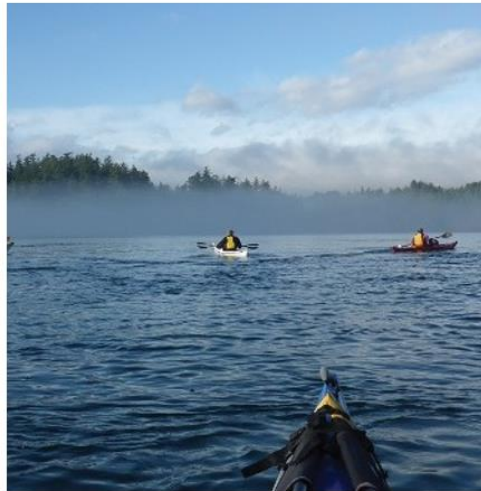




REMP

REGIONAL EMERGENCY  
MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP  
in the Capital Region



# 2023 Annual Report

January 2024

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## Message from the Co-Chairs

We are pleased to present the Regional Emergency Management Partnership (REMP) 2023 Annual Report which highlights the partnership's accomplishments over the year with local, regional, and provincial partners. 2023 saw another dramatic wildfire season, which when combined with several staffing changes and new emergency management legislation resulted in a busy year for the partnership. The new *Emergency and Disaster Management Act* (EDMA) received royal assent on November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023 and the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR) is currently working on regulations to facilitate its implementation. REMP staff are aligning their workplans to support the region in implementing EDMA and the associated regulations as they come into effect.

To assist in the adoption of the new act, REMP staff coordinated a forum, allowing regional partners the opportunity to ask questions and give feedback. Other completed work in 2023 included a tabletop evacuation exercise involving participants from all emergency programs in the region, a comprehensive survey of regional Emergency Support Services, and support to several regional projects. The REMP team also supported the provincial wildfire response efforts with deployments to various response roles. Acting Senior Project Manager Robert White completed two deployments to the Advanced Planning Unit in the Provincial Emergency Coordination Centre. Senior Project Coordinator Jane O'Higgins-Wilson deployed with the Canadian Armed Forces in the Northwest, providing logistical support in the Land Task Force Headquarters.

REMP has had many new faces this year. Thomas Hansen joined the team as Acting Director, Strategic Partnerships in January 2024 after Ryan O'Grady left, Robert White joined as Acting Senior Project Manager situated at EMCR, and Jane O'Higgins-Wilson joined as the Capital Regional District Senior Project Coordinator. The team will welcome back Ruth Fernandes and Brittany Schina from their parental leaves in 2024. The Steering Committee also saw changes, with Melanie Hope replacing Meghan Will representing the Homelessness and Supportive Housing Policy Branch. Brent Reems from the District of Saanich replaced Don Schaffer from District of Sooke as a Local Government representative. Erin Stockill from Saanich replaced Tanya Seal-Jones from Victoria, representing the Local Government Emergency Program Advisory Commission.

On a final note, we are pleased and proud to report that the partnership was nominated as a finalist for a Premier's Award for the Capital Region Tsunami Information Portal. Despite not securing the win, the nomination was a testament to the partnership's outstanding efforts and the dedication of REMP staff and regional partners who contributed to the success of the project.

Ted Robbins, Local Co-Chair,  
Chief Administrative Officer,  
Capital Regional District



Tara Richards, Provincial Co-Chair,  
Deputy Minister, Ministry of Emergency  
Management and Climate Readiness



## 2023 Annual Business Plan Highlights

2023 was a year of transition for REMP with new staff taking on support staff roles within the partnership and work priorities being adjusted accordingly. In the summer a significant wildfire season occurred resulting in REMP staff deploying to support emergency response efforts. Despite these challenges, REMP was able to achieve a number of its key performance indicators including:



REMP staff would like to thank all its partners, communities, organizations, and individuals who contributed to, collaborated on, or supported REMP's 2023 projects and initiatives.

## 2023 REMP Initiatives

### Regional Evacuation Tabletop Exercise:

Exercise Unknown Quantity was held on December 7th, 2023, and was attended by participants from all Emergency Programs from the 13 Capital Region municipalities and three Electoral Areas, as well one First Nation and Subject Matter Experts from provincial government and responding agencies. The exercise grew out of the 2022 REMP workshops series on cross-jurisdictional evacuation and was designed by REMP staff with support from an Advisory Group, made up of LGEPAC members and First Responders. The Advisory Group played a crucial role in shaping the exercise, providing input on design, scenarios, and objectives. Their involvement ensured a comprehensive and collaborative approach. The exercise revealed strengths in existing informal communication channels. Lessons learned included the need for updated communications planning, formalized agreements, and a desire for further exercising with varied partners. Exercise Unknown Quantity served as a valuable platform for testing the regional emergency management capacity and coordination in the face of diverse hazards.



Exercise Unknown Quantity participants discussing scenario findings.

### 2023 Regional Forum:

As part of a recurring engagement initiative, REMP holds an annual regional forum on a topic of regional significance. Regional forums provide an opportunity for emergency management practitioners in the Capital Region, as well as any other relevant partners and subject matter experts, to come together to share knowledge and to strengthen regional collaboration.

A regional forum about the new Emergency and Disaster Emergency Act (EDMA) was held virtually on November 23, 2023, in collaboration with EMCR's Policy and Legislation Branch. It was attended by 19 municipal and electoral area emergency program representatives. The purpose of this forum was to provide local emergency management practitioners in the Capital Region with an update on the recently enacted legislation and to facilitate feedback that would support the ongoing development of regulations for local authorities and post-emergency financial assistance. Common themes emerged, including concerns about



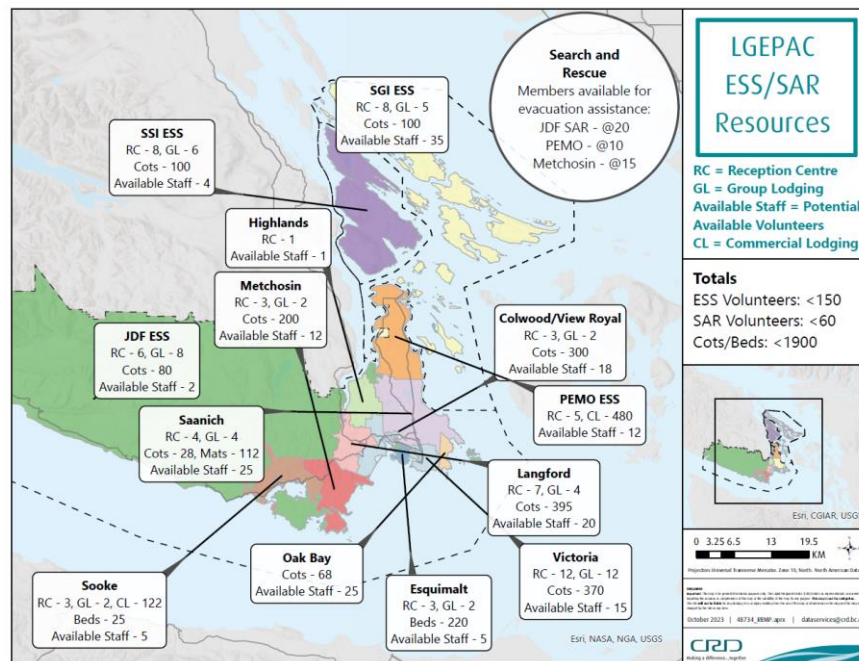
capacity constraints, the need for concrete guidance for understanding and meeting regulation requirements, the need for templates, the desire for meaningful action, and flexibility in regulations.

## Earthquake Early Warning System – Extended Network:

In 2023, REMP staff supported the City of Victoria with a project to implement seismic sensors within the region that will tie into the national Earthquake Early Warning system. A vendor has been chosen for the project and planning is well underway for sensors to be installed in eight locations across the region.

## ESS Survey and Map:

In 2023, REMP Staff completed a survey of the Emergency Support Services (ESS) available in the Capital Region. The information was then amalgamated in the form of a detailed map, encompassing all available ESS resources within municipal and electoral area emergency programs in the Capital Region. This tool provides a visual guide for Emergency Programs across the region to assist resource sharing during large-scale events. Recently completed and formally presented to the Local Government Emergency Planning Advisory Committee (LGEPAC), this map enhances coordination efforts, ensuring swift and effective responses in times of emergencies. This map serves as a visual guide for regional Emergency Programs, facilitating resource sharing during large-scale events and improving coordination efforts.



## Heat Vulnerability Mapping

In 2023, REMP staff supported GeoBC and the Capital Regional District's (CRD) work in developing a Regional Heat Dashboard that will map community vulnerability to extreme heat. The work is intended to allow residents and planners access to information related to vulnerability due to demographics and the built environment.

## REPAC Review

REMP Staff performed an in-depth review of the Regional Emergency Program Advisory Commission (REPAC), intended to understand the model and current level of interest in the commission. The group was formed under CRD Bylaw from emergency program representatives from Local Government, critical infrastructure, NGOs, and post-secondary institutions, and met regularly from 2008 to 2017. The review determined that former members indicate the meetings were valued for relationship building, and information sharing and its absence has left a gap in regional emergency management coordination. Tentative planning has begun with the CRD to host a rejuvenate version in May 2024.

## Concept of Operations Review

REMP staff completed a review of the regional concept of operations to identify gaps within the model and opportunities for improving it. In the review, escalating decisions and incorporating First Nations into the model were some of the items identified for improvement.

## Capital Region Tsunami Information Portal

Launched in 2022, the Capital Region Tsunami Information Portal is a one-stop-shop for interactive tsunami hazard maps and local government emergency preparedness information. It was created collaboratively between GeoBC under the Ministry of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship, 13 local governments, three electoral areas, and nine First Nations to centralize tsunami risk mapping across the region.

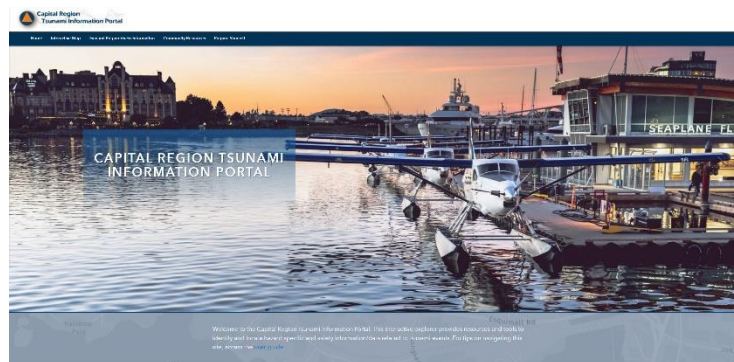


Image source: Province of BC



Attendees at the BC Premier's Awards including staff from REMP (current and former), EMCR, CRD, GeoBC, BC Government Communications and Public Engagement, the City of Victoria, and the District of Saanich. Photo courtesy of the Province of BC.

In 2023, the Portal was nominated as a finalist for a [BC Premier's Innovation and Excellence Award](#) in the regional impact category. The project was unsuccessful in securing the win, but the nomination is recognition of the project's success and the collaborative effort it took amongst partners in bringing it to completion. REMP staff would like to thank its partners that were part of the nomination process, especially those involved in the nomination [video](#) that outlined details of the Portal's development and its impact.

## Strengthening the Partnership Highlights

### REMP 2023-2027 Strategic Plan

REMP Staff continue to work from the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan, which was approved by the Steering Committee in December 2022. However, those priorities are now guiding the partnership work with the context of EDMA, requiring only modest changes as the Strategic Plan aligns in spirit with the new legislative requirements.

### Strategic Plan Key Priorities

Strengthen knowledge of regional hazards, risks, and vulnerabilities

Strengthen coordinated and integrated regional emergency management planning

Strengthen the effectiveness and reach of the partnership



## Relationship Building and Maintenance

### 2023 Local Government Emergency Program Advisory Commission Meetings

In 2023, REMP Staff coordinated quarterly meetings of the LGEPAC.

Four meetings were held throughout the year, with in-person sessions in View Royal, the Capital Regional District Headquarters, City of Victoria, and the District of Sooke. REMP Staff coordinated locations, invitations, agendas, minutes, and presentations from subject matter experts, including:

- Environment and Climate Change Canada - ECCC Storm Surge Events & Alert Systems
- BC Earthquake Alliance - Public Education Priorities & Local Government Support
- Emergency Management and Climate Readiness/Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation – Climate Risk Assessments

### Emergency Program Public Education Support

In 2023, REMP staff continued to manage and maintain the [PrepareYourself](https://prepareyourself.ca) website and social media presence. [PrepareYourself.ca](https://prepareyourself.ca) is a public education site that shares emergency preparedness information on behalf of the 13 municipalities and three electoral areas in the Capital Region, originally created by the Public Education Working Group of LGEPAC. In August 2023, LGEPAC voted to delegate some authority for the brand to the REMP Senior Project Coordinator allowing for expedited updating and maintenance. Since that time, the site has been reviewed and the event calendar function re-started. The site now regularly promotes partner emergency program public learning events. The Prepare Yourself Household Preparedness Guide is currently in process of being updated, with REMP staff collecting changes from partners and incorporating them for the first update in five years.

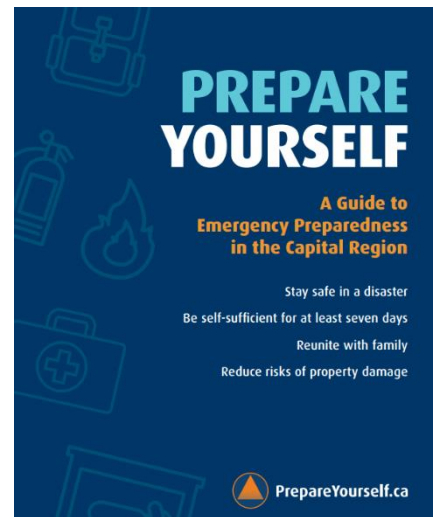


Image Source: Capital Regional District

## REMP Administration and Governance

### 2023 BUSINESS PLANNING

REMP completed its 2024 business plan and shared it with LGEPAC members, offering the opportunity to provide input on it. Limited feedback was received and adjustments to the plan were made accordingly.

### ANNUAL POLICY GROUP MEETING

As outlined in the REMP Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), the Policy Group consists of the Capital Region Board Chair and the Minister responsible for the BC *Emergency Program Act*<sup>1</sup>. This convening of elected officials reinforces the importance of emergency management to both regional and provincial leaders and provides the opportunity to shift to a strategic lens.

The 2023 REMP Annual Policy Group meeting took place virtually, on February 13<sup>th</sup>. In the meeting the REMP 2023-2027 Strategic Plan was ratified along with the 2023 business plan. Accomplishments and the future direction of REMP were also discussed.

### QUARTERLY STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

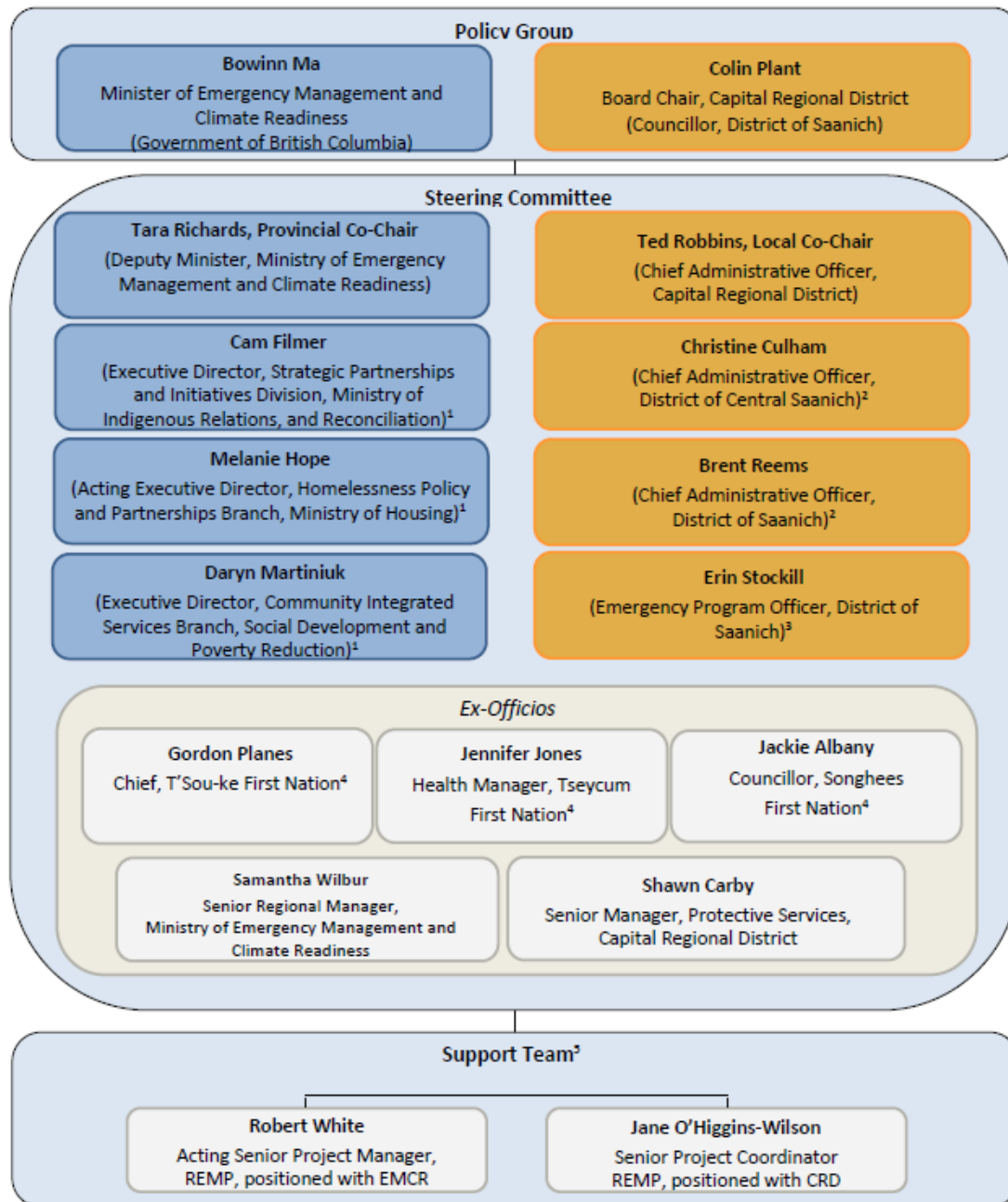
The REMP Steering Committee works collectively to make decisions on priorities, resources, and liaises with other senior decision makers to champion the work of REMP. Communication and engagement with the REMP Steering Committee is a vital component of REMP's processes.

REMP held three regular Steering Committee meetings in 2023. REMP initiatives throughout the year were brought forward for updates and approvals. In 2023, Steering Committee members received presentations on various emergency management topics relevant to the region and, amongst other items, engaged in a facilitated discussion on First Nations Partnership.

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<sup>1</sup> As noted above, the Emergency and Disaster Management Act became law in November 2023 and replaced the Emergency Program Act

# Organizational Chart



**Notes:**

- 1) Provincial representatives are recommended by the Assistant Deputy Minister's Committee on Disaster Risk and Emergency Management
- 2) CAO representatives are appointed by the Local Area Administrators and approved by the CRD Board
- 3) Representative elected by the Local Government Emergency Program Advisory Commission
- 4) Interim First Nations Representative
- 5) Partnership oversight is provided by EMCR (supervision of staff, finance, agenda coordination for Policy Group and Steering Committee)

# 2023 Year-End Financial Statement

## REVENUE

|                       |                      |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| CRD Requisition       | 241,770.95           |
| Provincial Government | 125,000              |
| Reserve Account       | 56,380               |
| <b>Total Revenue</b>  | <b>\$ 366,770.95</b> |

## EXPENDITURES

|   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| <b>Salaries and Benefits</b>  | 247,237.10           |
| <b>Consulting – REMP Projects</b>   | 0                    |
| Regional Concept of Operations  | 0                    |
| Cross-Jurisdictional Evacuation Coordination  | 0                    |
| Extreme Heat  | 0                    |
| Regional Forums on EM Topics  | 0                    |
| Tsunami   | 0                    |
| <b>Conference Registrations</b>   | 0                    |
| <b>Professional Development</b>   | 0                    |
| <b>Travel</b>   | 0                    |
| <b>Catering</b>   | 182.62               |
| <b>Workshop Supplies</b>  | 0                    |
| <b>Allocations</b> (Network support and other administrative services from the CRD) | 23621.40             |
| <b>Total Expenditures</b>   | <b>\$ 247,237.10</b> |

*Note: Unspent funds from previous years are tracked and set aside for future REMP initiatives*

# Appendix A: REMP 2023-2027 Strategic Plan

## REMP 2023-2027 STRATEGIC PLAN Approved by Steering Committee Dec 2022

|                           |   |   |   |   |   |
|---------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| <b>VISION</b>             | A disaster resilient region   |   |   |   |   |
| <b>MISSION</b>            | REMP works collaboratively with local, Indigenous, provincial (federal) governments, community, and organizational partners to advance coordinated regional emergency management planning to prepare the Capital region for emergencies and disasters   |   |   |   |   |
| <b>GUIDING PRINCIPLES</b> | <b>Disaster risk reduction approach</b>   | <b>Planning as a process</b>  | <b>Shared accountability</b>  | <b>Increased Connectedness</b>  | <b>Evidence and experience-based decision making</b>  |
|                           | REMP takes a proactive and multi-sectoral approach to reducing the risk of disasters by bringing partners and communities together to identify, assess, and address/prevent exposure to hazards, reduce vulnerabilities to disasters, and build community capacity.   | REMP undertakes planning with the view it is a process of continuous improvement and not an end-product. REMP will draw on our collective strengths and capabilities to absorb the impact of a disruption, to reorganize, change, learn, share, and adapt our work. | We rely on the participating agencies to implement regional solutions at an organizational level. REMP encourages ownership and respects the autonomy of communities.   | REMP supports increased connectedness through activities that create and strengthen relationships between partners that enhance resilience.   | REMP uses a risk-informed, systems-based approach in project management planning and decision-making that considers global good practices, and local and Indigenous knowledge in disaster risk reduction.   |
| <b>CORE VALUES</b>        | <b>Collaborative</b><br>Emergency events continue to intensify and create impacts throughout the Capital region. Teaming up with community leaders, other practitioners and researchers from the onset supports the proactive development of resilient solutions.   | <b>Innovative</b><br>REMP acknowledges the changing field of emergency management when planning for complex, concurrent, and compounding hazards. Our focus on innovation enables us to be more effective in the design, engagement, and delivery of our work.      | <b>Flexible</b><br>Increased risk and severity of emergency management is a dynamic field that requires flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances. REMP strives to be an agile partnership capable of responding to changing regional needs, balanced by our commitment to ongoing priorities.   | <b>Inclusive</b><br>REMP acknowledges that the Capital region is a diverse region with communities of all sizes facing a multitude of hazards with a broad spectrum of needs. REMP employs a lens of inclusivity to ensure equal opportunity. | <b>Compassionate</b><br>REMP and partners place community and people at the centre of all our work. We lead with compassion and empathy, recognizing the profound impacts emergencies and disasters have on individuals, families, and communities. |
| <b>PRIORITIES</b>         | Strengthen knowledge of regional hazards, risks, and vulnerabilities  |   | Strengthen the effectiveness and reach of the partnership   |   |   |
| <b>GOALS</b>              | Build a common understanding of the distribution of hazards, risks, and vulnerabilities across the region to prioritize REMP's emergency management planning initiatives  |   | Ensure REMP thrives as a regional emergency management partnership  |   |   |
| <b>STRATEGIES</b>         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborate with diverse knowledge bases to produce tools and materials supporting partners' understanding of hazards, risks, and vulnerabilities</li> <li>Develop a framework to help target and prioritize REMP initiatives that support risk mitigation planning</li> </ol> |   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage Indigenous partners to explore a regional co-development model</li> <li>Create and maintain staff well-being, professional development, and a positive work environment</li> <li>Ensure effective governance, operational systems, and human and financial resources to fulfill REMP's new strategic plan</li> <li>Propose legal, policy, and networking initiatives to advance effective regional emergency management governance</li> </ol> |   |   |