



A strategic planning engagement to support HSBRIS in the application process to have Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound designated a UNESCO biosphere reserve

Case Study: Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society

Howe Sound, known as Átl'ka7tsem in the Squamish language, is an area of more than 2,000 square kilometres northwest of Vancouver. Founded in 2017, the Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society (HSBRIS)



believed in the area's potential to be an outstanding model of sustainability and ecological health, providing a place for people to live, work, and play, now and in the future.

The organization had worked relentlessly to make the case for Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound watershed to be designated as a biosphere. In 2021 HSBRIS submitted their final nomination document to UNESCO and approached Junxion to help them produce a five-year strategic plan—a key requirement of the nomination document approval process.

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Junxion approached strategic planning in an innovative and truly collaborative way that honoured our core values as an organization. The process was engaging, constructive and very enjoyable. Thanks to Junxion's help we are now closer to our goals.

RUTH SIMONS

PRESIDENT, HOWE SOUND BIOSPHERE REGION
INITIATIVE SOCIETY

The Challenge

HSBRIS needed to transition from a volunteer-driven organization to a robust and recognized representative body for the Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound biosphere reserve. Having made steady progress on its 12-month priority initiatives, it was time for the organization to look further ahead and establish its priorities for 2021-2025. HSBRIIS also wanted to determine the best organizational and diversified funding model to help achieve its long-term impact goal. Faced with these challenges, HSBRIIS engaged Junxion to facilitate their strategic planning process and help them to produce their new strategic plan.

UNESCO (United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) biosphere reserves are areas of global ecological significance that make an ongoing commitment to the United Nations to strive for sustainability. They are not parks, and they have no legal authority. They are places where people are inspired to find ways to live and work in harmony with nature.

How We Helped

The plan was developed in collaboration with the HSBRIIS board and executive director, Squamish Nation representatives, and community groups. It was informed by eight years of dialogue with stakeholders and government. Junxion led two half-day strategic planning workshops to set out the 10-year vision for the region and the purpose of HSBRIIS, and determine five-year strategic priorities and programme areas. Several rounds of collaborative review followed, resulting in the final plan.

The new strategic plan presents a refreshed vision and purpose for HSBRIIS. It sets out guiding values and four strategic priorities for the next five years to ensure the organization moves meaningfully towards its vision. As a 'living roadmap', the plan will be reviewed and updated annually to ensure HSBRIIS remains responsive and flexible..

Measuring Success

On September 18, 2021, UNESCO officially announced Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound had been designated as Canada's 19th biosphere reserve. The designation will allow local authorities to collaborate more effectively on conservation and development. Our strategic plan was an important element of the successful submission.

HSBRIIS is responsible for managing and maintaining the UNESCO designation of Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound, supporting initiatives that contribute towards the objectives and build consensus with the region's many sectors. The strategic plan helps HSBRIIS ensure that it has adequate capacity and resources in place to serve the region and fulfill its purpose for the long-term.



Are you ready to define your social purpose and embed it in your strategy? Reach out to [Mike Rowlands](#) in Vancouver, [Shayla Meyer](#) in Toronto, or [Adam Garfunkel](#) in the UK to start a conversation.