

# **FireSmart™ BC Strategic Plan:** **2026-2030**

# Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Research and Engagement</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Initiatives, Goals, Metrics</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>FireSmart Organization and Scope in BC</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>35</b>



# Executive Summary



## Vision

A wildfire resilient province, where everyone works, plays and lives FireSmart.



## Mission

Build wildfire resiliency and reduce the negative impacts of fire for everyone in the province through FireSmart.



## Strategic Goal

Everyone in the province is aware of FireSmart, understands their role, accepts responsibility and takes action to increase wildfire resiliency.

## Strategic Themes

- Education and Training
- Collaboration and Partnering
- Advancing Broader Adoption
- Sustainable Performance
- Engaging Communities
- Research and Application

## Foundational Principles

- |  |                                |  |                                    |  |   |  |
|--|--------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| A focus on communities (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) | Evidence-based decision making | Engagement with and responsiveness to communities, partners and interest holders | Two-way, transparent communication | Diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility lens for all work | Collaboration with FireSmart Canada and alignment with national standards and practices | Beneficial fire as part of a healthy landscape |
|--|--------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|--|---|--|

# Introduction

**2026-2030** (5-year plan)



# Background



FireSmart's origins in Canada can be traced back to 1990, when a committee was established by the Alberta Forest Service to address common concerns about wildfire in the wildland-urban interface. A national FireSmart program was established in 2008 and was integrated with the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre (CIFFC) in 2021.

While various FireSmart activities have been carried out in British Columbia since the 1990s, it was only in 2017 when the BC Wildfire Service formed the BC FireSmart Committee (BCFSC) to coordinate and advance the goals of FireSmart in BC. Subsequently, the Committee developed its first ever strategic plan (2022-2025), followed by an organizational structure review that included recommendations on a potential new governance model.

The original strategic plan has proved fundamental to the successful implementation and growth of the FireSmart program in BC. It has been supported by regular public opinion polling and Partner Perception Audit interviews.

Based on the exponential growth of the organization, the changing context of wildfire emergencies, and the current funding model, which relies almost exclusively on provincial government support, general consensus from members and partners is that an update to the plan is necessary.

The BC FireSmart Committee (BCFSC) is proud of the progress made in building out the FireSmart BC (FSBC) program and is excited about the future. FSBC is bigger, stronger, more visible and more capable than it was when the inaugural strategy was developed, and those changes need to be reflected in the updated strategy

There is consensus that the updated strategy should support internal organizational alignment and facilitate consistent communication and engagement with members, partners and other interest holders. It should be more about the “how” and less about the “why” – it should be more action-oriented and outcome-focused. It should be “made

in BC” and enable BC innovation and leadership but continue to be aligned with the national standards and practices.

There is a need to balance the scope, scale and ambition of the FSBC mandate to avoid dilution and distraction of effort and move toward achievable outcomes. There is recognition that rapid growth over the last four years has created some issues and challenges to address, including fear and uncertainty about sustainability of funding and the need to build a more robust organizational structure that invests in people and people support systems.

# Glossary



**BC FireSmart Committee (BCFSC)** The BC FireSmart Committee directs the FireSmart program in BC. The BCFSC's goal is to collaboratively maintain and improve the delivery of the FireSmart BC program to better support wildfire preparedness, prevention and mitigation in BC. The BCFSC consists of the BC Wildfire Service (BCWS), FireSmart Canada, Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC), Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM), Fire Chiefs' Association of BC (FCABC), Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR), Forest Enhancement Society of BC (FESBC), First Nations' Emergency Services Society of BC (FNESS), Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), BC Parks, Parks Canada, Ministry of Forests – Regional Operations, Ministry of Agriculture and Food (AF) and Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs (HMA)

**FireSmart BC (FSBC)** FireSmart BC is a provincial program aimed at reducing the risk of wildfire damage to homes, communities, and forests.

**FireSmart Team** The FireSmart BC team is the group of individuals who work day in and day out to further the BCFSC goals.

**FireSmart Network** The FireSmart BC network delivers the FSBC program at the community level throughout BC.

**FireSmart External Partners** FireSmart external partners are organizations that support the mission of FSBC and help support and deliver on the program's objectives. Examples of external partners include non-profits, insurance providers, garden centres, hardware retailers, tourism associations, wildfire mitigation and climate change organizations, as well as schools and educational groups.



**BC Wildfire Service (BCWS)** The BCWS chairs the BCFSC and is tasked with managing wildfires through a combination of wildfire prevention, mitigation and suppression strategies.

**Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre (CIFFC)** CIFFC is a federally incorporated not-for-profit owned and operated by the federal, provincial and territorial agencies responsible for wildland fire management in Canada. CIFFC provides operational support to member agencies in preparedness, safety and response; manages resource sharing within Canada and internationally; and coordinates prevention and mitigation through FireSmart Canada.

**FireSmart Platform** A digital tool developed by FireSmart BC to deliver assessments, manage the new Local FireSmart Collective Program, provide training and certification, and track engagement across the FireSmart network.

**CRI: FCFS Program** The Community Resiliency Investment (CRI) FireSmart Community Funding and Supports (FCFS) program provides funding to local governments and First Nations in BC to increase community resiliency by undertaking community-based FireSmart planning and activities that reduce the community's risk from wildfire.



# Research and Engagement

2026-2030 (5-year plan)



# Research and Engagement

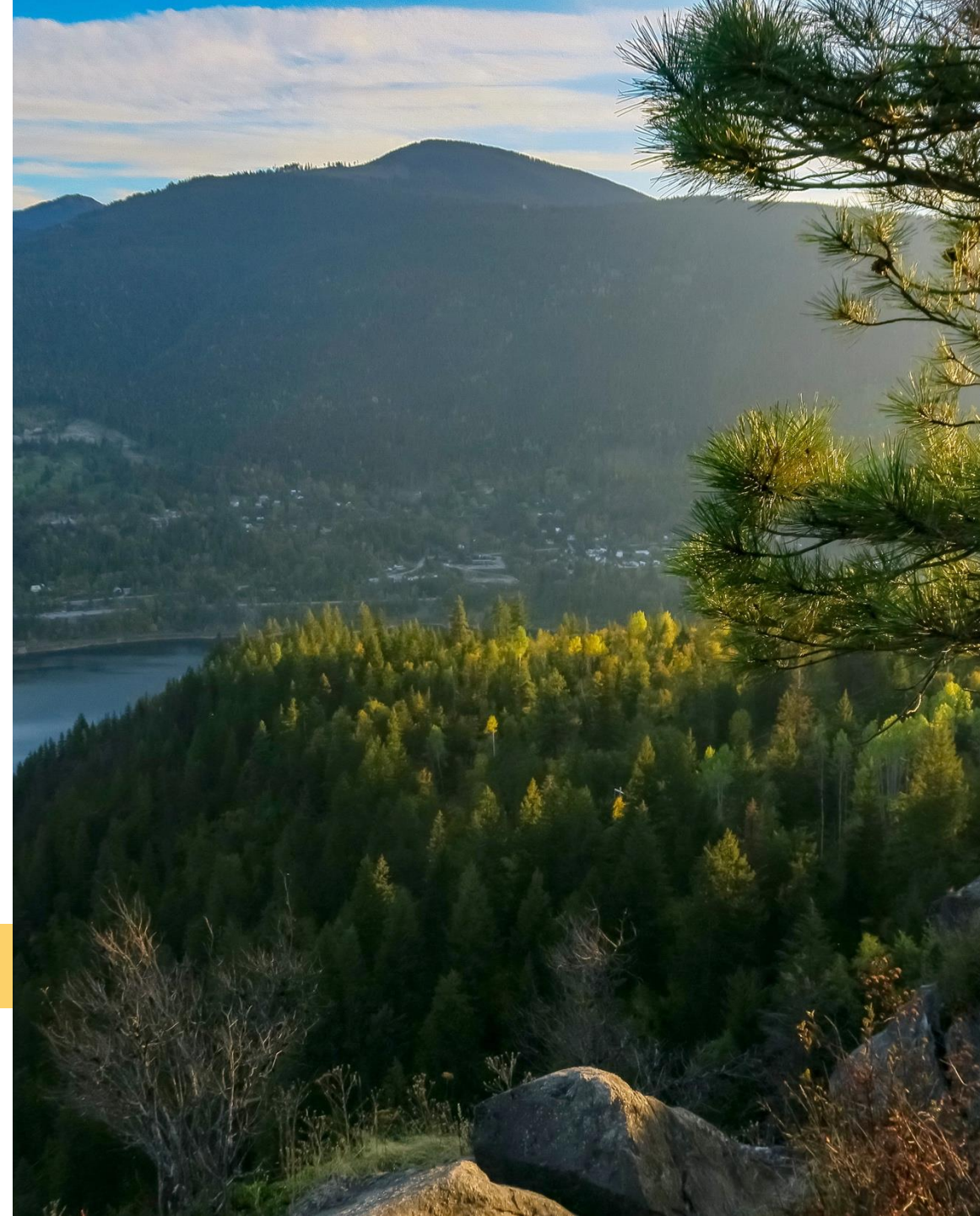
**The BCFSC has been conducting ongoing opinion research to gauge program success and guide the implementation of strategies and tactics in the 2022–25 strategic plan.**

**The most recent iterations** involved a Public Perception Survey completed in December 2024 and a Partner Perception Audit completed in March 2025.

**In addition,** research conducted as part of this strategic plan update included interviews with representatives of BCFSC member agencies and two facilitated planning workshops with BCFSC member representatives.

**The following provides a summary of the research findings.**

**2026-2030** (5-year plan)





# Public Perception Survey

December 2024

**2026-2030** (5-year plan)

# Public awareness



Compared to previous waves of research, familiarity with FireSmart BC continues to grow and is slightly higher among Indigenous respondents than non-Indigenous respondents.

As with previous waves of research, when provided with more context, the value of the organization is acknowledged by the vast majority.

Being familiar with FireSmart BC is highly correlated with a belief that one's community is prepared to deal with wildfires, the perceived ability of individuals to protect themselves, and the likelihood to seek out more information about wildfires.

**This in turn suggests that the more the population learns about FireSmart BC, the more engaged they will become in wildfire mitigation.**

92%

of the general population and 96% of Indigenous respondents say wildfires are an important, if not the most important, issue in BC.

Nearly  
1 in 3

British Columbians recall seeing, hearing or reading a FireSmart BC ad over the last year, through both traditional and digital media.



# Insurance industry connection



**Almost all members** of the public and Indigenous communities claim that they would be likely to undertake FireSmart prevention if it was recommended by their insurance company.



**A rebate or incentive** from an insurance company would also stimulate home assessments and FireSmart program uptake among both the general and Indigenous populations.



Perhaps even more importantly from the **insurance industry's perspective**, partnering with FireSmart BC significantly increases both the likelihood of purchasing insurance from that partner and switching insurers in favour of that partner.

# Partner Perception Audit

March 2025

**2026-2030** (5-year plan)



# General partner views of FireSmart



**FireSmart is seen as an important initiative**, and FireSmart BC was credited with increasing public awareness and education.

Program and materials were deemed to be attainable, relatable, and clear.



**Partners and British Columbians were relatively optimistic** that the average British Columbian is at least somewhat likely to FireSmart their homes/properties, though most recognize this will be a long process and varies regionally.



Complacency, costs and lack of follow up resources are most often cited as **barriers to program take-up**.



**Reactions to the vision and strategic goal** of the BCFSC were overall positive.



**The main concern** tended to revolve around the appropriateness of aspiration of a broader reach (i.e., "everyone" in the province) and whether vision and goals should focus on aspirational emotion and motive versus practical progress that could be measured and reported over time.

# Strengths and areas of improvement

Bearing in mind that almost all would describe their interactions with FireSmart BC as generally positive, when probed, areas of strength and areas of improvement emerged.



**Program well received;** well-resourced with tools and advice, quality literature; free and diagnostic

**FireSmart BC team described very positively;** supportive, responsive, friendly, helpful, proactive

**FireSmart becoming the norm;** increased awareness

**High praise** for the annual Wildfire Resiliency and Training Summit

**Increased visibility** of marketing campaigns; great messaging

**Level of involvement** at all levels and willingness to engage locally; recognizing regional variability



**Increased awareness,** buy-in, and incentives for homeowners and residents

**Need more follow-up instruction,** resources and partners

**More support** for elderly, mobility challenged, economically disadvantaged

**Funding and resources;** how to utilize funding, give back/allocate to communities

**Pace of the program;** specifically, training of new FireSmart Coordinators

**A customized approach** for regional differences

**Desire for deeper collaboration** with forest industry and other "on-the-ground" partners

# Committee Member Interviews

February 2025

**2026-2030** (5-year plan)



# Views on strategy & organization

Everything we do is framed within a set of strategic themes that give direction to the strategy, allow us to identify priorities, to build work plans and to set goals and objectives.

**FSBC is no longer an idea in startup**; it is a large and maturing program that requires management and leadership to match its scale and ambition.

**There is consensus** that the strategic planning update should proceed as planned but acknowledge and anticipate a potential governance change.

**Change in leadership** presents a challenge, and an opportunity.

**Budgets and funding** are currently vulnerable to future fiscal and political shifts.

**There is a strong desire from a plurality of members** that the plan needs to be more action-oriented. There is a feeling that the strategic nature of the current plan is almost too aspirational, and the update should be grounded in targets and measures.

**Growth in awareness and support** has been exponential, but it's not clear if awareness has moved to action. How many homeowners are actually FireSmarting?

# Strategy

2026-2030 (5-year plan)



# Vision, Mission, Strategy

During the strategic review, it was agreed the existing strategic vision, mission and goal remain relevant and should not be changed.



## **Vision**

A wildfire resilient province, where everyone works, plays and lives FireSmart.



## **Mission**

Build wildfire resiliency and reduce the negative impacts of fire for everyone in the province through FireSmart.



## **Strategic Goal**

Everyone in the province is aware of FireSmart, understands their role, accepts responsibility and takes action to increase wildfire resiliency.



# Foundational Principles

FireSmart BC is guided by common assumptions and operating principles that together provide a framework within which we operate, and which gives the work we do its foundation and its purpose.



A focus on communities  
(Indigenous and non-Indigenous)



Evidence-based decision making  
informed by data,  
learning and feedback



Engagement with and responsiveness  
to communities,  
partners, and interest holders



Two-way, transparent communication in  
everything we do



A diversity, equity, inclusion,  
and accessibility lens for  
all our work



Collaboration with FireSmart  
Canada and alignment with  
national standards and practices



Beneficial fire as part of a  
healthy landscape

# Strategic Themes

Everything we do is framed within a set of themes that give direction to the strategy, allow us to identify priorities, to build work plans and to set goals and objectives.



## **Education & Training**

Target education, training and communication that enables and mobilizes

## **Organizing for Sustainable Performance**

Build a sustainable, inclusive, diverse and nimble organization

## **Collaborating & Partnering**

Collaborate with partners to build capacity, trust, and public confidence

## **Engaging Communities**

Enable the FireSmart network to coordinate, facilitate and engage at all levels of community

## **Advancing Broader FireSmart Adoption**

Engage all levels of Indigenous and non-Indigenous governments to support and integrate FireSmart principles into community development policies

## **Research and Application**

Integrate Indigenous knowledge and scientific data to support informed decision making and behavioural change



# Initiatives, Goals, Metrics

2026-2030 (5-year plan)



# Initiatives (1 of 2)



## Education & Training

---

Align and mobilize FireSmart network and partners

Develop skills in FS team and network

Maintain and develop practical tools and guidance

Develop FS network career path and continued learning opportunities

## Collaborating & Partnering

---

Expand and extend capacity

Build trust and relationships with partners

Engage interest holders in message amplification and promotion

Grow impact of communication and marketing

Establish framework for sponsorships and incentives

Strengthen partnerships with insurance industry

Educate interest holders on FS work and processes

## Advancing Broader FireSmart Adoption

---

Support government economic mandate

Advocate for integration of FS principles into community development principles

Promote FS adoption at the local, regional and First Nations government leadership level

Create a model bylaw/ guidelines for use by communities

# Initiatives (2 of 2)



## Organizing for Sustainable Performance

Collect and share data and learning

Leverage FS platform to apply metrics that demonstrate effectiveness and outcomes

Build support systems for the FS network

Enable nimbleness and flexibility

Develop sustainable diversified funding and sponsorships

## Engaging Communities

Empower FS network

Launch and grow the Local FireSmart Collective Program (LFCP) to stimulate action

Improve coordination of risk reduction at the local and regional levels

Improve Indigenous and non-Indigenous community access and participation

## Research and Application

Integrate data, post-fire research, traditional Indigenous knowledge and social science

Track opinions and outcomes in target communities

Apply behavioural science to move from awareness to action

Assess approaches to complacency issue

# Education & Training

Audience: FireSmart network and external audiences



## Initiatives

- Align and mobilize FS network and partners
- Develop skills in FS team and network
- Maintain and develop practical tools and guidance
- Develop FS network career path and continued learning opportunities

## Goals and Metrics

1. Increase number of individuals who complete FireSmart training courses (LFR, WMS, F/R, Landscaping) year-over-year
2. Establish and communicate FireSmart Coordinator handbook and support communities with onboarding
3. Establish and communicate FireSmart career pathways and professionalize continuing education opportunities



# Collaborating & Partnering

Audience: External audiences



## Initiatives

- Expand and extend capacity
- Build trust and relationships with partners
- Engage interest holders in message amplification and promotion
- Grow impact of communication and marketing
- Establish framework for sponsorships and incentives
- Strengthen partnerships with insurance industry
- Educate interest holders on FS work and processes

## Goals and Metrics

1. Leverage insurance industry to support broader adoption of FireSmart practices
2. Grow and implement partnerships with BC-based industry / trade associations
3. Increase public awareness and conversions to public action
4. Engage the construction and building industry to implement FireSmart principles and practices from the onset

# Advancing Broader FireSmart Adoption

Audience: FireSmart network and external audiences



## Initiatives

- Support government economic mandate
- Advocate and provide the tools for integration of FS principles into local government regulations and policies
- Promote FS adoption at the local, regional and First Nations government leadership level
- Create a model bylaw/guidelines for use by communities

## Goals and Metrics

1. Increase adoption of FireSmart model bylaws / guidelines for building, fencing and landscaping
2. Increase number of communities using CRI FCFS funding to undertake initiatives under the development considerations category of eligible activities
3. Increase the number of communities that have established Wildfire Development Permit Areas and integrated FireSmart principles into the associated regulations
4. Increase number of FireSmart Coordinator positions that are funded by local, regional and First Nations governments (outside of the CRI FCFS program)

# Organizing for Sustainable Performance

Audience: FireSmart team and network



## Initiatives

- Collect and share data and learning
- Leverage FS platform to apply metrics that demonstrate effectiveness and outcomes
- Build people support systems
- Enable nimbleness and flexibility
- Develop sustainable diversified funding and sponsorships

## Goals and Metrics

1. Increase average FireSmart Coordinator tenure
2. Undertake annual FireSmart Coordinator Survey and expand to other FireSmart Network positions (e.g. Wildfire Mitigation Specialists)
3. Establish sustainable FSBC partnership positions
4. Establish annual network growth targets to identify people support needs
5. Undertake an independent review of funding diversification options for the FireSmart BC program
6. Establish diversified funding sources to sustain community-led FireSmart programming (Local FireSmart Collective, residential incentives, etc).



# Engaging Communities

Audience: FireSmart network and external audiences



## Initiatives

- Empower FS network
- Launch and grow the Local FireSmart Collective Program (LFCP)
- Improve coordination of risk reduction at the local and regional levels
- Improve Indigenous and non-Indigenous community access and participation

## Goals and Metrics

1. Increase number of year-over-year local government and First Nations FireSmart programs
2. Increase realized risk reduction in recognized Collectives
3. Increase the number of active FireSmart practitioners (FireSmart Coordinators, Wildfire Mitigation Specialists, Local FireSmart Representatives)
4. Increase engagement with local government and First Nation planning departments

# Research & Application

Audience: FireSmart team, network and external audiences



## Initiatives

- Integrate data, post-fire research, traditional Indigenous knowledge and social science
- Track opinions and outcomes in WUI communities
- Apply behavioural science to move from awareness to action
- Assess approaches to complacency issue

## Goals and Metrics

1. Conduct assessment of social science tools and models available to improve conversion from awareness to adoption
2. Establish baseline for adoption rate of tools and technology
3. Develop longitudinal reporting on opinions and adoption in target communities
4. Collaborate with the Wildfire Resiliency Consortium of Canada for information sharing on best practices in innovation, technology and traditional Indigenous knowledge
5. Complete a pilot market project to test conversion of awareness into adoption



A scenic landscape photograph showing a calm river flowing through a dense forest of tall evergreen trees. In the background, mountains are visible under a sky filled with large, white clouds. The foreground shows a rocky shoreline and some low-lying vegetation.

# FireSmart Organization and Scope in BC

2026-2030 (5-year plan)



# FireSmart BC At a Glance



## FireSmart BC Team

The FireSmart BC team is the group of individuals who work day in and day out to further the BCFSC goals. To learn more and to review a detailed organizational chart, visit <https://firesmartbc.ca/who-we-are/>

## CRI: FCFS Program

The Community Resiliency Investment (CRI) FireSmart Community Funding and Supports (FCFS) program provides funding to local governments and First Nations in BC to increase community resiliency by undertaking community-based FireSmart planning and activities that reduce the community’s risk from wildfire.

## FireSmart Platform

The FireSmart Platform is a tool that FireSmart BC has built to deliver assessments, manage the new Local FireSmart Collective program and deliver training, certification and keep track of the FireSmart network.

## FireSmart BC Programs



FireSmart™ Plant Program



Local FireSmart™ Collective Program



WILDFIRE RESILIENCY AND TRAINING SUMMIT



FireSmart™ BC Wildfire Mitigation Program



FireSmart BC Education and Library Programs

## FireSmart BC Committee Members

 British Columbia Wildfire Service	 Fire Chiefs' Association of British Columbia	 First Nations' Emergency Services Society of British Columbia	 Union of BC Municipalities
 FireSmart Canada	 Parks Canada Parcs Canada	 Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)	 Forest Enhancement Society of BC
 Ministry of Forests – Regional Operations	 BC Parks	 Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR)	 Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs
			 Ministry of Agriculture and Food

# References



2022-2025 FireSmart BC Strategic Plan

Public Awareness and Understanding of Wildfires and the FireSmart BC Program

The Premier's Expert Task Force on Emergencies

B.C. Minister of Forests Mandate Letter

Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre Strategic Plan 2024-2029

2026-2030 (5-year plan)