

B.C. Indigenous Advisory Council on Agriculture and Food (IACAF)

TERMS of REFERENCE - September 2024

1. Background and Context



The B.C. Indigenous Advisory Council on Agriculture and Food (IACAF) serves as a collaborative platform between the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Food (the Ministry) and Indigenous Council Members to advance Indigenous priorities for food security, food sovereignty, and economic development, ensuring Indigenous leadership and advancing equitable participation in the agriculture and food sector. This partnership supports the Ministry's reconciliation efforts under the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (Declaration Act)* and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action.

2. Purpose, Scope, Objectives and Activities

IACAF creates the space for the Ministry and IACAF members to work in partnership supporting the realization of Indigenous peoples' food security, food sovereignty, and economic development objectives. IACAF's objectives and activities are guided by a 3-year strategic plan (2024-2027) and an annual workplan, co-developed by Council members and the Ministry. IACAF achieves its purpose through:

- **Advising** the Ministry on the development and implementation of priorities, programs, and policies.
- **Identifying** key actions and priorities to better support Indigenous food producers, processors, and the harvesting, production and supply of traditional foods.
- **Collaborating** the Council with other relevant provincial advisory groups and cross-ministerial tables, and the agriculture and food sector.
- **Engaging** with Indigenous communities and Indigenous food organizations to help inform IACAF's priorities and raise awareness of Indigenous food and agriculture.
- **Identify and inform** research, projects and/or initiatives to support IACAF's objectives

IACAF balances its time between being responsive to emerging opportunities and collaborating with the Ministry to advance IACAF's defined strategic priorities.

3. Shared Values and Guiding Agreements

IACAF is guided by Indigenous values of balance and co-management with everything that lives and breathes. Expressing these ideas and philosophies in their fullness and complexity is impossible with the limitations of English; however, IACAF members recognize the spirit and wisdom of Indigenous ways of doing and being. They recognize the power of bringing in and centering Indigenous language in the Council's work and relationships as a practice of active reconciliation.

While each Indigenous language group has different words to express these core values, some examples offered by IACAF include:

- **st'akmen:** a St'át'imc word that refers to the way of being where everything has life and is respected, and where reciprocity is valued and practiced in all aspects of life
- **Na'tsa'maht:** a Hul'q'umi'num phrase meaning working together as one, with one heart and one mind
- **?iisaak:** a Nuuchahnulth value and natural law that keeps us in good reciprocity with each other and everything that lives and breathes

In tandem, IACAF is governed by the principles of integrity and respect. Furthermore, all parties engaged in IACAF recognize and uphold the knowledge systems, laws and worldviews of Indigenous peoples, their histories and contemporary experiences. This is essential to enacting respect and reconciliation. (Also see Section 7.)

4. Membership

IACAF consists of up to twelve (12) members appointed by the Minister. Members must be residents of B.C. and affiliated with a recognized Indigenous Nation in the province. Members join as individuals sharing their experiences and perspectives, rather than as representatives of their Nations. The Council includes:

- **Regular Members:** Contribute their professional and lived experience in Indigenous food and agriculture, representing diverse perspectives across the province
- **Youth Members:** Up to two members between the ages of nineteen and twenty-nine (19 – 29) whose contributions carry equal weight to regular members. Youth members may have mentors and support the succession and mentorship of new youth members
- **Elders:** IACAF may include Elders who provide cultural knowledge and practices in support of the Council's purpose.

Term Length and Leadership: Members serve two-year terms, renewable up to six years. IACAF is led by a Chair and Vice-Chair (“the Chairs”), appointed by the Minister for two-year terms. Nomination and selection of the Chairs is conducted through an anonymous process within the Council.

Recruitment and Onboarding: Recruitment occurs annually as needed. The Chairs, Ministry, and Secretariat support the orientation and onboarding of new members.

5. Meeting Frequency, Protocols, and Participation

IACAF meets as a whole Council five to six (5-6) times per year:

- In-person Gatherings: twice (2) per year for a two-to-three (2-3) day meeting
- Virtual Meetings: three to four (3-4) times per year, approximately three (3) hours each

Additional Participation:

- Working Groups: To advance specific strategic areas
- Special Sessions: One-off meetings on specific topics

- Representation: Members may represent IACAF at relevant tables and events, reporting back to the Council

The schedule and frequency of these additional meetings varies and depends on the nature of the activities. Members are expected to report back to the whole Council regularly and provide input where appropriate.

Meeting Protocols:

- **Quorum:** Half (50%) of members must be present.
- **Decision-Making:** Consensus is preferred; however, if consensus is not possible, a modified consensus based on two thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) majority rule will be used. The Chairs will support conflict resolution and ensure respectful dialogue.
- **Attendance:** Members are expected to attend all meetings in full and inform the Chairs and Secretariat in advance if they cannot attend.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

All members, the Ministry and other parties will uphold IACAF's values and conduct principles, including respecting confidentiality and participating fully in meetings.

Chair and Vice-Chair:

- Provide leadership and ensure a positive, consensus-based environment
- Act as spokespeople and key contacts for IACAF, including being a primary contact through regular meetings with the Ministry
- Lead the annual membership review process and support new member recruitment and onboarding

All Council Members:

- Collaborate with the Ministry on strategic priorities and provide ongoing advice
- Participate in all meetings, working groups, and special sessions
- Participate in working groups, special sessions and relevant tables as needed
- Represent IACAF at related events and report back to the Council
- Engage in strategic planning and annual work planning
- Share information and seek input from Indigenous communities as needed

Observers, Experts, Practitioners, and Other Invitees:

- May participate in Council activities by invitation of IACAF and the Ministry
- Do not provide advice or recommendations to the Ministry

The Ministry:

- Attend IACAF meetings, coordinate materials and resources
- Collaborate with IACAF to achieve strategic priorities, engage in learning, and apply feedback to Ministry programs, policies and implementation of the *Declaration Act*
- Report annually on how IACAF's input is being implemented and having impact

Secretariat:

- Provide planning, facilitation, and logistical support for IACAF
- Manage meeting logistics, communications, and records
- Support the development of the annual work plan and membership review process

7. Expectations

All members are expected to:

- Participate consistently and fully in all IACAF meetings and activities
- Not miss more than two (2) IACAF meetings per year. Members who miss more than two meetings per year without due cause may be asked to step down after follow-up by the Chairs and Secretariat
- Prepare for meetings to ensure informed and meaningful discussion
- Foster respectful, transparent, and cooperative relationships to achieve shared goals
- Engage in strategic planning, annual work planning, and review processes
- Adhere to IACAF shared values, guiding agreements, protocols and the [General Conduct Principles for Public Appointees](#), which include the values of Mutual Learning, Respect, Reciprocity, Integrity, Accountability and Equity

All members must commit to these expectations and review and sign the **B.C. Indigenous Advisory Council on Food and Agriculture (IACAF) Agreement** located on page 6.

8. Expenses, Remuneration, and Compensation

IACAF is classified as a Level 2 Board by the Crown Agencies and Boards Resourcing Office (CABRO) and follows [Treasury Board Directive 2/24 \(Remuneration Guidelines for Appointees to Ministry and Crown Agency Boards\)](#). Chairs are compensated at four hundred dollars (\$400) per day, and Members at three hundred dollars (\$300) per day. Travel expenses are reimbursed according to Non-Government Travel Expense Claim Rates.

9. Accountability and Reporting

Disclaimer: IACAF does not constitute government-to-government engagement with First Nations nor represent any individual Indigenous nation. It is an advisory body, and its discussions do not fulfill the Crown's legal or fiduciary obligations to consult with Indigenous Peoples. IACAF activities and resources, including honoraria for IACAF members, Secretariat support and funding for IACAF projects, are contingent on receiving annual funding.

Accountability: IACAF is accountable to the Minister and will provide an annual report and letter to the Minister. The Ministry is accountable to IACAF through providing annual reports on the impact and influence of IACAF input and recommendations on Ministry programs, policies and implementation of the *Declaration Act*.

Review of Terms of Reference: As part of its annual planning cycle, IACAF's Terms of Reference are reviewed and revised annually, or as deemed necessary by the Council and the Ministry.

B.C. Indigenous Advisory Council on Food and Agriculture (IACAF) Agreement

I, _____, hereby acknowledge that I have read the B.C. Indigenous Advisory Council on Food and Agriculture (IACAF) Terms of Reference (TOR) and agree to the following:

Initials:

____ I commit to participate consistently and fully in IACAF meetings and to missing no more than two (2) IACAF meetings annually to ensure there is strength and continuity in the work. If I am unable to attend a meeting, I will notify the Chairs and Secretariat via e-mail, with sufficient notice to ensure there is a quorum for Council decision-making (minimum 3 weeks before in-person gatherings and 1 week before virtual meetings).

____ I understand that missing three (3) meetings in a calendar year without communication will result in the IACAF Chairs, in consultation with the Ministry, making decisions about next steps for my involvement or removal from the Council.

____ I understand the role, responsibilities, and expectations for IACAF members as outlined in the TOR.

____ I agree to adhere to the Shared Values and Guiding Agreements outlined in the TOR.

____ I affirm that I will act in the public interest and proactively declare any real or perceived conflict of interest to the Chair and Secretariat.

____ I agree that any information that is not otherwise public, and was received in the spirit of soliciting advice, will be treated as confidential, unless prior agreement to disclose it is shared between IACAF members and the provincial government.

Signed by:

Print Name

Signature

Date