



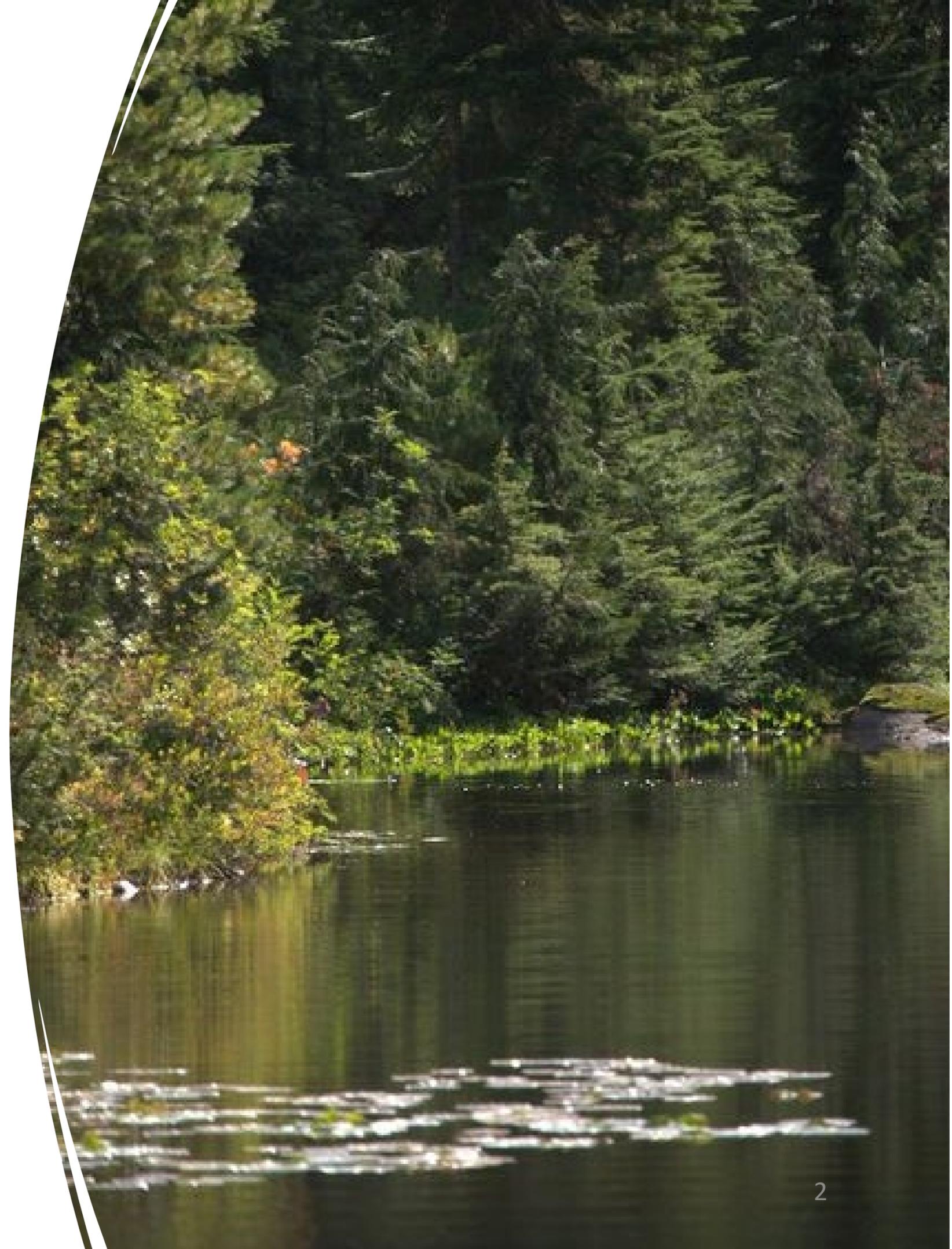
**Indigenous Procurement Initiative External Advisory Committee  
Interim Update - Fall 2023**

# Purpose

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The purpose of this interim update is to:

- Provide background about the Indigenous Procurement Initiative and the formation of the External Advisory Committee (EAC).
- Report on the EAC's progress and next steps.



# Context

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- The Indigenous Procurement Initiative (IPI) takes place within a broader context of reconciliation between Canada, British Columbia (B.C.) and Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) Peoples, in acknowledgement of the impacts posed by hundreds of years of continued colonization. The IPI works to address these legacies, which have contributed to the systemic exclusion of Indigenous Peoples from economic opportunities.
- The foundation for reconciliation is built upon:
  - Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982.
  - 94 Calls to Action put forth by the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report.
  - 10 Draft Principles that guide B.C. in its relationship with Indigenous Peoples of B.C.
  - First Nations Leadership Council - B.C. Implementing the Commitment Document.
  - UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
  - 2021 Letter of Intent between Métis Nation British Columbia and B.C.
- B.C. is committed to a distinctions-based approach, through which dealings with **First Nations, Métis, and Inuit as** Indigenous Peoples are conducted in a manner that acknowledges the specific rights, interests, priorities and concerns of these distinct Peoples, while respecting and acknowledging their unique cultures, histories, rights, laws and governments.
- All government ministries have a mandate to work “[...] toward true and meaningful reconciliation by supporting opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to be full partners in the inclusive and sustainable province we are building together” (Ministerial Mandate Letters, December 7, 2022).



# What is the Indigenous Procurement Initiative?

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- Formed as part of the [British Columbia Procurement Strategy 2018](#).
- Co-led by the Ministry of Citizens' Services (CITZ) and the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation (MIRR).
- **Goal:** to increase Indigenous Peoples' participation in B.C. Government procurement opportunities.



# What is the External Advisory Committee (EAC)?

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- Formed based on the recommendation and advice of engagement participants and key Indigenous partners.
- Includes representation from First Nations, Métis Nation, Indigenous organizations and businesses.
- Provides advice to help the B.C. Government develop strategies for increasing and enhancing Indigenous Peoples' participation in the Province's procurement opportunities.



# The Journey to the EAC



## Engagement

In 2018/19, with advice from Indigenous partners, the Province conducted engagement across the province to better understand the barriers and challenges, as well as the opportunities, ideas and suggestions for increasing Indigenous Peoples' participation in B.C. Government procurement opportunities.

Over 300 people provided input through nine in-person regional engagement sessions, in-depth conversations and information sharing, and an online survey.



**39** Engaged through preliminary conversations and information exchange



**14** Engaged through in-depth conversations



**167** Engaged through regional sessions



**97** Engaged through online survey

# The Journey to the EAC



## Report on What We Heard

In 2020 the IPI published the [Report on What We Heard](#).

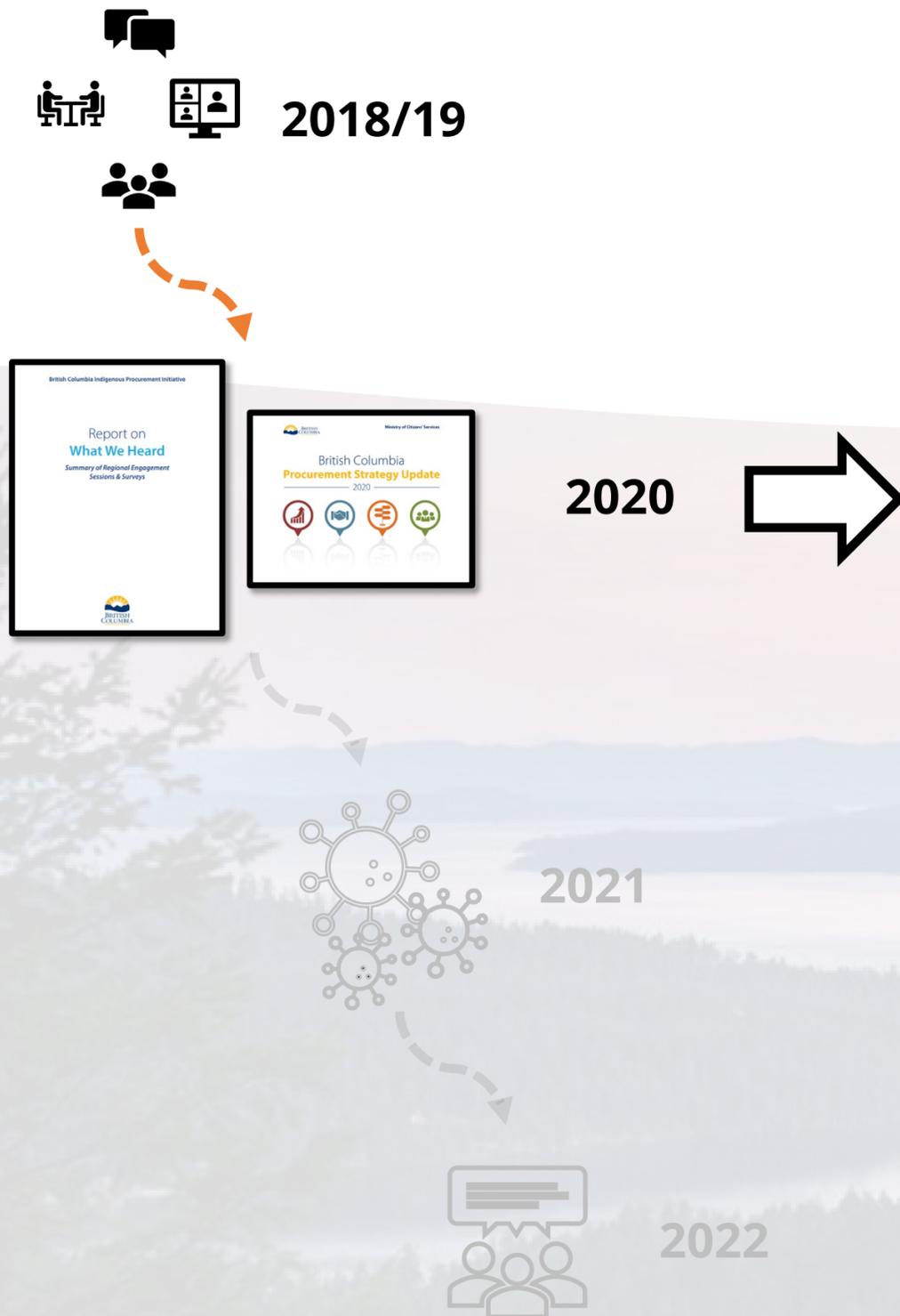
The report reflects the stories, experiences, concerns, visions for the future, and hopes heard from the 2018/19 engagement participants.

The report also contains 85 ideas and suggestions, heard during engagement, of how the B.C. government could increase Indigenous Peoples' participation in its procurement opportunities.

These ideas and suggestions are grouped into five themes:

-  **Theme 1: Valuing Indigenous culture and knowledge**
-  **Theme 2: Enhancing procurement processes to be more accessible to Indigenous businesses and communities**
-  **Theme 3: Creating space in the process for Indigenous businesses and communities**
-  **Theme 4: Strengthening relationships, open communication and transparency**
-  **Theme 5: Emphasizing local Indigenous procurement**

# The Journey to the EAC



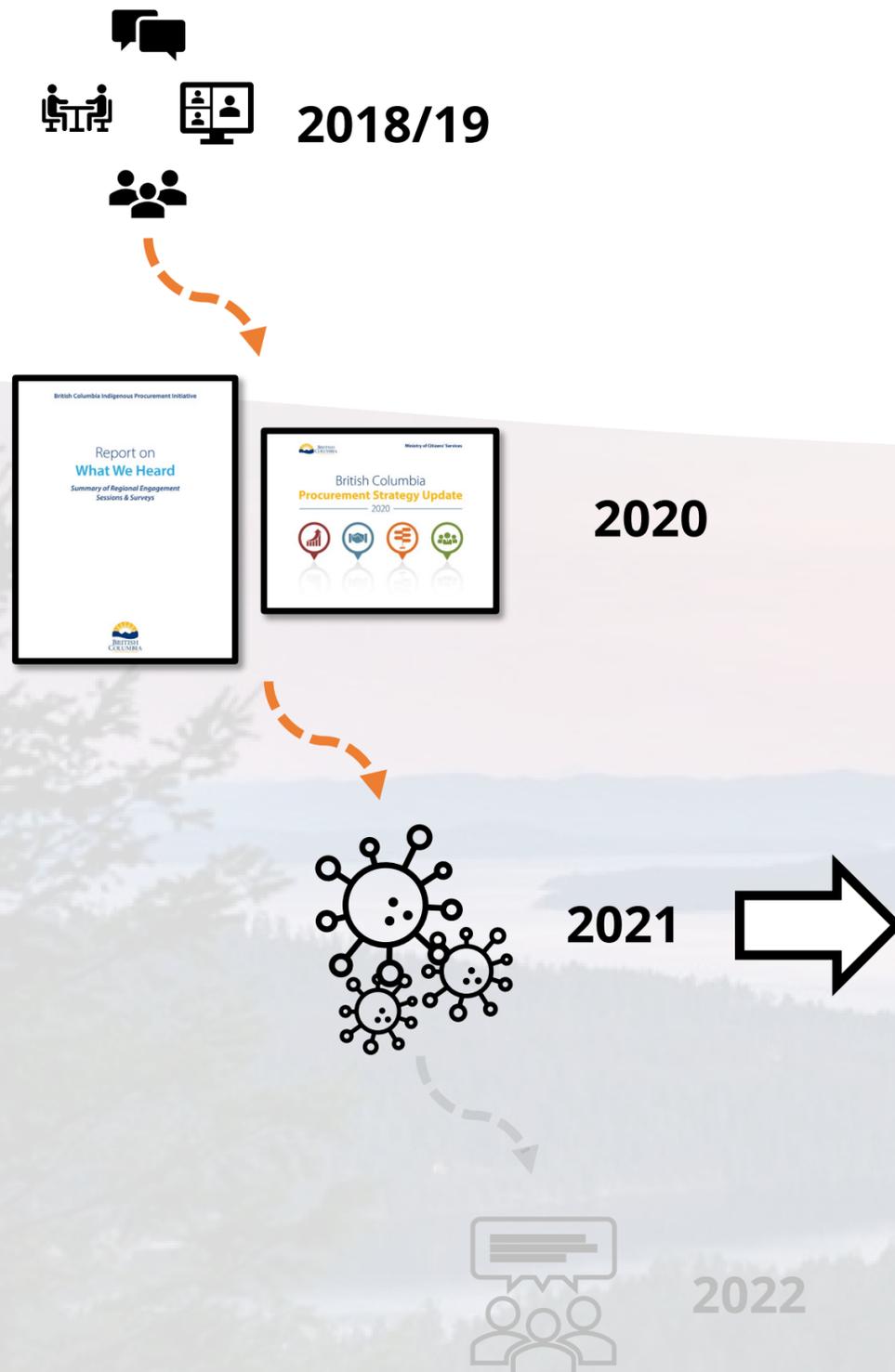
## Commitment to Form an External Advisory Committee (EAC)

Based on what was heard during engagement it was clear that:

- there is much the B.C. Government can do to reduce or remove barriers to Indigenous business and community participation in its procurement opportunities;
- collaboration should be the foundation of the B.C. Government's approach to developing the policies, practices, programming and supports needed to reduce or remove those barriers; and
- the approach must be guided by Indigenous Peoples.

As a result, the commitment was made to establish an external advisory committee to advise on the development and implementation of specific short-, medium-, and long-term actions to address what had been heard through engagement.

# The Journey to the EAC



## COVID-19 Response and Recovery

Formation of the EAC was delayed through 2020 and 2021 as the B.C. Government and Indigenous partners focused on the response to, and recovery from, the COVID-19 pandemic.

During this time the IPI focused on:

- delivering Indigenous cultural competency training to B.C. Government staff involved in procurement and contracting;
- raising awareness of the IPI and the Report on What we Heard;
- internal and external jurisdictional scanning;
- establishing a multi-use list of Indigenous facilitation services providers; and
- determining the governance model for the EAC.

# The Journey to the EAC



## Formation of the External Advisory Committee (EAC)

In 2022, the IPI was able to re-engage with Indigenous partners to identify and invite members to join the EAC.

The first meeting between the IPI and the EAC took place in November of 2022.

# EAC Members

Selection of EAC Members is based on:

- recommendations provided by CITZ and MIRR, key Indigenous partners and organizations, and EAC members;
- the relevance of their knowledge and business experience; and
- the desire that the EAC reflect, as much as is possible, B.C.'s diverse Indigenous Peoples.

**Mike Acko**

Acko Earth Solutions

**Sarah Behn**

British Columbia Assembly of First Nations

**Joe Bevan**

Gitga'at Development Corporation

**Brendan Decontie**

Ursa Creative Ltd.

**Candace Dennis**

Haida Enterprise Corporation

**Rob Diaz**

Dunne-Za Economic Development Corporation

**Alex Ibbotson (EAC Co-Chair)**

Métis Nation British Columbia Business Advisory Committee

**Trevor Pidcock**

Morningstar Technology Solutions

**Sophie Pierre, OC OBC**

Former Chief of 'Aqam and former Chief Commissioner of BC Treaty Commission

**Julie Robertson**

British Columbia Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres

# Mandate/Objective of the EAC

**Mandate:** Provide advice and recommendations to the B.C. Government on how to increase Indigenous Peoples' participation in the Province's procurement opportunities.

**Objective:** Co-develop with the Province a plan of incremental short-, medium- and long-term measures to:



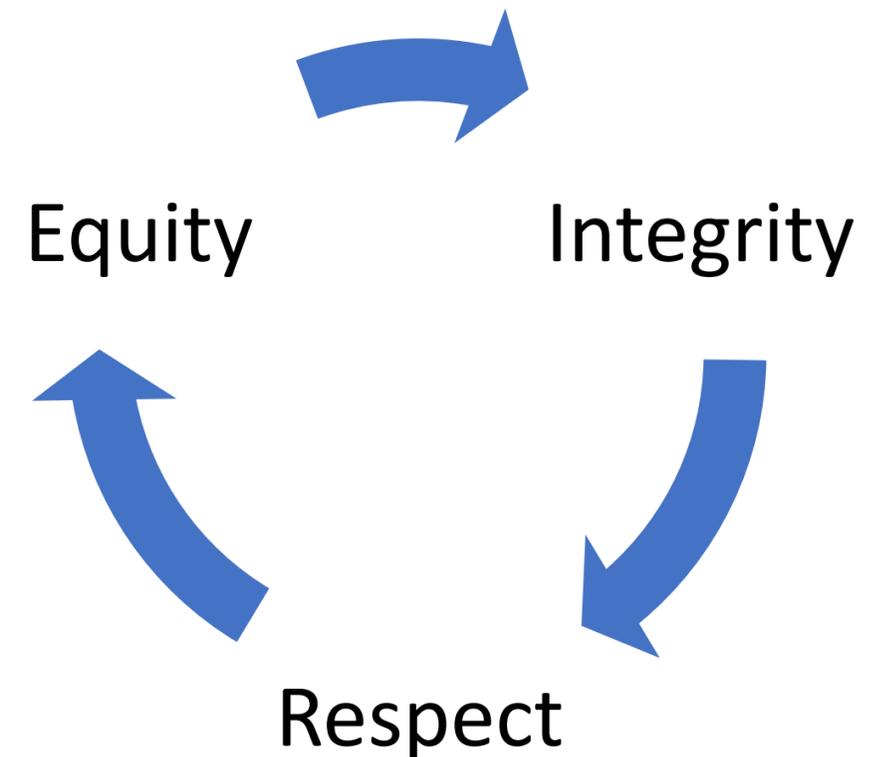
# Guiding Principles and Key Values

The EAC and its ways of working are guided by the EAC's guiding principles and key values:

## Guiding Principles

1. The foundation and the success of the EAC is based on the relationship between members and the connections they hold with their communities and partners.
2. In conducting its business, the EAC works in a coordinated manner with other initiatives across the Province and communities.
3. Through the advice it provides to the IPI, EAC members work to build a better future for generations of Indigenous Peoples to come.
4. In conducting its business, the EAC abides by the 3Rs: Rights, Respect and Responsibility.
5. In conducting its business, the EAC uses an intersectional lens to understand how issues impact different Peoples across society and communities.

## Key Values



# Accomplishments to Date

(As of October 2023)

Since its inaugural meeting in November 2022, the EAC's accomplishments have included:



Co-developing Terms of Reference with the IPI Team



Drafting a workplan for the EAC's 1<sup>st</sup> term



Initiating the work to identify potential priority actions for the IPI Plan



Drafting a statement for a shared vision for procurement built on our values and future-oriented ideas.



Engaging with ministries to participate, share progress and knowledge, and enhance coordination

# Next Steps

The IPI team priorities in the next 12 months:



Refine and describe the initial list of potential priority actions.



Prepare to engage about the potential priority actions by finalizing the communications and engagement plans.



Better understand the baseline by gathering information about current-state procurement practices and volumes.



Determine how best to write, format, and present the IPI Plan.



Provide the next interim update in six months.

## **Indigenous Procurement Initiative**

For additional information about the Indigenous Procurement Initiative please visit:

<https://gov.bc.ca/IndigenousProcurementInitiative>

# Appendix A: EAC Member Bios

## **Mike Acko**

As Owner-President of Acko Earth Solutions, Mike is passionate about business development and committed to serving his community: the Doig River First Nation. At 18, Mike started his first business in Industrial First Aid at Ackshaw Enterprises. A year later, he was elected as a Band Councillor for the Doig River Nation, where he advised on social, economic, political and cultural relationships, and led the development of agreements with industry and government regulators. Having worked with many Indigenous organizations across Canada, Mike believes in ethical and responsible business practices that support the social and economic prosperity of Local and Indigenous Communities. He focuses on advancing the capacity of Indigenous communities through leadership and the promotion of health and wellness.

## **Sarah Behn**

Sarah is a Senior Economic Development Policy Analyst with the BC Assembly of First Nations and Vice-President of the Canadian Geoparks Network, where she works to elevate First Nations' priorities and voices in UNESCO-designated spaces. As a member of the Fort Nelson First Nation and a community member of the West Moberly First Nation, Sarah is passionate about economic equity and reconciliation within an economic development context. Prior to joining the BCAFN, Sarah functioned as an independent consultant, supporting First Nations in BC through grant writing and project management.

## **Joe Bevan**

Joe is the CEO of Gitga'at Development Corporation, where he focuses on developing joint venture partnerships and creating intergenerational wealth in B.C.'s Northwest. His career spans over 31 years of experience in finance and accounting across the private and public sectors. As a member of the Kitselas First Nation with Nisga'a/Tshimshian heritage, Joe is committed to the advancement of Indigenous Peoples in the economy of Canada. He served 6 years as a councillor and 6 years as Chief for the Kitselas First Nation, which gave him experience in municipal leadership, policy and economic development.

## **Brendan Decontie**

Brendan is Anishinabe from Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg. He is the CEO of Ursa Creative, an Indigenous software company, and sits on the boards of national and local homelessness organizations. Brendan has worked in the social service sector, in the non-profit sector, and now in small business. Ursa Creative works with non-profits, Nations, municipalities, and the provincial and federal government.

## **Candace Dennis**

Candace is a versatile and agile business leader with 25+ years of expertise gained while working as CEO of Haida Enterprises Corp (HaiCo) and as a Senior Business Advisor within BMO and RBC. For 20+ years, Candace has worked with Indigenous leaders across BC and the Yukon to develop economic solutions focused on financial independence that improves the quality of life for the collective benefit of the Indigenous people. As a big picture thinker who builds consensus between partners and mentors emerging leaders, Candace's accomplished leadership and relationship-building competence has culminated in her adoption by the Giddens Clan of Skidegate, Haida Gwaii.

**Rob Diaz**

As President of the Dunne-Za Economic Development Corporation (West Moberly First Nation) and Founding Director of DM Cultural Services Ltd, Rob is a strong innovator with nearly 30 years of experience in supporting negotiations with First Nations, government and industry. Rob's fair and principled approach toward consultation and negotiation has garnered much respect from the communities he serves, and the industries and governments involved.

**Alex Ibbotson**

Alex is an Indigenous artist, facilitator, business advisor, life coach, cultural competence consultant, on-the-land adult educator and inclusion and diversity scholar. As the founder of Canada Backcountry Services, Natural Progression Consulting and Kootenay Girl Design, she has an eclectic background of entrepreneurial experience to draw on. Alex was appointed to the Indigenous Procurement Initiative, External Advisory Committee by the Métis Nation of BC Business Advisory Committee and is currently serving as co-chair. Alex has an academic interest in distinction-based human rights associated with economic development and exercised those learnings in the past as distinction-based Indigenous rights when she served as a Métis Nation Chartered Community director and president.

**Trevor Pidcock**

Trevor is the President and Managing Partner of Morningstar Technology Solutions. As a Technology Services Executive, Trevor is an expert in complex contract management. His 20+ year career is marked by his extensive experience working with both public and private sectors clients across Canada. Experienced in technology services and recruitment services within a challenging and changing talent landscape, Trevor has a deep understanding of Canadian employment law and standards, along with the biases that affect hiring. As a proud Metis person growing up in the Lower Mainland, Trevor is invested in growing and creating opportunities in Technology for Indigenous people.

**Sophie Pierre**

As former chief commissioner of the British Columbia Treaty Commission, Sophie is distinguished for her commitment toward Self-government and Self-determination through First Nations' economic development. Sophie served her community of 'Aqam as elected Chief for 26 years. She was the administrator of the Ktunaxa/Kinbasket Tribal Council and tribal chair of the Ktunaxa Nation for 25 years. During this time, she also functioned as chairperson of the First Nations Finance Authority, president of St. Eugene Mission Holders Ltd, and co-chair of the International Advisory Committee to the Indigenous Nations Institute for Leadership, Management, and Policy of the University of Arizona. Since her retirement in 2015, Sophie has received the Order of Canada, been appointed by the Pierre Elliot Trudeau Foundation as a mentor and been recognized as one of the top 50 most influential women in BC. She now functions as elder advisor to her community and to the Ktunaxa Nation.

**Julie Robertson**

Julie is a member of the We Wai Kai First Nation (Cape Mudge Band) through her mother's line (Lewis/Wilson family) and Scottish through her father's line. She has spent the past 12 years working for the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres in a variety of positions, including as the General Manager since 2020. Julie's areas of interest are focused around increasing Indigenous peoples access to economy and wealth, disability advocacy, and supporting community through volunteerism (she volunteered for over a decade with the Victoria Emergency Social Service and sat as a board member of VolunteerBC). Julie is currently pursuing a Masters of Business Administration degree in Advancing Reconciliation at UVIC.