

3rd BARC IMPACT REPORT



Local Governments
for Sustainability

CANADA



We set our sights on an inclusive and equitable future.

If the COVID-19 pandemic gave us anything, it was a heightened sense of our vulnerabilities. As we cautiously emerge from lock-downs, online school, mask-mandates, and travel restrictions, many in the field of climate change are doing so with a deeper understanding of the impacts and consequences climate change will have, a commitment to better prepare and a stronger sense of urgency in reaching our net-zero commitments by 2050.

Since ICLEI Canada first started Building Adaptive and Resilient Communities (BARC) in 2007 we have seen tremendous growth in the field of adaptation and resilience building. We have also seen unprecedented impacts across the country – hundreds of deaths from heat in British Columbia, multi-day power outages in Atlantic Canada from Hurricane Fiona, and billions of dollars in damages from flooding across the country (alongside emergencies being declared from months-long droughts).

This year is yet another pivotal year as the federal government launches Canada's first-ever National Adaptation Strategy (NAS).

In October 2022, we came together to wrestle with some of the new challenges amongst the experts and practitioners gathered at the **10th Livable Cities Forum** on the theme of Conversations for an Inclusive Future. Together, we discussed important synergies between efforts to address social vulnerabilities exposed through the pandemic and efforts to increase climate resilience and achieve net-zero in communities across Canada with an equity lens front and centre.

As we reflect on the work of BARC and the Livable Cities Forum, we set our sights on an inclusive and equitable future and reaffirm our commitment to continuous learning, improvement, and steadfast implementation.

BARC Impact

Many will know BARC as a national capacity building program for municipalities focused on adaptation and resilience. Well over 100 municipalities, large and small, have used BARC's framework, tools and resources to guide their adaptation and resilience building efforts. However, BARC has grown to become much more than a program. BARC is the window through which ICLEI engages in adaptation and resilience policy development, planning, applied research, resource development, capacity building, networking and much more.



Building Adaptive and Resilient Communities

The open-source foundation established by BARC has become so widely used that it's impossible for ICLEI to track its uptake and application with the same degree of accuracy as we have in earlier BARC Impact Reports. However, that doesn't mean we won't try.

620+

Local Partners

2790+

Adaptation
Actions Identified

1860+

Climate Impacts
Identified

83+

Institutional
Collaborators

53+

Funding Partners

104+

BARC Users

BARC Users



Ajax	Hamilton	Orillia
Baie-Saint-Paul	Havelock Belmont Methuen	Ottawa
Barrie	Hunstville	Parry Sound
Beaconsfield	Huron-Kinloss	Peel
Bonfield	Iqaluit	Penetanguishene
Bracebridge	Kawartha Lakes	Peterborough, City
Brampton	Kenora	Peterborough, County
Burlington	Kingston	Pickering
Caledon	Kitchener	Port Alberni
Calgary	Lake of Bays	Portugal Cove, St Phillips
Cambridge	Laval	Prévost
Campbell River	London	Prince George
Candiac	Longueuil	Qualicum Beach
Canmore	Loyalist	Red Deer
Capital Regional District	Meaford	Repentigny
Colwood	Metro Vancouver	Richmond Hill
Conception Bay South	Mississauga	Rivière-du-Loup
Courtenay	Moncton	Saanich
Courtney	Montreal	Selwyn
Cowichan Valley	Mount Pearl	Shawanaga First Nation
Delta	MRC de Thérèse-De	St. Catherine's
Dufferin	Blainville	Sunshine Coast
Duoro Dummer	MRC Mirabel	Surrey
Durham Region	Muskoka District	Thunder Bay
Edmonton	Muskoka Lakes	Timmins
Edmunston	Nanaimo	Toronto
Esquimalt	National Capital Commission	Ucluelet
Essex	New Glasgow	Vancouver
Fredericton	Niagara Falls	Vernon
Gatineau	Nipigon	Victoria
Georgian Bluffs	Norfolk County	Waterloo, City
Gravenhurst	North Vancouver, City	Waterloo, Region
Greater Sudbury	North Vancouver, District	Wawa
Guelph	Oakville	WDGPH
Halton Hills	Orangeville	Windsor

67

<50,000 Population

37

>50,000 Population

Reflections from the Field

Throughout the last year, we have been working with 30+ communities, conducting applied research projects, collaborating with experts, and delivering dozens of community-based workshops. We are constantly learning and adjusting our approach. Here are a few of the lessons we are currently reflecting on.

Adaptation planning is becoming mainstream, but implementation is not keeping pace with the frequency and severity of impacts being felt by communities or the need to prioritize equity and inclusion in the process.

Increased adaptation planning

We are seeing dozens of adaptation plans being created each year, with the majority of these supported by robust vulnerability and risk assessment processes. However, implementation of these plans is not keeping pace with the frequency and severity of impacts being felt by communities. While developing adaptation plans is an important process, and one that is capable of delivering positive outcomes, it can also overestimate the ability of planning to deliver the intended outcomes of adaptation – namely a reduction of risk from extreme weather or other weather-related hazards. We need to implement projects that reduce risk, improve the capacity of Canadians to adapt and build resilience.

Decolonizing climate action

We're starting to see efforts to decolonize climate action (e.g. the creation of the Indigenous climate atlas) but it is not enough. It is important to understand that reconciliation and decolonization requires attention be placed on the process itself, not on the products or specific outcomes. It is critical that this work is built on a foundation of trust and relationship building and not one of extraction, where Indigenous knowledge is selectively incorporated into Western scientific frameworks. It is therefore important that local governments commit dedicated time and effort to build relationships and establish trust with Indigenous Peoples to collaboratively weave together multiple knowledge systems into climate adaptation planning processes.

Tailoring capacity building efforts

We've seen the benefit of direct capacity building supports, through initiatives such as our **Advancing Adaptation** project that showcase the positive benefits of working directly with a community to provide training on adaptation planning and implementation rather than having them outsource the work. Through such initiatives, we have learned that capacity building is about more than creating a funding program or specific tools; it is about providing support and nurturing a community of action where learning can come from the exchange and dialogue between communities and not just from the creation of the resource.

Prioritizing equity, diversity, and inclusion

It has become mainstreamed that collaborative problem-solving leads to improved outcomes. However, typical municipal engagement processes have tended to centre the voices of individuals with privilege, including those with time, resources, and power. Local governments must invest in and pursue climate adaptation policy changes, programs, and infrastructure development that prioritize equity and inclusion.



Enhanced recognition of climate risk

One of the essential functions of financial markets is to price risk to support informed, efficient capital-allocation decisions. It is becoming increasingly well understood that one of the most significant risks that organizations face today relates to climate change. The practices and techniques of producing financial disclosures related to the potential effects of climate change on organizations are becoming more advanced and robust, with climate-related issues becoming a regular part of annual financial filings. This recognition of climate risks by those outside of the climate change field is paramount for stimulating the level of action required to meet climate commitments and ultimately reduce risk.

Our Vision of the Future

BARC is always evolving, just like the concept of resilience itself. ICLEI Canada's priorities incorporate decades of experience working with local governments from across Canada, lessons we have learned through our work, and emerging issues.

Increased pace of implementation

In order to help communities get beyond assessment and planning, we are committed to creating unique and tailored capacity building supports for implementation. Whether these are cohorts of local governments working together or specific tools that address the challenges of implementation, we will focus our efforts to help local governments implement adaptation in their communities.

Regional collaboration

The age-old saying many hands make light work can be applied to municipal work on adaptation. While there are unique characteristics to each of the 6000 communities across Canada, there is no need for each of them to work in isolation. Sharing resources, personnel, and expertise among neighbouring municipalities is an excellent way to overcome the capacity barrier. We will continue to support regional collaboration through cohort delivery of the BARC program and other ICLEI-led initiatives that bring municipalities together to lessen the workload.

Enhanced nature-based solutions

There is clear focus on exploring the opportunities for adaptation that lie in investing in the protection or enhancement of nature to strengthen resilience. We are delighted to see so much attention on the valuation of nature in cities. As we move to implementation of green and blue infrastructure projects, we will work with local governments and partners to move beyond discrete pilot projects and implement larger scale or systems wide approaches that integrate nature at scale.

Resilient infrastructure financing

Given the accelerating changes in our climate and the multi-billion dollar loss events we have recently experienced, a whole-of-society approach – including private investors, professional engineering and solutions designers, and innovative bundling and project delivery mechanisms – is needed to achieve the scale and speed of construction required. ICLEI Canada is committed to working with partners to explore, test, and develop mechanisms that will connect municipal efforts with public and private financing.

Communicating climate change differently

One of our realizations comes from the reality that the lack of effective climate response is not due to a lack of facts or technology or policy solutions, but to “softer”, psychological reasons. People are not motivated by global, abstract, intellectual issues – they are motivated by issues that resonate emotionally and locally. We are working to help train local government staff in a new style of climate communications – one aimed not at winning debates but rather at motivating change and building trust.

Pursuing multiple benefits

Local governments will not be able to keep pace with all of the change required if we build one solution at a time. In order to meet the climate change challenge we need to multisolve with funding for adaptation. Money spent to future-proof a roadway could be allocated to add sidewalk space (for placemaking benefits), a bike lane (for active transportation opportunities), trees and greenspace (for ecosystem and health benefits), while at the same time moving vehicles as well. ICLEI will continue to find opportunities to design adaptation solutions that can serve multiple benefits.



Building an inclusive and equitable future

In order to build an inclusive and equitable future, we are approaching our work through the lens of equity, diversity, and inclusion. We are striving to listen and learn from Indigenous Peoples in the process, working with partners to weave together multiple knowledge systems and worldviews.

Connect with us online to learn more about ICLEI Canada and BARC



Website



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ICLEI Canada's work happens across Turtle Island which has traditionally been and is home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples since time immemorial. We endeavour to listen to and learn from Indigenous Peoples in the process of our work.

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