-building inside and outside** REFBC is not just a value but a practical necessity for collaboration and impact. Inside, we reflect on how the understanding and efforts of individuals, groups, and systems don't all move at the same speed. We are committed to finding ways to value inter-relationships and communication that helps build confidence and understanding in the work.

- **We need to make ourselves available.** This includes showing up, when invited. Sharing a meal. Leaning into listening, especially if the feedback is hard. We are working to deepen our organizational awareness of power imbalances as a funder, and to strengthen our protocols for respectfully engaging with First Nations communities, including practices around gift giving and honouring time and contributions with appropriate resourcing.

- **Ceremony, celebration, and recognition matter.** It's important to bring people together to share stories of success, inspiration, and learning to help others see themselves in the work. Whether through arts, journalism, gifting, or gatherings and even our Land Awards, creative, fun, generous moments for people and partners brings out the joy.

- **Institutional transformation, not just programmatic tweaks,** is necessary to uphold UNDRIP. This includes rethinking alignment of governance, funding priorities, and organizational culture.

- We must sit with the discomfort of not doing things perfectly. Nothing we've faced has been a reason to stop our journey.

Continuing the Path

REFBC has made significant strides on the 50 actions in the year since the TAUA was launched. As REFBC builds on progress and relationships that have been developed in the early phases of the commitments laid out in the report, we are committed to continuing and deepening our work. This includes prioritizing UNDRIP and FPIC criteria across our grant streams, sharing decision-making power and processes, and continuing our reconciliation and decolonizing journey.

This report will serve as a guide for REFBC and its partners and grantees to shape the coming year and to ensure continual improvement on advancing UNDRIP through its grantmaking, governance, and operations. We will also work with the provincial government, First Nations rightsholders and stakeholders in efforts to strengthen our relationships, understanding, and communication across communities.

Upon publication, the report will be sent to all First Nations in BC and an open invitation for feedback will be included. This feedback will then be incorporated into the next annual progress report, the format for which will remain largely the same to ensure consistency in approach and ability to measure and compare progress over time.

Progress towards meaningful and transformative change is often difficult and long-term in nature. Incremental change is often seen as less significant than monumental or highly visible change. However, it's the incremental change that is necessary to build the foundation for larger sweeping changes. This journey isn't always easy, but it's also meaningful, strengthens the quality and purpose of our work and relationships, and motivates us to continue.

Glossary

BC Water Legacy Initiative (BCWL): BCWL is a project of MakeWay Charitable Society. BCWL brings people together to advance watershed solutions that increase the resilience and watershed security of communities on the ground. Within the freshwater sector, BCWL plays a strategic role in supporting leadership and capacity building with Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners in community and government.

The Circle on Philanthropy ("The Circle"): The Circle is a membership organization working to transform the philanthropic sector to redistribute wealth, activate wisdom, and strengthen organizational infrastructure for the purpose of Indigenous Peoples, communities, and nations. REFBC is a member of The Circle.

Crown Agencies and Board Resourcing Office (CABRO): CABRO oversees the recruitment and recommendation of candidates for appointments to Crown corporations, agencies, boards and commissions, and provides public sector governance advice and training.

Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA): DRIPA establishes the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as BC's framework for reconciliation. The BC provincial government passed the DRIPA into law in November 2019.

Decolonization: Decolonization refers to the process of dismantling colonial systems of power, with the goal of restoring Indigenous sovereignty and land. While decolonization can describe colonies gaining independence, in settler colonial states like Canada, true structural decolonization has not occurred. Decolonization also involves challenging Eurocentric dominance in knowledge systems and transforming institutions to recognize and centre Indigenous perspectives.

Equity: The fair and just distribution of resources, opportunities, and support, tailored to individuals' specific needs and circumstances. Unlike equality, which treats everyone the same, equity recognizes systemic barriers and works to remove them, ensuring that all people can thrive.

First Nations: First Nations are one of three recognized Indigenous Peoples in Canada, along with Inuit and Métis. There are 204 First Nations who inhabit and maintain title to lands in BC.

First Nations Fisheries Council (FNFC): FNFC is a non-profit society that works to develop a cohesive and united voice among First Nations in BC. FNFC, as the secretariat to the Water Caucus, implements the goals and priorities of the Water Caucus and carries out the substantive operational work.

First Nations Water Caucus ("The Water Caucus"): The Water Caucus is composed of the First Nation delegates who participate at the joint B.C.-First Nations Water Table (Water Table). The Water Table addresses water and watershed security issues of concern

between First Nations in B.C. and the Province through co-development and consensus.

Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC): FPIC describes processes that are free from manipulation or coercion, informed by adequate and timely information, and occur sufficiently prior to a decision so that Indigenous rights and interests can be incorporated or addressed effectively as part of the decision making process — all as part of meaningfully aiming to secure the consent of affected Indigenous Peoples. FPIC is about working together in partnership and respect.

General Grants: These REFBC grants can fund projects led by First Nations, non-profits, and other organizations working on projects relating to land use or real estate in BC.

Healthy Watersheds Initiative (HWI): HWI was a $27-million economic stimulus program initiative to support job creation through investments in community-driven watershed conservation and restoration. The Province of British Columbia provided funding for HWI as part of its COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan. REFBC administered the funding in partnership with Watersheds BC to support the successful implementation of 61 watershed security projects between 2021–2022.

I4DM Definitional Matrix (I4DM): The I4DM helps funders distinguish between Indigenous-led, Indigenous-informed, and Indigenous-benefiting charities for more accurate philanthropic impact. It was developed by The Circle on Philanthropy.

Indigenous Caucus: The Indigenous Caucus is a REFBC advisory group of three to five Indigenous members with expertise in UNDRIP and philanthropy, REFBC funding priorities, and community-led programming. They advise REFBC staff on General Grants, including reviews, recommendations, communications, and planning. Members are recommended by UNDRIP Fellow and REFBC staff and approved by the REFBC Board of Governors.

Indigenous Community Leaders Circle (ICLC): A group of First Nations leaders that guides the foundation's Indigenous Grants Stream.

Indigenous Grants Stream (IGS): Guided by a group of First Nations leaders, the Indigenous Grants Stream supports Indigenous-led, land-based projects across what's known as BC. Funding goes to projects that support Indigenous people in getting out on the land and water, build Indigenous community leadership (especially among youth), centre Indigenous culture and knowledge, advance Indigenous governance, and contribute to the exercise of Indigenous rights and title.

Indigenous Watersheds Initiative (IWI): IWI was a three-year initiative (2022–2025) that supported Indigenous-led and co-led projects that advanced holistic watershed health and security.

Indigenous-led: According to the I4DM Definitional Matrix, Indigenous-led organizations have Indigenous leadership at all levels of decision making; Indigenous culture, knowledge, and language guide the organization and deliverables; Indigenous people own, lead, and deliver programs in relationships and response to their communities, and reciprocity is deeply embedded through values, policy, practice, and behaviours.

Land Back or **Landback:** There is no universal definition of Land Back, but it is a range of concepts, actions, and ideas across many Indigenous Peoples. Land Back is embodied in different ways by many Indigenous Peoples across Turtle Island (the Americas) and around the world. It has been described as the process of reclaiming lands by Indigenous Peoples who have been dispossessed of such lands.

The movement emphasizes the importance of land not only as a vital resource for Indigenous communities but also as a fundamental aspect of Indigenous identity, culture, and self-determination.

POLIS Water Sustainability Project: POLIS is an action-based research group at the University of Victoria's Centre for Global Studies. They develop research and share solutions, best practices, and opportunities for reform with those working on the ground (and in the water) to generate change towards a sustainable and secure freshwater future.

Rematriation: Work led by Indigenous women to restore sacred relationships between Indigenous Peoples and their ancestral lands and waters.

Rights and title: Indigenous rights are collective rights which flow from Indigenous Peoples' continued use and occupation of their lands. They include inherent rights to subsistence resources and activities, the right to self-determination and self-government, and the right to practice one's own culture and customs including language and religion. Indigenous title refers to the inherent right to land or a territory. Rights and title have not been granted from external sources but are a result of Indigenous Peoples' own occupation of their home territories as well as their ongoing social structures and political and legal systems.

Settler: A person who moves with a group of others to live in a new country or area. For the purposes of this document, settlers are people, organizations, and governments who are not part of a First Nation in BC. Those who have immigrated to BC/Canada from elsewhere and rely upon the Canadian state to acquire citizenship and the privileges associated with it are settlers.

UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP): A global document adopted by the UN in 2007 that sets out the collective and individual human rights for Indigenous Peoples worldwide. It affirms rights to self-determination, culture, land, and self-governance, serving as a framework to ensure the survival, dignity, and well-being of Indigenous Peoples by establishing minimum standards for their rights.

On June 21, 2021, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act received Royal Assent and immediately came into force.

This Act requires the Government of Canada, in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples, to:

- Take all measures necessary to ensure the laws of Canada are consistent with the declaration;
- Prepare and implement an action plan to achieve the declaration's objectives; and
- Table an annual report on progress to align the laws of Canada and on the action plan.

UNDRIP Fellow: In 2022, REFBC and Hlimoo Sustainable Solutions created and co-designed the REFBC's UNDRIP Fellowship. The REFBC UNDRIP Fellow delivers education and training to staff and Governors, gives presentations at events, provides advice on grantmaking, and leads the development of UNDRIP-related policies at REFBC.

Watershed Security Fund Joint Executive: The WSF Joint Executive sets the strategic direction of the work and establishes and supports the interim vision of the Watershed Security Fund. The group is composed of delegates from the First Nations Water Caucus, as well as leaders from REFBC and the First Nations Fisheries Council. Representatives from the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship are advisors.

Photo by Alieska Robles

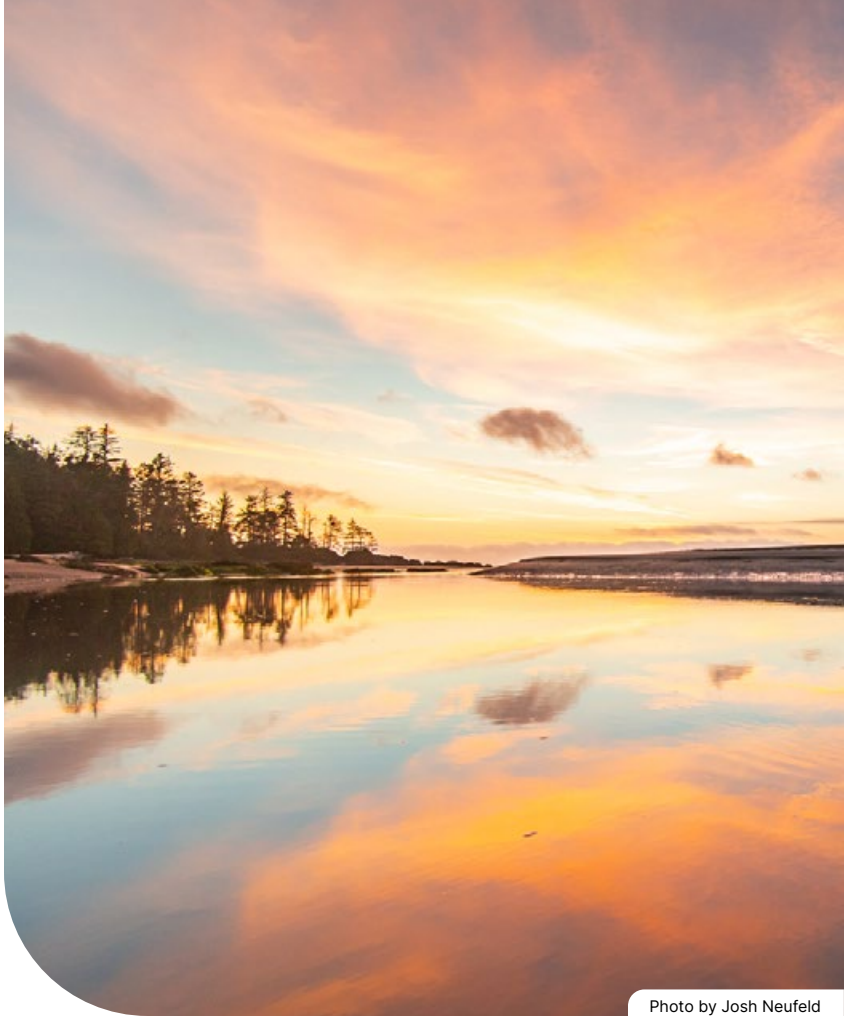

Photo by Josh Neufeld

Photo by Stephen Hui

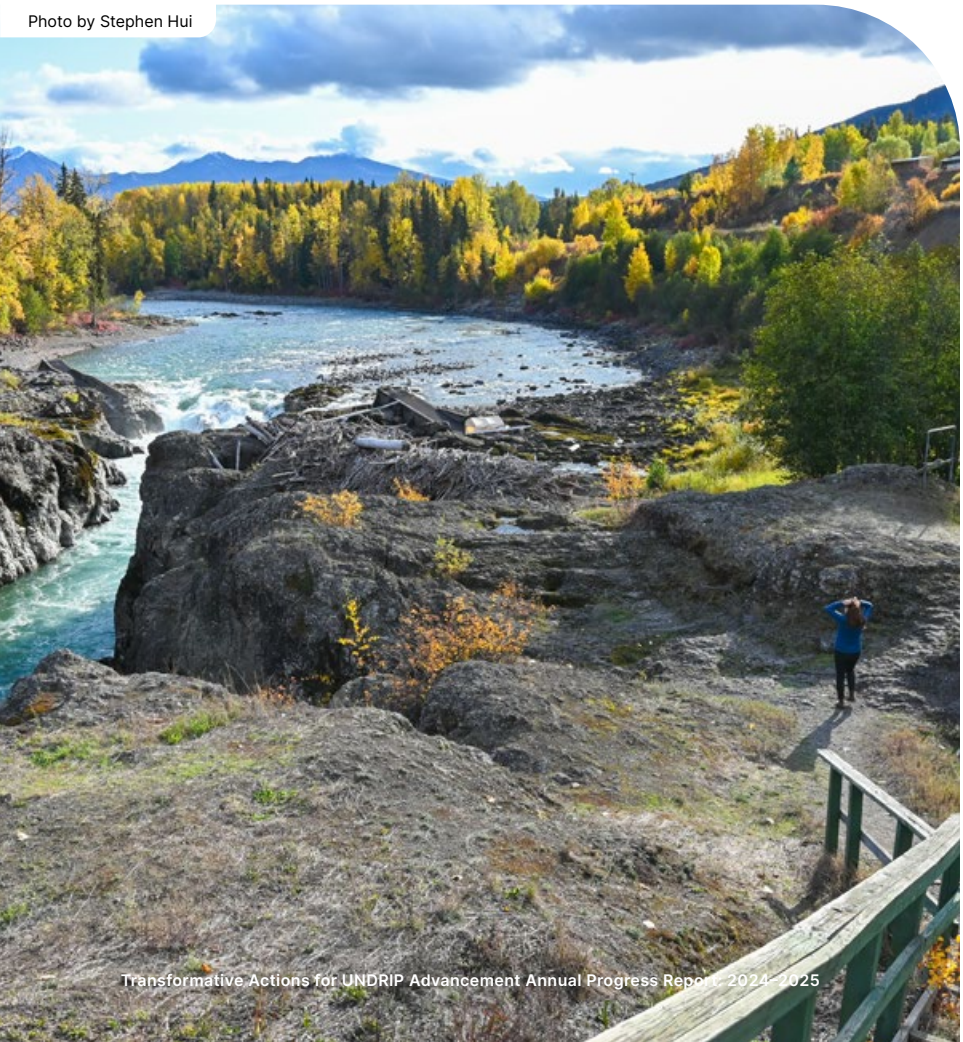

Photo by Stephen Hui

Appendix 1:

Progress Update on Action Implementation

Legend:

 **Complete**

 **In Progress**

 **Not started**

Notes:

"REFBC General" refers to actions and activities under the main grants, governance and operations of the Real Estate Foundation of BC.

"WSF" refers to actions and activities under the Watershed Security Fund implemented by REFBC in partnership with the First Nations Fisheries Council.

Grants

Grants: Early Action / In Progress

#	Action	Status	Comments & Next Steps
1.	Reduce administrative barriers, ensure flexibility in grant application process including the types of expenses that are eligible, and equity for capacity-strained First Nations.	 In Progress	**REFBC General:** Efforts to increase flexibility within eligible expenses, constraints on some expenses such as capital purchase. Identified need for guidelines on ensuring greater equity for capacity-strained First Nations. **WSF**: WSF allows for all types of expenses (with some limits/guidelines explained on the application form and budget form) except debt, partisan political activities, land purchases, or large-scale building development. WSF also allows for multiple ways to submit applications, including through the portal, Microsoft Word document, and by conversation. WSF has created a process to make application resubmissions easier (e.g., send applicants what they submitted through Salesforce so they can update as opposed to having to submit a whole new application).

Grants: Early Action / In Progress

#	Action	Status	Comments & Next Steps
2.	Provide peer-to-peer learning opportunities for grantees by region or topic area through online webinars.	REFBC In Progress WSF Not started	**REFBC General:** Indigenous Grants Stream funds travel for youth and for communities to spend time in each other's territories for sharing learning. Online sessions are also offered to support relationship building and shared learning between peers. **WSF**: Anticipate developing program support, and could explore hosting or supporting peer learning in future years. Grants Program Framework identifies peer learning and support for future program development. Currently, capacity has been constrained with co-developing multiple new areas for this new initiative. New staff will be retained in the coming year.
3.	Increase and maintain the percentage of General Grants that go to support Indigenous-led land, water, and food sovereignty projects consistently from year to year, based on level of interest. Baseline in 2021 was below 5% of total General Grants going to Indigenous-led projects. In 2023 this has increased to over 50% Indigenous-led in the General Grants category.	Complete	**REFBC General:** In 2025, 77% of General Grants flowed to Indigenous-led projects. **WSF:** In its first two grant intakes (2024-2025), 87% (47/54) of funded projects were First Nations-led.
4.	Maintain and increase funds allocated to the Indigenous Grants Stream from $800,000 to $2 million annually. Respond to potential requests for additional increases from the Indigenous Community Leaders Circle as they may arise.	Complete	The REFBC Board of Governors increased the grants budget to $3 million in 2024/25 and $3.2 million in 2025/26.

Appendix 1: Progress Update on Action Implementation, cont.

Grants: Early Action / In Progress

#	Action	Status	Comments & Next Steps
5.	Incorporate UNDRIP related questions into all grants documentation including application Stage 1 & 2, interim and final reporting.	Complete	**REFBC General:** Have incorporated UNDRIP questions into grant application forms and final report forms. **WSF:** Advancing UNDRIP is an overarching priority for WSF, and UNDRIP questions are in its grant application and reporting forms. For more details, see application form and reporting forms.
6.	Further refine partnership categories for non-Indigenous projects that have an Indigenous partnership. Gather data to inform the nature of partnerships to inform additional criteria to advance REFBC policy on Free, Prior and Informed Consent for land-based projects.	**REFBC** In Progress **WSF** Complete	**REFBC General:** Work is underway to strengthen understanding of/upholding of FPIC in projects funded through the General Grants steam. **WSF:** Have included partnership categories including "Full Partner," "Partial Partner," "Engagement," "Info-Sharing Only," and "Other." See application form.
7.	Coordinate and implement webinars and other communications outreach to inform and attract new Indigenous applicants, going beyond familiar grantees, to help ensure regional equity across REFBC service area.	**REFBC** Not started **WSF** Complete	**REFBC General:** REFBC hosted a grant webinar in 2025. REFBC staff will tailor outreach to Indigenous communities and organizations in 2026. **WSF:** WSF outreach efforts have included hosting grant information webinars, issuing public updates through press releases and newsletters, and maintaining active social media channels. WSF staff have also attended First Nations-led events, such as the BC Assembly of First Nations Water Forum and FNFC Fall Assembly, to connect directly with communities. Information was also shared through current and past watershed funding networks, such as the Indigenous Watersheds

Appendix 1: Progress Update on Action Implementation, cont.

Grants: Early Action / In Progress

#	Action	Status	Comments & Next Steps
7.	(cont.)	(cont.)	Initiative and the Healthy Watersheds Initiative. In WSF's first two intakes, 70% (206/292) of applications came from groups that had not previously received grants through prior related provincial watershed funding programs (e.g. HWI & IWI) and 64% (187/292) of all applicants were First Nations-led.
8.	Align funding priorities with issues of contemporary significance for Indigenous communities/ First Nations that may include Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas, climate impacts, Indigenous Guardian programs, cultural sensitivity and other training for colonial governments, training and education support for First Nations, regional decision-making projects, inter-generational learning, data management for First Nations connected to land-based decision-making, and UNDRIP awareness in the real estate sector.	In Progress	**REFBC General:** Significant shift to funding priorities identified by communities. Continue to be responsive to applicants through annual intake. Work with Indigenous Caucus to ensure REFBC is responsive to emerging trends and needs. **WSF:** Funding themes and assessment criteria strongly align with these areas/types of work. De-colonial training for colonial governments has not come up specifically but can be supported if requested.
9.	Weight UNDRIP criteria with increasing significance in the review of all applications, where funding requests exceed funds available on an annual basis. Engage UNDRIP Fellow or other key Indigenous advisors on questions of application of the UNDRIP criteria as needed.	Complete	**REFBC General:** Applications are scored based on REFBC's project assessment criteria. UNDRIP is weighted as a priority in the scoring rubric. Discussions are underway to refine the scoring rubric to better reflect how well a project addresses the separate issues of UNDRIP and equity issues. REFBC receives guidance from the UNDRIP Fellow and Indigenous Caucus to bring further

Appendix 1: Progress Update on Action Implementation, cont.

Grants: Early Action / In Progress

#	Action	Status	Comments & Next Steps
9.	(cont.)	(cont.)	accountability to commitments to UNDRIP and equity. This has become more important as we experience significantly increased demand for funding. **WSF:** Advancing UNDRIP is an overarching priority for WSF. Application review scores weight UNDRIP section higher than other areas. There is also a question/score for Free, Prior, and Informed Consent. Additionally, WSF's Grants Working Group includes up to four members from the First Nations Water Caucus and up to four external members who provide key advice, with 50% or more of the combined members being First Nations (per its Terms of Reference). Tara Marsden (UNDRIP Fellow) is an external member, and learnings from her work applying UNDRIP criteria in prior work has been highly informative.
10.	Support multi-year funding for Indigenous-led or partnered projects to reflect demands on Indigenous organizations' human resource capacity, and to decolonize funding timelines (e.g. bound by fiscal years).	Complete	**REFBC General:** Grants can fund up to three years and are flexible with amendments if more time is needed. **WSF:** Has the same approach as REFBC General Grants (above).
11.	Explore removing the requirement for matching funding in General Grant applications submitted by Indigenous organizations and governments. The current 50% matching funds requirement has posed a barrier for smaller organizations that apply	Complete	**REFBC General:** No longer require matching funds. For larger projects still look to see if there is some other support, but does not have to be matching. **WSF:** WSF does not require matching funds. Its guidelines and framework note that

Appendix 1: Progress Update on Action Implementation, cont.

Grants: Early Action / In Progress

#	Action	Status	Comments & Next Steps
11.	for multiple sources of funding annually, all with different timelines and requirements. Investing in Indigenous-led work sometimes means full investment not requisite on other funders' investment.	(cont.)	matching funding has been identified as a barrier for many organizations. There is an optional question for applicants to indicate if they have other sources of funding to better understand the funding landscape that grantees are working within. For larger projects, additional resources such as other sources of funding can strengthen a proposal.
12.	Regularly review and update as needed the Interest Areas Framework and Funding Priorities document to reflect emergent and more urgent priorities amongst First Nations and other Indigenous communities.	 **REFBC** Not started  **WSF** In Progress	**REFBC General:** REFBC's Funding Priorities Framework (formerly the Interest Areas Framework) was updated in 2022 following a community listening initiative. Through the annual grant intake, REFBC is responsive to emerging community funding needs. **WSF:** WSF's Grants Program Framework was newly developed in 2024, with direction from the WSF Grants Working Group, of which over half the members are First Nations, and Joint Executive, of which over half the members are First Nations, who bring knowledge, experience and connection to First Nations watershed needs and communities across BC. Learnings from HWI and IWI grant programs and Indigenous Advisors also informed the WSF Grants Program Framework.
13.	Regularly review and update as needed and requested by Indigenous and other grantees the REFBC standard grant agreement (contract) to better reflect a trust-based relationship.	 In Progress	**REFBC General:** Last revised in 2022. Could seek more formal feedback and review of contract language. One grantee wanted acknowledgement of grant not affecting sovereign work (provincial funding), change made but not standardized to all agreements. Change in General Grants agreement for data

Appendix 1: Progress Update on Action Implementation, cont.

Grants: Early Action / In Progress

#	Action	Status	Comments & Next Steps
13.	Regularly review and update as needed and requested by Indigenous and other grantees the REFBC standard grant agreement (contract) to better reflect a trust-based relationship.	(cont.)	sovereignty for First Nation. Opportunity for review and response on all Grant Agreements. Request for changes are fairly infrequent. **WSF:** WSF's grants program was established in 2024. Since then, there have been case-by-case adjustments to funding agreements at grantees' request (e.g. acknowledgement of grant not affecting grantees other work on sovereignty due to the source of funding being originally from the Province).
14.	Prioritize support for research and special projects that assess and analyze the impacts of land and water use policies and practices for First Nations and other Indigenous Peoples. For example, an economic impact study of the public and private financial benefits that are derived from the purchase, sale, rent and/or licensed use of land and water access, and potential opportunities for First Nations to share in the benefit of these practices and resources.	 In Progress	**REFBC General:** Funding for special project on land-back research being led by The Circle on Philanthropy and Aboriginal People. REFBC special projects and initiatives funding has supported research by POLIS and BC Water Legacy Initiative which demonstrates a case for modernizing industrial water rates and directing a portion of revenue to support watershed security through the WSF and other initiatives.
15.	Support land acquisition for First Nations through contributions to larger Land Back purchases of fee simple properties taken without consent, or to the planning processes to research and identify relevant fee simple land for acquisition.	 In Progress	**REFBC General:** Grants support multiple Land Back initiatives, expenses that align with research, education, law/policy reform rather than land acquisition at this time. **WSF:** Supporting a restoration project on a parcel of land previously repatriated to a First Nation.

Appendix 1: Progress Update on Action Implementation, cont.

Grants: Longer-term Change			
#	**Action**	**Status**	**Comments & Next Steps**
	Grants: Longer-term Change		
16.	Commit to informed, adaptive, and meaningful targets for percentage of Indigenous-led projects of total grants, in both number of grants and total funds distributed. Develop targets in collaboration with BC First Nations, with special attention paid to those First Nations whose territories are most affected by high density residential cities and communities (and thus where the majority of REFBC revenue is generated from).	Not started	**REFBC General:** Official targets not yet set. Need to consider multiple perspectives on equity, proportionality of revenue sources and granting. Next step is to conduct monitoring over a two-year period on changes to percentages based on UNDRIP criteria and grant application questions, then develop targets based on monitoring data. **WSF:** WSF funds are not derived from real estate transactions in the same way as REFBC. WSF is keeping data on all applicants based on their organizational relationship to First Nations. Grant streams 2 & 3 prioritize organizations further along the I4DM continuum, but do not currently have a specific target. Program criteria are such that First Nation-led projects are rated very high. For example, in our first two grants intakes, 87% (47/54) of funded projects were First Nations led.
17.	Establish permanent Indigenous Grants Stream (currently a pilot project), allocate an amount agreed upon by the Indigenous Community Leaders Circle, and informed by broader engagement and input on this action plan.	Complete	The Board approved this as a permanent stream in 2024. Indigenous Grants Stream is application by invitation. Decision-making of Indigenous Grants Stream is connected to Governance actions and pending governance review.
18.	Develop permanent REFBC policies, informed by leading standards endorsed by Indigenous Peoples and broad engagement, that address	In Progress	**WSF:** WSF respects and promotes the inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples and recognizes that respect for Indigenous knowledge, cultures, and traditional

Appendix 1: Progress Update on Action Implementation, cont.

Grants: Longer-term Change

#	Action	Status	Comments & Next Steps
18.	*Free, Prior and Informed Consent* in relation to land and water-based projects. Conduct appropriate outreach to inform policy implementation.	(cont.)	practices contributes to sustainable and equitable development and proper management of watersheds. UNDRIP Article 32 recognizes Indigenous Peoples' right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands or territories and other resources, and establishes principles for Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC). WSF features the following question on its grant application form: Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC)* "Are you a First Nation working in your own territory? If not, is your project addressing FPIC? What policies or practices do you have to work towards or to obtain First Nations free, prior, and informed consent for a project affecting their lands or territories and other resources, in connection with the development or use of water resources?" **REFBC General:** REFBC's General Grants program is guided by all UNDRIP articles, including Article 32 and appreciates the learning received from WSF regarding evaluation of FPIC in grant-funded projects. While REFBC previously asked settler-led organizations about FPIC in 2025, REFBC refined the grant application to gather information about FPIC from Indigenous-led projects where those involved are not members of host communities.

Grants: Longer-term Change			
#	**Action**	**Status**	**Comments & Next Steps**
18.	(cont.)	(cont.)	REFBC asks the following question: "Is your project addressing free, prior, and informed consent? What policies or practices do you have, or are you working toward to obtain First Nations free, prior and informed consent for the proposed project in relation to potential affects to their lands, waters, and other resources?" General Grant's communications on funding priorities could highlight FPIC more fulsomely.
	Grants: Deeply Transformative		
19.	Develop and apply tools, policies, and granting criteria on how settler organizations can best uphold UNDRIP and thereby ensure the weight of UNDRIP advancement is not only the responsibility of Indigenous Peoples. Ensure appropriate resources are provided for effective outreach and engagement to raise awareness and increase uptake.	In Progress	**REFBC General:** Granting criteria, FAQs, webinars, and conference workshops have supported understanding of UNDRIP. General Grants application can add more learning resources on webpage, making those more accessible. **WSF:** Grants program framework, guide, application questions, and frequently asked questions (FAQs) speak to the relevance and role of non-First Nation organizations in upholding UNDRIP. Explanatory information and links are provided throughout these documents, and tools and learning resources are identified in the program FAQs.

Appendix 1: Progress Update on Action Implementation, cont.

#	Action	Status	Comments & Next Steps
	Grants: Deeply Transformative		
20.	In light of the connection between the source of REFBC revenue and redress, affirm with First Nations' total permanent targets for percentage of grants' total numbers and granting amount that is eligible for First Nations with territories in the REFBC service area (BC), with special attention paid to those First Nations whose territories are most densely populated and represent the largest contributions to REFBC revenue. Discuss other options with most affected First Nations including establishment of trusts.	In Progress	**REFBC General:** Research, dialogue and planning will be needed to develop consensus with First Nations, provincial government and stakeholders to address this action.
	Grants: Legislative Change Required		
21.	Depending on the nature and scope of Deeply Transformative Action #20, legislative change may be required to ensure permanence of commitments to the total percentage of grants going to First Nations land and water-based projects. Reform to the Real Estate Services Act may fall under the purview of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act process.	Not started	

Governance

Governance: Early Action / In Progress

#	Action	Status	Comments & Next Steps
22.	Through board position postings, recruitment, and retention efforts led by REFBC's chief executive officer, prioritize individuals who are Indigenous and have connections to First Nations within the REFBC service area, have experience in land-based work, and represent a diversity of both rural and urban areas and a range of capacity.	In Progress	**REFBC General:** The CEO regularly meets with the appointing bodies responsible for nominating board members, including CABRO, to share REFBC's strategic priorities and the skills and knowledge needed on the board. These conversations help encourage the recruitment and nomination of Indigenous candidates when vacancies arise. Job postings and communications emphasize the foundation's commitment to advancing UNDRIP and its interest in candidates who have demonstrated support for this work. **WSF:** The WSF Joint Executive is comprised of two First Nation Water Caucus commissioners and two REFBC board appointments. The WSF Grant Agreement with the province and Commitment to Action (C2A) agreement state the commitment to "Establish a permanent fund co-governed with First Nations at the table in a meaningful decision-making role." C2A further states, "In recognizing First Nations need to be at the table in a meaningful decision-making role, it will be important that the fund is co-developed and that the permanent entity created to administer the fund is co-governed with First Nations".

Appendix 1: Progress Update on Action Implementation, cont.

Governance: Early Action / In Progress

#	Action	Status	Comments & Next Steps
23.	Offer and implement various training sessions with the REFBC Board of Governors on cultural safety, decolonizing practices, anti-racism, and UNDRIP to ensure Indigenous board members are supported with appropriate knowledge base and awareness amongst their board peers.	In Progress	REFBC's Board of Governors has participated in workshops on UNDRIP with the REFBC UNDRIP Fellow. In addition, governors have participated in training sessions offered by CABRO and The Circle on Philanthropy.
24.	In addition to prioritizing Indigenous candidates for the Board of Governor positions, invite and support Indigenous advisors, contractors, and other collaborators who can provide key insights and guidance to both the Board of Governors and REFBC staff on all aspects of REFBC operations including granting, special projects and research, investments, and special events such as the Land Awards.	In Progress	**REFBC General:** REFBC nurtures relationships with several Indigenous advisors to support REFBC decision-making through UNDRIP Fellowship, Indigenous Caucus, and Indigenous Community Leaders Circle. Indigenous individuals, companies, and organizations are also prioritized in Land Awards juries, impact investments, sponsorships, and general procurement. **WSF:** First Nations members make up 50% or more of the Grants Working Group, Co-Development Working Group, and Grow the Fund Working Group membership. Members are selected collaboratively between FNFC and REFBC and confirmed by the WSF Joint Executive. WSF worked with a First Nations contractor for help with reviewing Intake Two applications, and WSF worked with a First Nations contractor for support with website development and strategic planning graphics.
25.	Continued actioning direction from the Healthy Watersheds Initiative	In Progress	**REFBC General:** ICLC members share updates and learnings four

Appendix 1: Progress Update on Action Implementation, cont.

Governance: Early Action / In Progress

#	Action	Status	Comments & Next Steps
25.	Indigenous Leaders Advisory Circle (ILAC) and the IGS Indigenous Community Leaders Circle (ICLC) on funding criteria and approaches, ensuring two-way communication with the Board of Governors in a collaborative and mutually supportive manner.	(cont.)	times a year at board meetings. **WSF:** WSF's Grants Program Framework drew on the teachings and direction from the HWI Indigenous Leaders Advisory Circle (ILAC). Three members of the current WSF Grants Working Group were former ILAC members.
26.	Extend invitation to First Nations organizations and governments to engage in dialogue on REFBC governance, including potential for First Nations' appointing bodies for board positions.	Not started	**REFBC General:** REFBC is undertaking a governance review process in 2025 and 2026, which includes in its scope engagement of Indigenous leaders and First Nations in BC. **WSF:** WSF's Co-Development Working Group will advise the Joint Executive on a process to seek feedback from First Nations Rights and Title holders and additional non-First Nations interests on the co-development process for the Permanent Entity for the WSF.
27.	Recognition of and respect for the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations' territories on which the REFBC office resides, and provide official support for the City of Vancouver UNDRIP Strategy, and encourage other similar philanthropic funders and grantees to do similarly.	In Progress	**REFBC General:** The foundation recognizes host nation territories, connects and provides grants, and is supportive of the City of Vancouver UNDRIP strategy. More official support and formal protocols have not been established.

Appendix 1: Progress Update on Action Implementation, cont.

Governance: Longer-term Change			
#	**Action**	**Status**	**Comments & Next Steps**
	Governance: Longer-term Change		
28.	Finalize and affirm REFBC governance structure that ensures First Nations' involvement in decision-making on granting, investments, special projects and research, communications, and other areas of responsibility and activity.	**REFBC** Not started **WSF** In Progress	**REFBC General:** An initial governance review was approved by the Board, and is underway in 2025 and 2026. **WSF:** As interim stewards, REFBC is co-developing and co-governing the fund with the First Nations Fisheries Council and First Nations Water Caucus, until it is handed over to the permanent co-governed entity. Very clear joint staff, joint management, joint executive governance, agreements, and processes in support of joint decision making. Joint executive members include two First Nations Water Caucus Commissioners and two REFBC board members. At least 50% of positions on working groups are held by people who identify as BC First Nations (articulated in terms of reference). Clear governance structure and processes established to uphold co-development and co-governance principles and ensure First Nations are at the table in a meaningful decision-making role. See WSF Strategic Plan, Commitment to Action Agreement, Joint Executive and Working Group Terms of Reference.
29.	Explore and, where called for in First Nations' engagement, reconfigure REFBC governance and decision-making processes to better reflect First Nations' diversity of systems of	**REFBC** Not started **WSF** In Progress	**WSF:** Unique structure and interim governance are based on a model recommended by the First Nations Fisheries Council. The WSF joint executive terms of reference states: "The Joint Executive will be

Appendix 1: Progress Update on Action Implementation, cont.

Governance: Longer-term Change			
#	**Action**	**Status**	**Comments & Next Steps**
29.	governance, cultural protocols, and practices.	(cont.)	guided by the principles and context outlined in the Commitment to Action framework (sections two and three) including principles of respect, transparency and accountability, cooperation and collaboration, flexibility and adaptability, and innovation. "They will recognize the foundational importance of embedding Indigenous principles, goals and protocols into their approach and relationships. Indigenous values should underpin all aspects of the work."
	Governance: Deeply Transformative		
30.	Explore with First Nations' partners various governance models and select the most desirable and appropriate to uphold UNDRIP in the administration of land-based funding.	**REFBC** Not started **WSF** In Progress	**WSF:** This is a fundamental purpose of WSF. The WSF strategic plan states: "The fund and its governing entity will be co-developed and co-governed with First Nations to establish a permanent and enduring funding stream for watershed projects that uphold UNDRIP/ DRIPA commitments across British Columbia." For more details, see also the WSF Grant Agreement.
	Governance: Legislative Change Required		
31.	Where and if dialogue and engagement with First Nations' yields a governance model that requires legislative change, advance the legislative change in accordance with processes associated with the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act.	Not started	

Operations

Operations: Early Action / In Progress

#	Action	Status	Comments & Next Steps
32.	Continue to offer cultural safety, anti-racism, UNDRIP, OCAP and other relevant training for all REFBC staff and board members. Ensure training reflects a diversity of regions, First Nations, and approaches from within the REFBC service area.	In Progress	REFBC has supported a range of training and learning opportunities to REFBC and WSF staff, board, and community partners since 2020. Options for ongoing and annual training will continue to be prioritized.
33.	Review and make any needed changes to the REFBC Employee Handbook to reflect commitments and objectives in this action plan, and address ongoing training requirements as it relates to human resource policy.	In Progress	Updates have been made to the REFBC employee handbook to ensure explicit connection to TAUA and UNDRIP. REFBC has made related updates to its practices on staff recruitment, selection and orientation practices; its compensation philosophy and health and wellness benefits; and its professional development and performance management priorities.
34.	Review and make any needed changes to the REFBC performance evaluation processes (including for CEO), criteria, and personnel involved to reflect this action plan and commitments to UNDRIP.	Complete	TAUA is part of annual performance review process and goal-setting processes for staff and CEO.
35.	Continue to share, profile, and celebrate stories of Indigenous-led land-based work supported by the foundation, and in partnership with the nations and led by REFBC communications. Include direct sharing with REFBC Board through	In Progress	**REFBC General:** The plan is to complete this work throughout the current year, acknowledging that more can be done and this work is an ongoing commitment. Indigenous Grants Stream grantees have expressed interest in storytelling for their own communities, not external audiences. The context for sharing stories is to support

Appendix 1: Progress Update on Action Implementation, cont.

Operations: Early Action / In Progress

#	Action	Status	Comments & Next Steps
35.	site visits, and presentations at board meetings.	(cont.)	continued transformational change through TAUA. In future, REFBC could add a question in grant applications inviting applicants to share their capacity to engage in storytelling initiatives or site visit. REFBC has been asked to share more openly about why stories and photos are being shared, and for what purposes, with the goal of prioritizing consent in communications processes, ensuring they are not extractive. **WSF:** Currently developing a storytelling plan/ strategy in partnership with First Nations Fisheries Council.
36.	Strengthen and improve process for REFBC staff and board site visits (grantee projects) in First Nations' territories to ensure respectful permission protocols are followed, including confidentiality for culturally sensitive areas where advised.	 In Progress	**REFBC General:** REFBC has shifted its practice to wait for invitations to do site visits. REFBC is learning how to ensure protocols are respected. **WSF:** WSF is developing a plan for site visits and will include principles and approaches to respect First Nations' communities, leaders, priorities, and time.
37.	Share stories, lessons, and learnings from the REFBC UNDRIP Fellowship with other funders and encourage similar approaches be taken amongst the philanthropic funding community. Efforts to date include panel and other presentations by the UNDRIP Fellow and senior REFBC staff at conferences, webinars, direct communications with individual funders, and collaborative pooling of funds for common cause	 In Progress	REFBC's UNDRIP Fellow presented at various conferences on TAUA. REFBC's CEO and senior staff presented at various conferences and events and highlighted TAUA.

Appendix 1: Progress Update on Action Implementation, cont.

Operations: Early Action / In Progress

#	Action	Status	Comments & Next Steps
37.	(e.g. Trust-Based Philanthropy Group, Low Carbon Funders, BC Freshwater Water Legacy Initiative, Pacific Salmon Funders).	(cont.)	(cont.)
38.	Continue to profile Indigenous leadership and excellence in land and water stewardship at the REFBC Land Awards, including as potential award nominees, judging committees, keynote speakers, performers, and procurement opportunities (e.g. catering, gifts for award winners, etc.).	In Progress	This is complete for the current year; this work is ongoing, as REFBC's Land Awards are every two years.
39.	Complete UNDRIP self-evaluation with all REFBC staff and board members. The process will be led by the UNDRIP Fellow, drawn from the Healthy Watersheds Initiative's similar self-evaluation, and based on the International Funders for Indigenous Peoples Toolkit. Utilize findings for continuous improvement, learning, and adaptive change in the advancement of UNDRIP at REFBC.	In Progress	**REFBC General:** REFBC aims for grants evaluation in 2025. **WSF:** The WSF team participated in a mini evaluation with six questions drafted by REFBC's UNDRIP Fellow. Team members responded individually and then discussed the results as a group. The results have provided a useful context for this progress report.
40.	Assess REFBC investment strategies, portfolio management, and criteria with an UNDRIP lens. Identify and remedy potential conflicts, for example in portfolio management and investment in fossil fuel industries and projects which violate Indigenous rights.	In Progress	**REFBC General:** An updated REFBC investment philosophy was adopted in Q1, 2025, to incorporate relevant TAUA line items. REFBC considers adherence to UNDRIP a foundational criterion, not just a consideration. **WSF:** The WSF portfolio was created from the bottom up. This allowed for: Values and

Appendix 1: Progress Update on Action Implementation, cont.

Operations: Early Action / In Progress

#	Action	Status	Comments & Next Steps
40.	(cont.)	(cont.)	statements aligning with DRIPA and UNDRIP; specific investment restrictions embedded into the statement of investment policy and goals; investments made in a manner to support reconciliation; and for infrastructure projects and real assets, assurances that demonstrated support exists from Indigenous Peoples in the area.
41.	Promote best practices among investment managers and investee companies with respect to Indigenous rights, reconciliation, justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in all its forms.	 In Progress	**REFBC General**: • At the early stages, REFBC will review alignment of proxy voting guidelines; • REFBC will engage with the investment manager's Environmental, Social, Governance (ESG) team to update its investment philosophy; • REFBC will conduct an UNDRIP-aligned portfolio audit to assess current exposure to: Fossil fuel companies with contested projects (e.g. pipelines lacking FPIC); land-intensive sectors with unresolved Indigenous land title; and companies with poor Indigenous relations or lack of reconciliation policies; • REFBC is currently invested in four funds that only invest in Indigenous-led companies; and • REFBC is researching other opportunities that are allocated to Indigenous-led companies. **WSF**: Throughout the due diligence process and interview process, investment firms were questioned on alignment with Indigenous rights, DEI policies, and reconciliation.

Appendix 1: Progress Update on Action Implementation, cont.

Operations: Early Action / In Progress

#	Action	Status	Comments & Next Steps
42.	Work with investment organizations who advocate on behalf of REFBC to advance UNDRIP and work on other identified issues by directly engaging with specific companies.	In Progress	**REFBC General:** REFBC is working with SHARE (Shareholder Association for Research and Education) on: • SHARE engagement program; and • Reconciliation and Responsible Investment Initiative (RRII). Participation and learning also benefits WSF investment learning and practices.
43.	Maintain and increase funds invested in Indigenous-led enterprises and Indigenous funds. Highlight Indigenous-led enterprises through communication channels and networks.	In Progress	**REFBC General**: REFBC is currently invested in four Indigenous-led funds that only invest in Indigenous-led companies. REFBC is actively seeking out funds and highlighting/prioritizing Indigenous-led companies and culturally appropriate housing. **WSF:** WSF selects investment managers with a lens on Indigenous alignment. Its infrastructure funds are confirmed to have demonstrated support from Indigenous Peoples in the area.
44.	Incorporate UNDRIP questions into impact investment due diligence review process.	In Progress	**REFBC General**: REFBC is actively seeking potential impact investments that allocate funds to Indigenous-led companies. Action is underway for this fiscal year to revamp due diligence for impact investments to include UNDRIP questions and prioritize Indigenous-led companies and funds. REFBC will prioritize positive screening for investments that contribute to Indigenous economic development, stewardship, and equity ownership. REFBC developed a screening framework that flags and excludes

Appendix 1: Progress Update on Action Implementation, cont.

Operations: Early Action / In Progress

#	Action	Status	Comments & Next Steps
44.	(cont.)	(cont.)	investments that lack FPIC, have documented rights violations, or are involved in litigation with Indigenous communities.
45.	Strengthen partnerships with Indigenous-led organizations that build host capacity to access, share, and evaluate impacts of philanthropic support and relationships. For example, support for the development of The Circle on Philanthropy's Feast House.	In Progress	REFBC is providing multi-year support to The Circle on Philanthropy, including the development of the Feast House and Land Back research. Other examples include a five-year grant to Right Relations Collaborative, and multi-year funding to the Reconciliation and Responsible Investment Institute.
46.	Provide an annual report focused solely on UNDRIP outcomes as permanent accountability and transparency mechanism. Include meaningful deadlines for Longer-Term and Deeply Transformative Change Actions. Share annual UNDRIP report on REFBC website, and through email to BC First Nations and Indigenous organizations for feedback. Include independent evaluation to ensure arms-length and non-bias reporting on all actions through UNDRIP Fellow or Indigenous organizations with experience in UNDRIP and organizational evaluation.	In Progress	The first annual UNDRIP Progress Report (this document) was drafted by staff and REFBC's UNDRIP Fellow.

Appendix 1: Progress Update on Action Implementation, cont.

Operations: Early Action / In Progress

#	Action	Status	Comments & Next Steps
	Operations: Longer-term Change		
47.	Develop a system to track range and the number of decisions made that include Indigenous decision-makers or voices at REFBC. The goal is to shift from the narrower metric of the number of Indigenous staff and board members to transparency and accountability on day-to-day and strategic decision-making that includes and upholds Indigenous decision-makers or advisors.	Not started	
48.	Make UNDRIP Fellow permanent role with REFBC. Invite Indigenous leaders, experts, and partners to assume role on a temporary and rotating basis (every three years) to ensure representation from multiple diverse First Nations across the REFBC service area. Modify role as requested by subsequent UNDRIP Fellows.	In Progress	REFBC's Board of Governors passed a motion to make the UNDRIP Fellow a permanent role with REFBC in 2023, then confirmed with approval and budget allocation in 2025/26.
49.	Develop investment strategy that addresses key findings from the assessment described in Transformative Action #40 above, include Indigenous advisors, board members and partners/grantees where needed to finalize.	In Progress	**REFBC General:** A new investment philosophy, reviewed by internal and external groups presented and adopted by the REFBC Board, is an overarching document that is referred to by both Statement of Investment Policy and Goals and Impact Investment Policy. **WSF:** WSF Statement of Investment Policies and Goals incorporates DRIPA and UNDRIP and does not permit investments in extractive industry and energy projects "without

Appendix 1: Progress Update on Action Implementation, cont.

Operations: Longer-term Change			
#	**Action**	**Status**	**Comments & Next Steps**
49.	(cont.)	(cont.)	demonstrated support …from the relevant Indigenous communities following a process aimed at achieving a Free, Prior, and Informed consent." Indigenous members of working group and committee have been retained. WSF's investment strategy, policy and goals were developed with an Investment Working Group which included First Nations advisors. Ongoing oversight is provided through a Finance & Investment Committee which includes representatives from the First Nations Water Caucus, First Nations Fisheries Council, and an external First Nations advisor.
	Operations: Deeply Transformative		
50.	Based on outcomes of governance, and longer-term change actions identified above, potentially restructure REFBC operations to suit renewed governance models, informed and identified by dialogue and partnership with First Nations.	Not started	**WSF:** Interim governance and operations will evolve into a permanent, independent co-governed fund and entity (estimated by 2028).