



Ministry of  
Agriculture, Food  
and Fisheries

# B.C. Indigenous Advisory Council on Agriculture and Food

Strategic Plan  
2021 - 2024



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# INTRODUCTION

The B.C. Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries and B.C. Indigenous Advisory Council on Agriculture and Food (“IACAF”) Members come together around a shared commitment to advance reconciliation through meaningful change rooted in the implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s Calls to Action in the context of the agriculture and food sector.

The purpose of this Strategic Plan is to guide the work of the Council over the course of the next 3 years (2021-2024). The plan includes three priority action areas to advance Indigenous peoples’ priorities and address barriers in the agriculture and food sector and recognizes the ongoing legacies of colonialism and imminent environmental threats posed by climate change to Indigenous peoples. The planning effort was facilitated by Four Directions Management Services and included participation of IACAF members and Ministry staff.

Feedback and information to develop the plan were gathered over a series of 3 sessions held virtually between January to March 2021.

# ABOUT IACAF

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The B.C. Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries wishes to work closely with Indigenous nations, communities and businesses in B.C. to support Indigenous peoples' agriculture and food economies, food security and food sovereignty objectives and advance the implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action within the Ministry's mandate.

The purpose of IACAF is to create a platform for the ministry and members to work together to enhance the equitable participation of Indigenous peoples in the agriculture and food sector and support the realization of their food security, food sovereignty and economic development objectives.

IACAF provides strategic advice to inform priorities and programs on how to better support the interests and objectives of Indigenous nations, communities and businesses engaging in agriculture and food harvesting, processing and marketing and economic development activities.



# MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

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Dear Members of the B.C. Indigenous Advisory Council on Agriculture and Food,

I would like to extend my thanks to each member of the B.C. Indigenous Advisory Council on Agriculture and Food for sharing your experiences, perspectives, and your dedication to advancing meaningful change for Indigenous peoples in B.C. This Council is the first of its kind in Canada, working towards advancing reconciliation, respect for Indigenous rights and supporting self-determination goals in the sector, and this strategic plan is the result of the effort, commitment, and knowledge of the Council Members.

Our government is committed to working with Indigenous nations, communities, and businesses to increase equity and opportunities in the B.C. agriculture and food sector. By working together, we can address many interrelated priorities, including food security, climate change adaptation, inter-generational learning and cultural practices while supporting local economies. Many Indigenous nations and entrepreneurs are leaders in this work and they must be supported and their impact amplified. My mandate reaffirms the strong, ongoing commitment from the ministry and the whole of the provincial government to do the hard work necessary to bring change and action.

This three-year strategic plan sets out a path forward for the first steps that we will walk together to advance our shared priorities. It will look at how to build on existing strengths, address gaps and barriers Indigenous communities are facing within the agriculture and food sector and how programs can support Indigenous-focused priorities. Importantly, this council also recognizes the very real and impending threat that climate change poses to our food system in B.C. and that Indigenous nations and individuals are likely to be disproportionately impacted. Building food system resilience through cooperation, innovation and investment



will be transversal to this work. I fully endorse the priority areas set out in this plan and recognize the urgent need for action in these areas if true, lasting reconciliation in B.C. is to be realized.

Over the next three years, as we implement the plan, we will work closely together to help address challenges to create more resilient food systems in Indigenous communities throughout B.C. and build strong, vibrant Indigenous economies that reflect Indigenous peoples' rights and distinct cultures, priorities, values and aspirations for the future.

Honourable Lana Popham, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries

# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

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On behalf of the B.C. Indigenous Advisory Council on Agriculture and Food (“IACAF”), I would like to thank Minister Popham for this opportunity to support to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries. Each member who participates in this Council brings with them a wealth of knowledge and experience. Together, the collective wisdom that will be gathered from this talented group of Indigenous leaders passionate about agriculture will be a valuable asset to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries and the Province of British Columbia as a whole.

With the Provincial government’s commitment to reconciliation as demonstrated through the implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, the unanimous support for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action, and the call for lasting and meaningful reconciliation contained within every Minister’s mandate letter, IACAF has been created in an environment set up for success. The time is ripe to identify actions, strategies, and issues pertaining to the enhancement of agriculture and food opportunities for Indigenous peoples in the Province of B.C.

As Indigenous peoples, it is important that we share our understanding with the Minister so that she can understand and appreciate what agriculture from an Indigenous perspective means to our communities. There are many forms of agriculture to us as Indigenous peoples. We appreciate it as so much more than a practice – it’s grounded in our rights and our abilities to care for one another and be self-sustaining, which is more important than ever as we face the critical impacts of climate change.



Over the next 3 years, IACAF will be working towards our goals of: strengthening Indigenous food security, food sovereignty, and building food system resilience; addressing barriers and creating economic opportunities; and, fostering inclusive Indigenous governance and supporting self-determination. It is with great enthusiasm and optimism that we share our Strategic Plan for how we are going to put these goals into action.

Chief Byron Louis (Okanagan Indian Band), Chair of the IACAF



## **VISION**

The vision of IACAF is to increase Indigenous people's participation in the agriculture and food sector, promote reconciliation within this context, and establish and support community-based agricultural economies, trade and commerce.

## **MANDATE**

The mandate of IACAF is to serve as an advisory council to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries on actions, strategies, and issues pertaining to the enhancement of agriculture and food opportunities for Indigenous peoples in the Province of British Columbia.

# VALUES

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The **shared values** for the Ministry and IACAF's work include:

## RESPECT

We believe everybody has value, that we must always listen generously to understand, and engage with one another genuinely and empathetically by acknowledging and understanding each other's points of views - especially where they differ.

## RECIPROCALITY

We will embrace reciprocal accountability by making space for other's opinions, sharing information, being receptive to receiving new information, and ensuring that our words align with our actions.

## RESPONSIBILITY

We honour our stewardship of the land and the Indigenous peoples who have cared for the land since time immemorial by considering the impacts of our work on current and future generations, understanding risk, and taking actions for the betterment of all.



## HONESTY

We look at ourselves and others wholly and completely to ensure we are behaving openly, truthfully, and transparently ensuring that we participate in the Council with no hidden agendas.

## INTEGRITY

We demonstrate humility and good character in our words and actions; doing what we say and practicing fairness and authenticity in our interactions.

## EXCELLENCE

We strive individually and collectively to model a standard of excellence for what can be achieved through an advisory council by exceeding expectations in our operations and in the outcomes that we deliver.

## BEST INTEREST OF THE PUBLIC

We pursue actions in the best interest of Indigenous peoples in BC believing that when Indigenous people, businesses, and communities succeed, all members of society flourish as they experience the ripple effects of positivity that come from these successes.



# PRIORITIES

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In support of our vision to advance Indigenous self-determination, further self-sufficiency and resilience to climate change, prioritize the revitalization of cultures, and through these advance lasting and meaningful reconciliation, the priority action areas for IACAF are:



Strengthen Indigenous food security, food sovereignty, and build food system resilience



Address barriers and create economic opportunities



Foster inclusive Indigenous governance and support self-determination



# PRIORITY ACTION 1

## Strengthen Indigenous food security, food sovereignty, and build food system resilience

### Year 1

- » Commission a discussion paper on the topic of strengthening Indigenous food security and food sovereignty, and building food system resilience that offers recommendations and reflects the unique histories, priorities, innovations and diversity of Indigenous peoples, and offer recommendations.
- » Review previous and current work related to this priority area in order to identify successful examples and best practices that can be amplified and learned from by others and better define the unique role of IACAF in this area.

### Year 2

- » Bring forward recommendations and develop a workplan to action a priority project to advance our aspirations for strengthening food security, food sovereignty and build food system resilience.
- » Using the information learned in Year 1, engage in the development of a public awareness and education campaign to showcase success stories, historical information, and Indigenous businesses operating today.

### Year 3

- » Bring forward recommendations and develop a workplan to action a priority project to advance our aspirations for strengthening food security, food sovereignty and build food system resilience.



## PRIORITY ACTION 2

### Address barriers and create economic opportunities

#### Year 1

- » Commission a gap analysis for Indigenous agriculture across B.C. to identify policy, legislation and program gaps, address barrier and create opportunities for Indigenous peoples in the agriculture and food sector.<sup>1</sup>
- » Work with the Ministry on developing consistent definitions for Indigenous products and a feasibility study on options and recommendations for Indigenous Buy BC branding and programming.

#### Year 2

- » Make recommendations to resolve identified gaps in policy, legislation and programs identified, including recommendations related to capacity building and potential partnership development.
- » Provide guidance on an appropriate path forward, governance framework and design process for an Indigenous Buy BC programming to improve marketing of food and agriculture products from Indigenous enterprises.

#### Year 3

- » Work to action and implement the recommendations to address barriers and create opportunities made in Years 1 and 2.
- » Provide guidance on an approach to increase investment in the Indigenous agriculture and food sector, including on attracting venture capital investment, and enhance opportunities for inter-provincial and international trade and commerce for Indigenous agriculture and food businesses.

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<sup>1</sup> The “Indigenous Agriculture Inventory Research: Understanding the sector, assessing the needs” project that the province is currently carrying out with the Investment Agriculture Foundation will also provide a helpful baseline.



# PRIORITY ACTION 3

## Foster inclusive Indigenous governance and support self-determination

### Year 1

- » To foster inclusive Indigenous governance and support self-determination, conduct an analysis on the current status, interest and potential of Indigenous trade networks and economic institutions to strengthen Indigenous food systems and provide recommendations to reinvigorate this type of economy within B.C.
- » Engagement with the Province on incorporating B.C. Indigenous priorities and perspectives into the development of the Next Policy Framework and the development and implementation of the Declaration Act Action Plan.
- » Engage in information sharing through presentations and discussions on Indigenous rights, priorities and perspectives on the food and agriculture sector with government and other relevant groups.

### Year 2

- » Develop an engagement plan to support communication and promotion of Indigenous perspectives on agriculture and food and increase knowledge of Indigenous rights and priorities with the province, stakeholders in the sector and members of the public.
- » Engage with practitioners on innovations in agriculture and engage in dialogue on Indigenous priorities and perspectives for the sector.

### Year 3

- » Engage with practitioners on innovations in agriculture and engage in dialogue on Indigenous priorities and perspectives for the sector.

# MEMBERS

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Listed Alphabetically

Jacqueline Alderking, President, Fort St. John Métis Society

Harold Aljam, President/Economic Development Coordinator,  
First Nations Agricultural Association/Coldwater Indian Band

Kukpi7 Wayne Christian, Splatsín First Nation

Patrick Harry, Stswecem'c Xgat'tem First Nation

Tribal Chief Shelley Leech, T'it'q'et First Nation

# OF IACAF

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Listed Alphabetically

Cherie Luke, Councillor, Yaqaṇ nu?kiy

Tribal Chief Tyrone McNeil, Seabird Island Band

Chief Patrick Michell, Kanaka Bar Indian Band

Andrew Robinson, Chief Administrative Officer, Nisga'a  
Village of Laxgalts'ap

Steven Stark, Councillor, Tsawwassen First Nation

Chief Leah Stump, Nazko First Nation

