



RHS
QUEBEC FIRST NATIONS
REGIONAL HEALTH SURVEY



FIRST NATIONS OF QUEBEC
AND LABRADOR HEALTH
AND SOCIAL SERVICES
COMMISSION

MOBILITY AND COMMUNITY WELLNESS

Highlights

- More than six in ten adults have lived outside their community.
- The main reasons for moving away from the community are to pursue education and employment.
- The main reasons for returning to the community are family and community connections, as well as job opportunities.
- Family values and connections, culture, elders, community health programs and the use of a First Nations language are most commonly reported as elements of community strength.
- Alcohol and drug abuse, lack of jobs, violence and housing are the elements most often mentioned as challenges facing communities.



CONTEXT

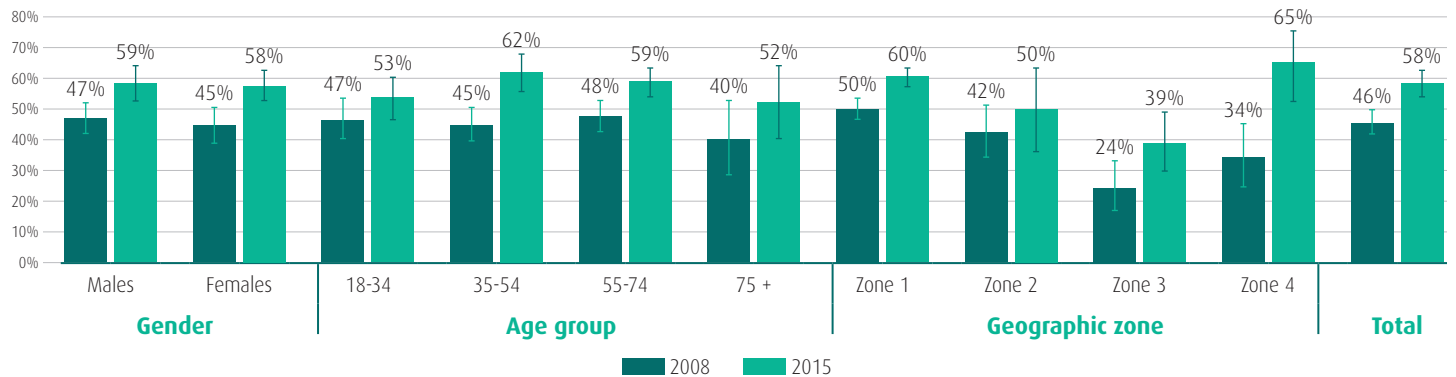
This booklet presents a portrait of First Nations mobility and community wellness. It addresses the reasons that motivate First Nations to move away from or return to their community. It should be noted that the results on mobility are based on responses from people who at one time lived outside their community but who lived there at the time of the survey. In addition to mobility, the feeling of belonging to the community, the feeling of safety, as well as the population’s perception of the community’s strengths and challenges are also discussed.

MOBILITY

Residence outside the community

Among adults residing in First Nations communities in 2015, nearly six out of ten report that they have lived outside their community, which is a significant increase over the 2008 data. The increase is especially strong among respondents 35-54 years old, as well as in the communities located in Zone 4 (FIGURE 1). It should be noted that these results do not indicate that more people moved away from their community in 2015 than in 2008, but that more community residents report, in 2015, that they have ever lived outside the community. This could mean that a significant number of adults have settled in or returned to communities between 2008 and 2015.

FIGURE 1
Adults who have lived outside their community based on gender, age group and geographic zone, in 2008 and in 2015



Departing from the community

As was noted during the 2008 RHS (FNQLHSSC, 2013), the main reasons for departing from the community are to pursue education and employment. Relationships, housing and family responsibilities are also mentioned, but to a lesser extent (FIGURE 2).

Similar proportions of males and females report having moved away from their community to pursue their education, while employment is more often cited as a reason by males. Employment is also more often given as a reason among people 55 years and over, while education is the main reason for moving away among people 18-54 years old (FIGURE 3). This is consistent with the observation that many young people move away from their community to pursue their education, but also to “experiment with another lifestyle” (Nolet, 2003).

FIGURE 2
Reasons adults moved away from their community

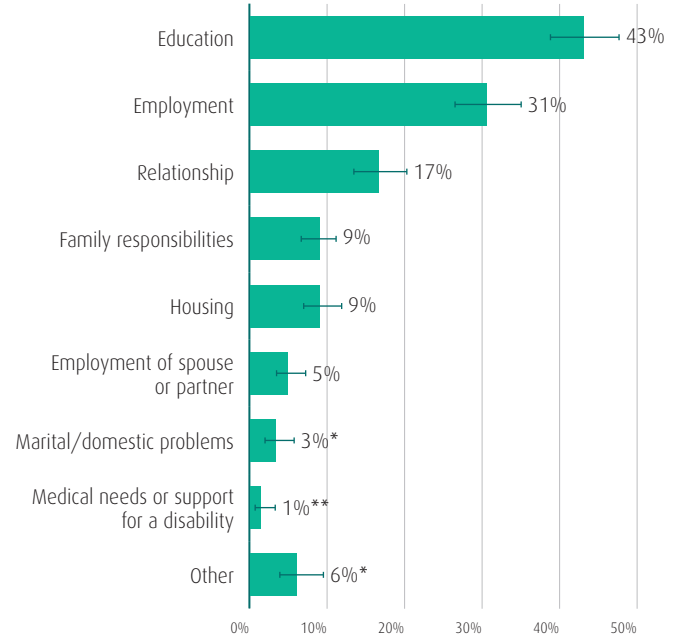
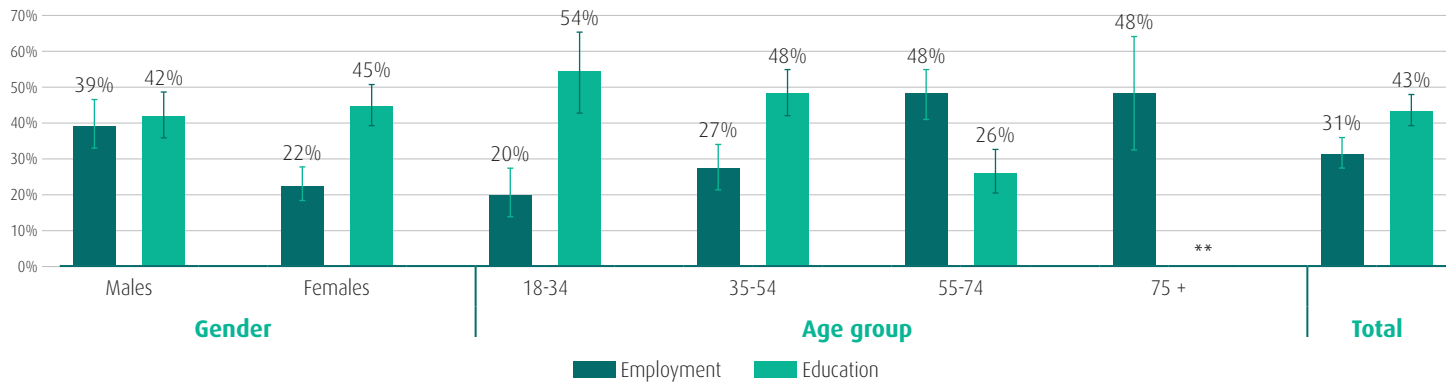
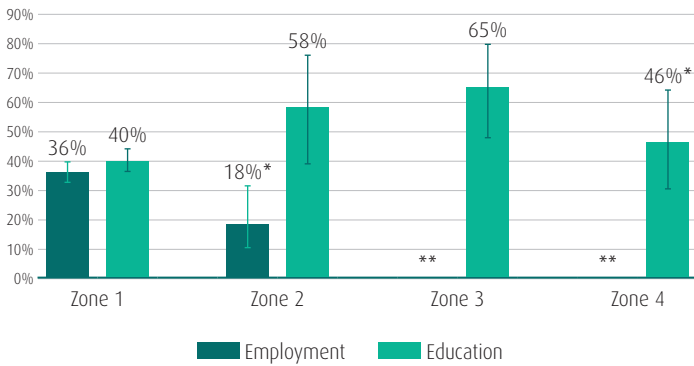


FIGURE 3
Adults who moved away from their community to pursue employment or education, based on gender and age group



Education is generally an important reason for departing from communities, particularly in communities in Zones 2 and 3. Employment is of similar importance to education in Zone 1, but this is less the case in Zone 2 (FIGURE 4).

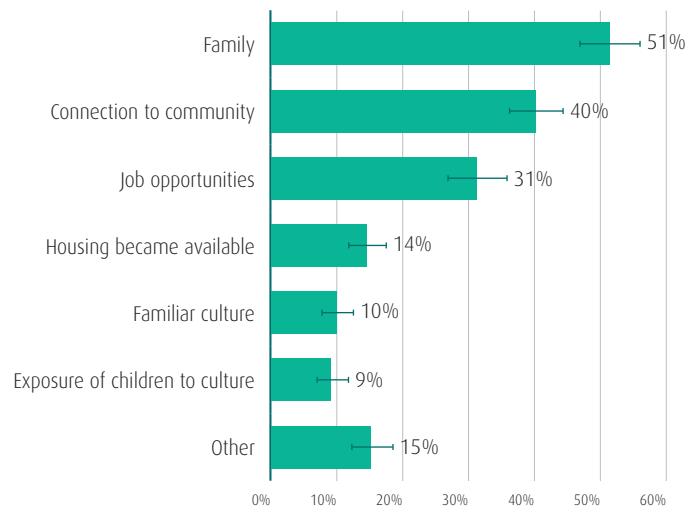
FIGURE 4
Adults who moved away from their community to pursue employment or education, based on geographic zone



Returning to the community

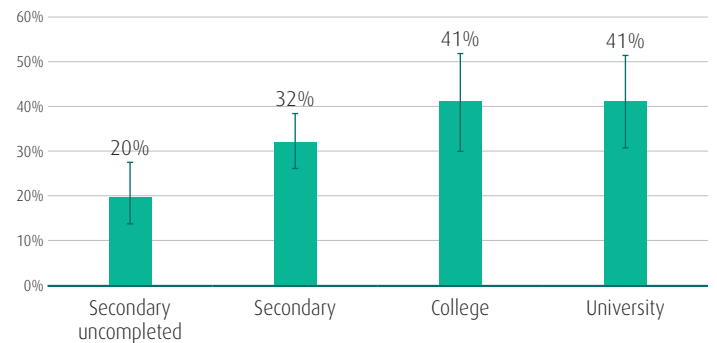
While people often move away from their community to pursue education or employment, their connections to community and family, as well as job opportunities, are the main reasons for returning. The availability of housing, the presence of a family culture and the desire to make their culture known to their children are also mentioned (FIGURE 5).

FIGURE 5
Reasons why adults returned to their community



People with a college or university education appear to be more likely to return to their communities because of job opportunities (FIGURE 6).

FIGURE 6
Adults who returned to their community because of job opportunities, based on education



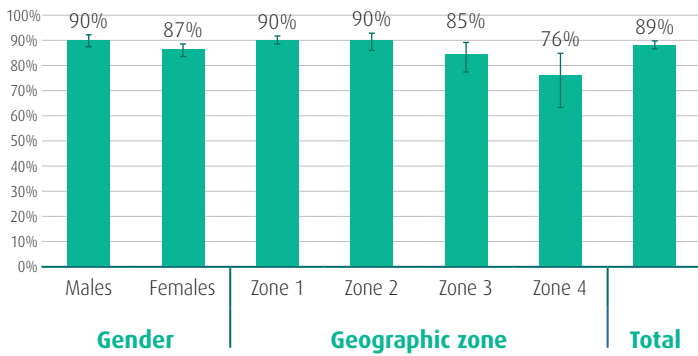
FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITY WELLNESS

This community wellness analysis is based on respondents' feelings of safety in and belonging to their community, as well as their perception of the strengths and challenges faced by their community and how these areas of challenge have changed.

Feeling of safety

Almost nine out of ten respondents 12 years and over say they feel safe in their community. However, the proportion is lower among residents living in Zone 4 communities (FIGURE 7).

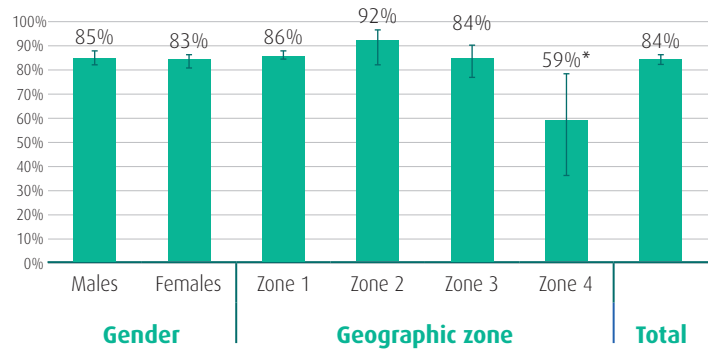
FIGURE 7
People who feel safe in their community, based on gender and geographic zone (12 years and over)



Sense of belonging

A large majority of respondents say they have a “somewhat strong” or “very strong” feeling of belonging to their community. However, like the feeling of safety, the proportion is lower among residents in Zone 4 communities (FIGURE 8).

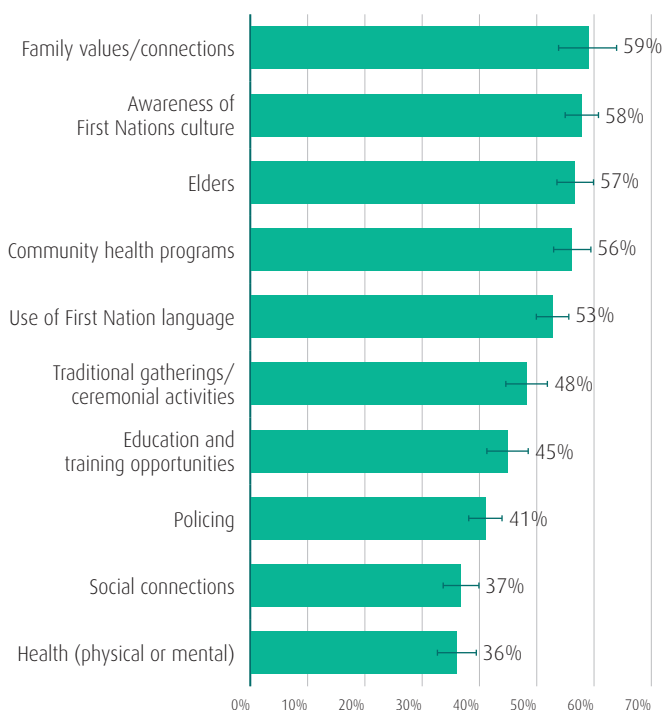
FIGURE 8
People who describe their sense of belonging to their community as strong or very strong (12 years and over)



Community strengths

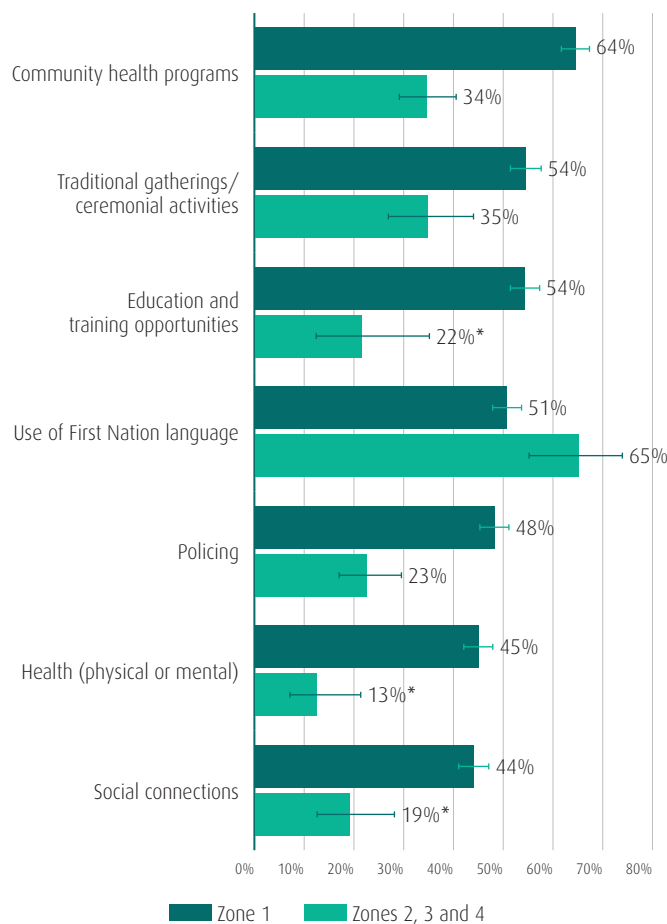
FIGURE 9 presents the characteristics most often considered as strengths within communities. More than one-half of people 15 years and over believe that family values and connections, culture, the presence of elders and use of a First Nations language are strengths for their community. More than half feel the same way about community health programs.

FIGURE 9
Elements most often considered as strengths in communities (15 years and over)



Looking at FIGURE 10, we can see that people in different geographic zones have different perceptions as to what constitutes a strength. Community health programs, traditional gatherings and ceremonial activities, education and training opportunities, policing, health (physical or mental) and social connections are less often seen as strengths in communities in Zones 2, 3 and 4 than in communities in Zone 1. However, the use of First Nations language is more often perceived as a strength in more remote communities.

FIGURE 10
Elements most often considered as strengths revealing differences based on geographic zones (15 years and over)

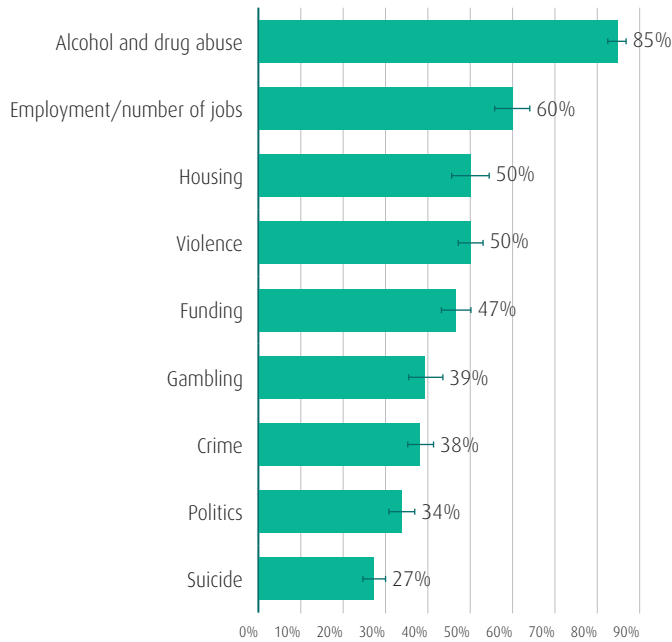




Challenges facing the communities

FIGURE 11 presents the elements most often considered as challenges facing their communities by people 15 years and over. A strong majority of respondents feel that alcohol and drug abuse is a challenge, and more than half agree that there are challenges in terms of jobs, violence and housing.

FIGURE 11
Elements most often considered as challenges facing their community (15 years and over)



As with strengths, people’s perceptions of what constitutes challenges can vary based on geographic zone. Funding, crime, and politics are less often perceived as challenges in the communities located in Zones 2, 3, and 4 than in communities in Zone 1. However, the housing issue is seen more as a challenge in more remote communities (FIGURE 12). FIGURE 13 shows that for the various challenges reported, only a minority of people aged 15 years and over observed an improvement in the situation during the year prior to the survey.

FIGURE 12
Elements most often considered as challenges revealing differences based on geographic zones (15 years and over)

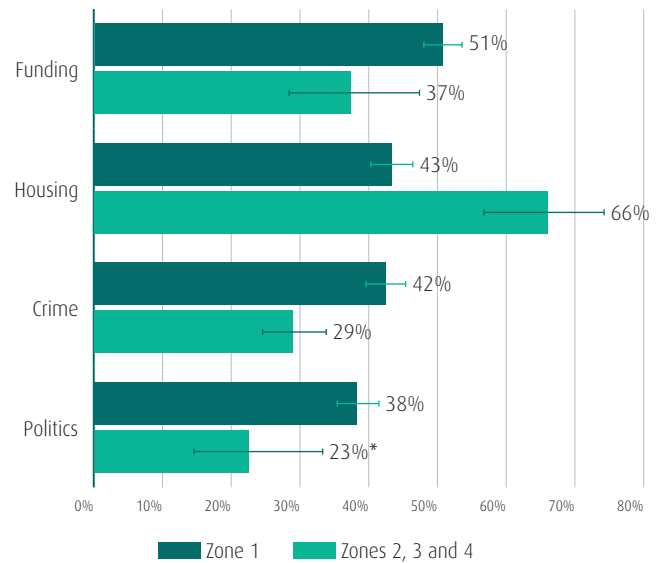
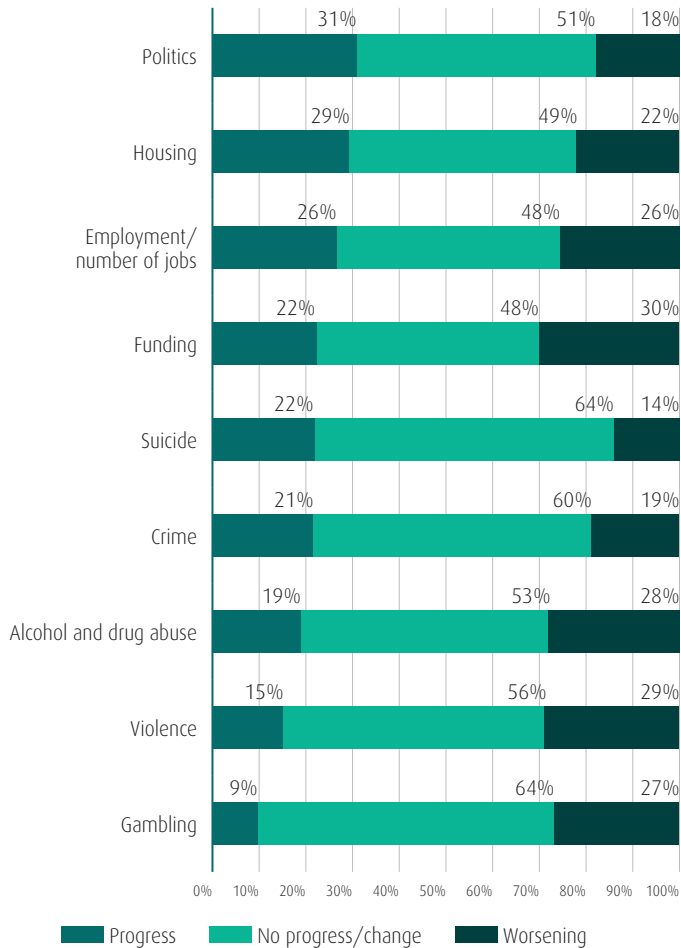


FIGURE 13
Perception of how the areas of challenge have changed over the year before the survey (15 years and over)



CONCLUSION

This portrait shows that in recent years, people living in First Nations communities are highly mobile. People who have moved away from their community say that education and employment are the main reasons for their departure, while their return to the community is often motivated by attachment to their community and family, but also by job opportunities.

The results on community wellness reveal that many residents feel that their community is struggling with a number of challenges, such as alcohol and drug abuse, reduced employment opportunities, violence and hardships related to housing. That said, these same residents are often of the opinion that their community has many strengths, such as family values and connections, culture, elders, language, and community health programs, and a strong majority of them say they feel attached to their community.

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METHODOLOGY IN BRIEF

The third phase of the First Nations Regional Health Survey (RHS) aims to describe the health status of the population in First Nations communities in Quebec. It was conducted from February 2015 to May 2016 in 21 communities from eight nations and reached 3,261 people (825 children aged 0 to 11 years, 769 adolescents aged 12 to 17 years and 1,667 adults aged 18 years and over) who responded to an electronic questionnaire submitted by field agents.

Data followed by the “*” sign have a coefficient of variation of 16.6% to 33.3% and should be interpreted with caution. The sign “***” indicates a coefficient of variation greater than 33.3%. This data is not published, except for estimates below 5%, which must be interpreted with caution. The lines presented in the bar or line charts are the confidence intervals calculated using a 95% confidence level.

In certain cases, the data are presented according to the geographic zone of the community of the respondents. These zones are defined as follows:¹

- Zone 1 (urban): less than 50 km from a service centre with road access;
- Zone 2 (rural): between 50 and 350 km from a service centre with road access;
- Zone 3 (isolated): more than 350 km from a service centre with road access;
- Zone 4 (difficult to access): no road.

Service centre: The nearest access to suppliers, banks and government services.

In the context of the RHS, the term “community” is used to represent “Indian reserves.”

For more details, please refer to the *Methodology* booklet of the RHS.

The RHS report consists of 20 thematic booklets. All the booklets can be consulted at the FNQLHSSC documentation center: <https://centredoc.cssspnql.com>.

¹ INAC, <http://fnp-ppn.aandc-aadnc.gc.ca/fnp/main/Definitions.aspx?lang=eng> [accessed 2018-01-03].



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