



DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES ACT ACTION PLAN

2022-2027



Copies of this report are available from:

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<http://declaration.gov.bc.ca>

Cover design:

Cover photo: The photo was taken by Melody Charlie, a First Nations photographer. Melody is based out of Yuuthluithaht (Ucluelet) B.C. Her photography reflects the love and respect she holds for her culture and ways of life, always focussing on the strengths and resilience of her people.

Front and back cover art: The feather and drum art presented on the cover was developed by Andy Everson. Andy is an accomplished artist from the K'omoks First Nation on Vancouver Island. He draws upon his roots amongst the Kwakwaka'wakw, Salish and Tlingit peoples to create artwork that reflects the convergence of ancient traditions with modern society.

The four feathers represent the diversity of the Indigenous Peoples of British Columbia, while the drum symbolizes the heartbeat of ceremonies. The feathers are arranged in four directions to represent the people of the North Coast (North), Interior (East), Salish (South) and those who are disenfranchised or have relocated to western Canada (West).



JOINT MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER OF BC AND THE MINISTER OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

On November 26, 2019, with the unanimous passage of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* in the B.C. legislature, we committed to upholding the human rights of Indigenous Peoples. Under this legislation, we have begun with a five-year action plan in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples to advance this vital work. We are pleased to present the first *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* action plan.

This has been challenging work in challenging times. Over the past two years while we worked together on this plan, we faced incredible adversities. We have been grappling with a global pandemic, a toxic drug supply crisis, and our communities were ravaged by wildfires, floods and heat waves. Through all of these challenges, Indigenous Peoples have carried a disproportionate burden. This burden was made even heavier by the devastating findings of unmarked graves at former residential school sites. These experiences have been stark reminders of the continued effects of colonialism and systemic racism. They also reinforce with absolute certainty the importance of the work to be carried out through this action plan to implement and uphold the human rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Even in the face of these overwhelming challenges, Indigenous Peoples throughout the province continued to work with us on this action plan, determined to create a better future for all generations to come. We are grateful for the time, energy, leadership, and expertise they contributed to finalizing this action plan.

We are also grateful for the dedication of the many public servants who contributed to this work, and who will work in partnership with Indigenous Peoples to carry out these actions to advance our shared long-term vision of reconciliation. We acknowledge the support for this action plan from local governments, business and industry, the non-profit sector, scholars, and many others who share our commitment to reconciliation.

Our government is committed to pursuing the goals and achieving the outcomes articulated in this action plan. It includes 89 actions that represent contributions by each and every ministry. Together, we will work to advance reconciliation in tangible and measurable ways in communities across the province.

This work requires real and meaningful systemic change. We see the commitment to that change across the board – from the Province, Indigenous Peoples, allies, and supporters, and it gives us great hope that the outcomes of this plan are not only possible, but achievable. We have much work ahead of us, and together we will create a better future for everyone.



John Horgan
Premier



Murray Rankin, QC
Minister of Indigenous
Relations and Reconciliation

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INTRODUCTION



The [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#) (Declaration Act)¹ was unanimously passed by the British Columbia Legislative Assembly in November 2019. This made B.C. the first jurisdiction in Canada to adopt the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) (UN Declaration).² The Declaration Act was developed jointly with Indigenous leaders and legal staff and was introduced through historic ceremony.

The Declaration Act established the UN Declaration as the Province’s framework for reconciliation, as called for by the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#).³ Section 4 of the Declaration Act requires development and implementation of an action plan, in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples,^a to achieve the objectives of the UN Declaration. The UN Declaration is a “universal framework of minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the Indigenous [P]eoples of the world and it elaborates on existing human rights standards and fundamental freedoms as they apply to the specific situation of Indigenous [P]eoples.”⁴ The provincial government is committed to upholding these human rights in its institutions, laws, policies and practices to advance reconciliation and address the legacy and harms of colonialism on Indigenous Peoples. The Province reaffirms its intent to achieve government-to-government relationships based on respect, recognition and exercise of Aboriginal title and rights and reconciliation of Aboriginal and Crown titles and jurisdiction.

The *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* contributes to the implementation of the UN Declaration in B.C. by:

- requiring the Province, in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples to take all measures necessary to ensure the laws of B.C. are consistent with the UN Declaration (section 3);
- requiring the development and implementation of an action plan, in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples, to achieve the objectives of the UN Declaration (section 4);
- requiring the Province to report annually on progress made toward alignment of laws and achievement of the goals in the action plan (section 5); and
- enabling agreements with Indigenous governing bodies, including joint or consent-based decision-making agreements that reflect free, prior and informed consent (sections 6 and 7).

This action plan outlines significant actions the Province will undertake in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples over the next five years. The Province will continue to demonstrate commitment and ensure accountability to implement the UN Declaration and the Declaration Act Action Plan through collaborative annual reporting.

a Consistent with section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982* and section 1 of the Declaration Act, the term “Indigenous Peoples” includes First Nations, *Métis* and Inuit Peoples in Canada.

The Province conducted initial engagement to develop the draft action plan with Indigenous Peoples between July 2020 and February 2021.^{b,5} The Province conducted broader engagement on the draft action plan to seek input from Indigenous Peoples to inform the final action plan between June and September 2021. Engagement focused on Indigenous Peoples in B.C.; however, local governments and non-Indigenous people, organizations, business and industry leaders also participated.^c Engagement feedback was carefully reviewed, considered and utilized to finalize this action plan.

Colonization and the associated attempted genocide of Indigenous Peoples fractured the self-determined lives, cultures and well-being of Indigenous Peoples across Canada. The Declaration Act is both an acknowledgment of these histories and a commitment by the Government of B.C. to respect and uphold the human rights of Indigenous Peoples. If history is a teacher, meeting this collective responsibility will require a different approach from that previously taken. This action plan has been built through discussion with Indigenous Peoples in B.C. It describes initial actions for the Province to take in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples over the next five years. Through the action plan, the Province is committed to changing the trajectory of history through coherent, concrete and cooperative action.



b For further details on the development of the draft action plan, see the [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act 2020/21 Annual Report](#).

c Further details and reflection on the draft action plan engagement process will be included in the forthcoming annual report for 2021-2022.

PURPOSE



This action plan provides a province-wide, whole-of-government approach to achieve the objectives of the UN Declaration over time. The Province acknowledges the widespread socio-economic and health inequities for Indigenous Peoples in B.C. and across Canada. This includes the overrepresentation of Indigenous people in the justice and child welfare systems, lower rates of education, and higher instances of poverty, unemployment and homelessness. The goals and outcomes of this action plan focus on addressing the inequities experienced by Indigenous Peoples by achieving the highest attainable standard for health and well-being.

DISTINCTIONS-BASED APPROACH:

The Province is committed to a distinctions-based approach. This requires that the Province's dealings with First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples be conducted in a manner that acknowledges the specific rights, interests, priorities and concerns of each, while respecting and acknowledging these distinct Peoples with unique cultures, histories, rights, laws, and governments. Section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, recognizes and affirms the rights of Aboriginal Peoples of Canada, while all Indigenous Peoples have human rights that are expressed in the UN Declaration. However, not all rights are uniform or the same among or between all Indigenous Peoples. In many cases, a distinctions-based approach may require that the Province's relationship and engagement with First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples include different approaches or actions and result in different outcomes.

These actions are intended to support changes in understandings, behaviours and systems to shift the status quo, address Indigenous-specific racism and establish new foundations of government that respect and uphold the human rights of Indigenous Peoples. The actions identified advance a distinctions-based approach that recognizes First Nations, Métis and Inuit as the Indigenous Peoples of Canada.

The action plan is meant to help everyone who lives in British Columbia understand the importance of reconciliation and how it will help the province achieve its greatest social, cultural and economic potential.

The actions identified in the plan build on priorities brought forward through decades of advocacy and leadership by Indigenous Peoples. These include existing priorities identified in current agreements between the Province and Indigenous organizations.

The 2018 [*Implementing the Commitment Document - Concrete Actions: Transforming Laws, Policies, Processes and Structures*](#)⁶ is one existing document between the First Nations Leadership Council^d and

^d The First Nations Leadership Council is comprised of the political executives of the BC Assembly of First Nations, First Nations Summit, and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs.

the Province that sets out priorities with First Nations, including with respect to policy and legislative changes that reflect the recognition and implementation of title and rights.

The October 27, 2021 [Letter of Intent](#)⁷ between Métis Nation British Columbia (MNBC) and the Province is another document that commits to strengthening relationships. This Letter of Intent proposes a new whole-of-government approach to Métis relations as a partnership between MNBC and British Columbia that respects Métis self-determination.

The 2022 government-to-government [Shared Priorities Framework](#) between each of the eight modern treaty nations and the Province commits to concrete actions to ensure timely, effective and fully resourced implementation of modern treaties.

Each action listed in this plan will be implemented in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples, reflecting our commitment to work in partnership and collaboration. The plan outlines actions that will be undertaken between 2022 and 2027. Progress will be reviewed on an annual basis and publicly reported in the Declaration Act annual reports.

It is important to note that the action plan does not include all provincial initiatives to advance reconciliation in B.C. Further, while closely linked to work under section 3 of the Declaration Act to ensure laws are consistent with the UN Declaration, the action plan is a separate and distinct obligation. Actions proposed in this plan do not replace, limit, change or stop existing initiatives or related commitments. These efforts will continue alongside the development and implementation of the action plan.

ANTI-RACISM:

The government of British Columbia recognizes the need to address Indigenous-specific racism in this province and within our systems, practices, and policies. First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples have experienced ongoing, systemic and race-based discrimination that has maintained unequal treatment and normalized the false notion that Indigenous Peoples are 'less than' their non-racialized counterparts.

Anti-racism is fundamental to achieving the objectives of the UN Declaration. Therefore, anti-racism is foundational to the goals, objectives and actions laid out in this plan. Key to the implementation of the Declaration Act are actions that identify, challenge, prevent, eliminate and change the values, structures, policies, programs, practices and behaviours that perpetuate racism. This will require understanding and targeting the root causes of systemic discrimination, our colonial and racist foundations, and committing to take action to create conditions of greater inclusion, equality and justice.^{e,8}

^e Indigenous-specific racism and anti-racism in this action plan are defined as per the 2020 [In Plain Sight Report](#).

MODERN TREATIES IN BRITISH COLUMBIA:

The Province's relationship with the eight Nations with whom it has signed modern treaties is distinct and unique. These treaties, to which the Government of Canada is also a signatory, set out constitutionally protected rights and obligations of the parties and contain the actions and language necessary to carry out those rights and obligations. The rights and obligations contained in modern treaties have been established, a distinction that has significant and important implications for the work the Province does with modern treaty nations.

The Province recognizes that, consistent with the distinctions-based approach, all Indigenous Nations can choose whether they wish to enter the treaty making process.

The Province's work with modern treaty nations to fully implement these treaties occurs both with individual nations and collectively through the Alliance of British Columbia Modern Treaty Nations (the Alliance). The Alliance was formed to collaborate and advance areas of shared interest relating to the implementation of modern treaties in B.C.

As part of the continued work under the action plan, the Province has entered into a government-to-government [Shared Priorities Framework](#) with modern treaty nations with the goal of renewing its commitment to timely, effective and fully resourced implementation of modern treaties. The framework will address three broad outcomes:

- Comprehensive organizational and policy changes in the public service to ensure timely, effective, fully resourced whole-of-government approach to treaty implementation;
- Appropriate fiscal arrangements to fulfill treaty rights and obligations; and
- Meaningful involvement of modern treaty nations in legislative and policy initiatives.

Progress made to achieve these outcomes will be included in future annual Declaration Act annual reports.

SHARED UNDERSTANDINGS

This action plan and its implementation are informed by the following understandings:

Comprehensive The articles of the UN Declaration are interrelated and interdependent, intended to be read together and understood as an indivisible whole.

Distinctions-based The Province of British Columbia recognizes First Nations, Métis and Inuit as the Indigenous Peoples of Canada with rights recognized and affirmed in section 35(1) of the *Constitution Act, 1982*. The Province also recognizes that First Nations, Métis and Inuit are distinct, rights-bearing communities, and is committed to a distinctions-based approach to its relationship with each.

Diverse The action plan reflects the principle of diversity amongst Indigenous Peoples as stated in section 1(2) of the Declaration Act, which includes meeting the standard in article 37(2) that nothing in the UN Declaration “may be interpreted as diminishing or eliminating the rights of [I]ndigenous [P]eoples contained in treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements.”⁹

Legally Plural The action plan is grounded in the affirmation, consistent with the UN Declaration, that upholding the human rights of Indigenous Peoples includes recognizing that within Canada there are multiple legal orders, including Indigenous laws and legal orders with distinct roles, responsibilities and authorities.

Principled The goals, outcomes and actions in the action plan, and the process of implementing them will be consistent with “the minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being”¹⁰ of Indigenous Peoples in the UN Declaration.

Cooperative The action plan has been developed and will be implemented in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples.

Enabling The action plan must enable and support government-to-government relationships between Indigenous Peoples and the Province based on recognition and implementation of the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Impactful The implementation of the action plan must make tangible improvements to Indigenous Peoples’ social, physical, cultural and economic well-being.

Transparent Progress under the action plan will be reviewed and publicly reported on annually.

2022-2027 ACTIONS

The actions are organized by the following four themes:

1. **Self-determination and inherent right of self-government**
2. **Title and rights of Indigenous Peoples**
3. **Ending Indigenous-specific racism and discrimination**
4. **Social, cultural and economic well-being**

Each theme includes a **Goal**, with **Outcomes** and **Actions**.

The **goals** and **outcomes** are drawn from the UN Declaration. They describe what the Province is striving for with this action plan and set the vision for achieving the objectives of the UN Declaration.

The **actions** articulate the specific commitments and steps that the Province will take between 2022 and 2027 to achieve those goals and outcomes.

Each action identifies the ministry or ministries responsible for leading its implementation. As this action plan takes a cross-government approach, other ministries may be involved in the work, even if they are not listed within an action.

INTERPRETIVE GUIDANCE

The following *must* be applied when interpreting and implementing this action plan.

First, all actions identified in this action plan are to be implemented in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples in B.C., as described in the Declaration Act.

Second, a wide range of terminology is used in the goals, outcomes and actions referring to Indigenous peoples including: "Indigenous Peoples," "First Nations," "Indigenous Nations," and others. Effort has been made to use this terminology consistently and coherently using a distinctions-based approach; wherever possible, reference to First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples are made intentionally to reflect these distinctions. There are currently some variances in use for several reasons; for example, out of respect for the diversity of preferences among Indigenous Peoples, or to reflect and remain consistent with terminology used in existing commitments, agreements and other constructive arrangements. A distinctions-based approach must be applied in the interpretation and implementation of the action plan. Some of the actions referencing Indigenous Peoples may, through implementation, come to be more aptly focused on First Nations and/or Métis people.

Lastly, progress on implementing this action plan will be provided through the Declaration Act annual reports. In those reports, the Province must make reference to First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples intentionally to uphold a distinctions-based approach.



THEME

1

Self-Determination and Inherent Right of Self-Government



THEME 1. Self-Determination and Inherent Right of Self-Government

GOAL

Indigenous Peoples exercise and have full enjoyment of their rights to self-determination and self-government, including developing, maintaining and implementing their own institutions, laws, governing bodies, and political, economic and social structures related to Indigenous communities.

OUTCOMES

A British Columbia where:

- Indigenous Peoples are fully supported in their work of freely determining and implementing their systems and institutions of government, through their internal processes of nation-rebuilding.
- Through their governments, Indigenous Peoples are recognized and engaged through formalized and predictable relationships with the Province, and exercise their jurisdictions and laws.
- Indigenous Peoples exercise self-determination and self-government.
- Through their governments, Indigenous Peoples have open, respectful and productive working relationships with the Province that recognize legal pluralism and reflect cooperative federalism.
- Indigenous Peoples have the necessary legal space to strengthen the application of their Indigenous Laws and legal orders in various areas not adequately addressed through the Canadian legal system.
- The overall emergency management structure and regime in B.C. is revised, in collaboration with the Government of Canada and Indigenous Peoples, to enhance Indigenous Peoples' emergency management outcomes through a strong tripartite approach.

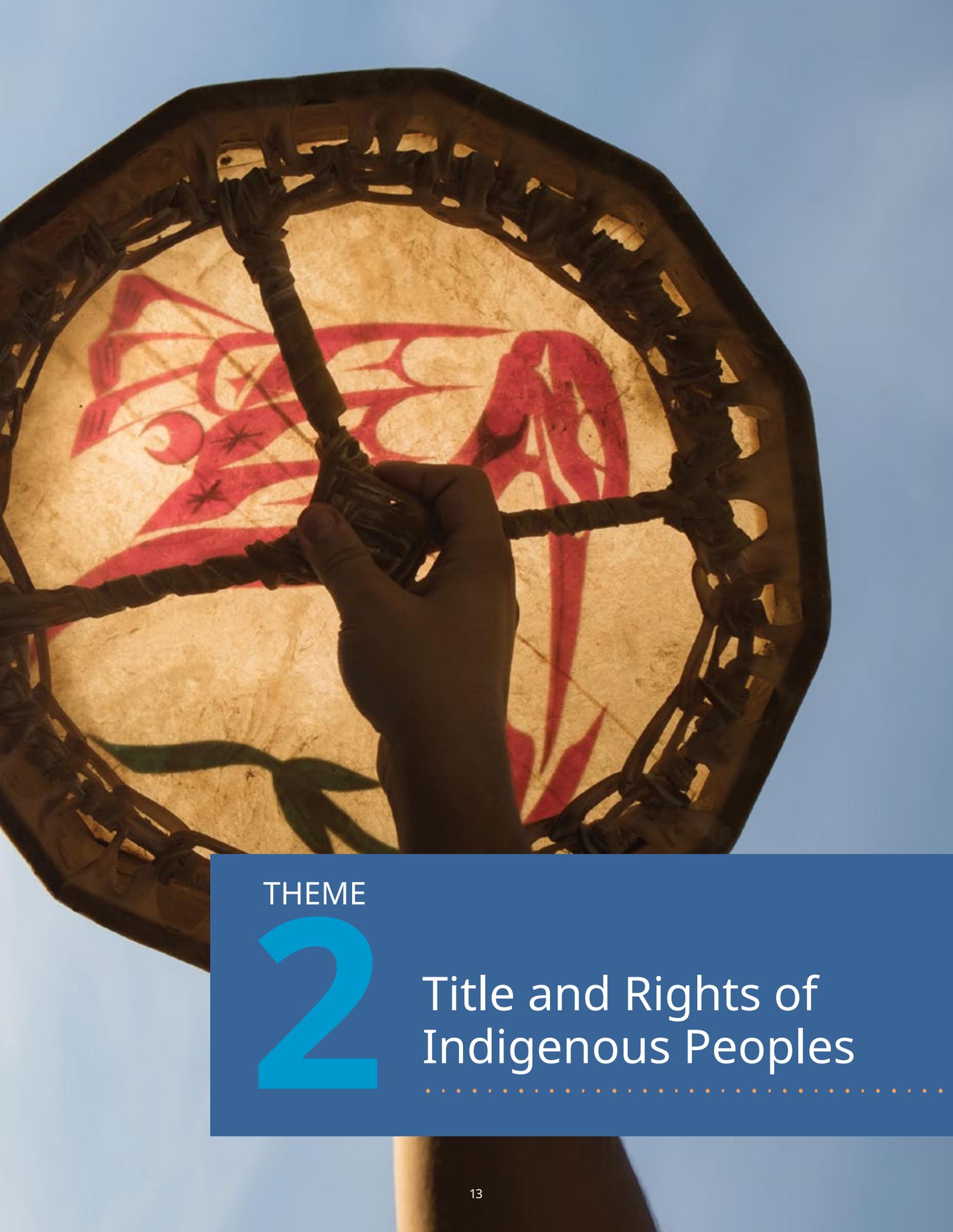
2022-2027 ACTIONS

The Province recognizes that the work of nation-rebuilding is the work of Indigenous Peoples, and is to be conducted in accordance with Indigenous legal processes, rights, cultures, languages, protocols, traditions and standards, and undertaken as part of expressing, building, strengthening and implementing freely chosen governance systems.

To advance this, the Province will take the following actions in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples from 2022 to 2027:

- 1.1** In partnership with the Government of Canada, establish a new institution designed and driven by First Nations to provide supports to First Nations in their work of nation- and governance-rebuilding and boundary resolution in accordance with First Nations laws, customs and traditions. (*Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation*)
- 1.2** Shift from short-term transactional arrangements to the co-development of long-term agreements that recognize and support reconciliation, self-determination, decision-making and economic independence. (*Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation*)

- 1.3 Utilize sections 6 and 7 of the Declaration Act to complete and implement government-to-government agreements that recognize Indigenous self-government and self-determination. *(Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation)*
- 1.4 Co-develop with Indigenous Peoples a new distinctions-based fiscal relationship and framework that supports the operation of Indigenous governments, whether through modern treaties, self-government agreements or advancing the right to self-government through other mechanisms. This work will include collaboration with the Government of Canada. *(Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation)*
- 1.5 Co-develop and implement new distinctions-based policy frameworks for resource revenue-sharing and other fiscal mechanisms with Indigenous Peoples. *(Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation)*
- 1.6 Co-develop an approach to deliver on the BC Tripartite Education Agreement commitment, in which the Ministry of Education and Child Care and the First Nations Education Steering Committee will co-develop legislation that requires local education agreements (LEAs) with First Nations where a First Nation wants one, and that requires the application of the provincial LEA at the request of a First Nation. *(Ministry of Education and Child Care)*
- 1.7 Update the Bilateral Protocol agreement between the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care and the First Nation Education Steering Committee for relevancy, effectiveness, and consistency with the UN Declaration to support First Nation students in the K-12 education system. *(Ministry of Education and Child Care)*
- 1.8 Recognize the integral role of Indigenous-led post-secondary institutes as a key pillar of B.C.'s post-secondary system through the provision of core funding, capacity funding and the development of legislation. This includes institutes mandated by First Nations, as well as a Métis post-secondary institute being developed by Métis Nation BC. *(Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training)*
- 1.9 Work with the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology, and the Urban Native Youth Association to co-develop an urban Indigenous centre that supports the childcare, housing and post-secondary needs of Indigenous learners, and strengthen the capacity of the Native Education College to provide culturally relevant post-secondary opportunities for urban Indigenous learners. *(Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training)*
- 1.10 Co-develop modernized emergency management legislation (replacing the *Emergency Program Act*) with First Nations. *(Emergency Management BC)*
- 1.11 Support inclusive regional governance by advancing First Nations participation in regional district boards. *(Ministry of Municipal Affairs)*



THEME

2

Title and Rights of Indigenous Peoples

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THEME 2. Title and Rights of Indigenous Peoples

GOAL

Indigenous Peoples exercise and have full enjoyment of their inherent rights, including the rights of First Nations to own, use, develop and control lands and resources within their territories in B.C.

OUTCOMES

A British Columbia where:

- The distinctions-based rights of Indigenous Peoples are respected, upheld and exercised.
- The rights of Indigenous Peoples, including First Nations title, are exercised, recognized and respected, and cooperatively implemented including through treaties, government-to-government agreements and other constructive arrangements.
- The Province's laws, policies and practices recognize and respect the distinctions-based rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- Dispute-resolution and relationship-building with Indigenous Peoples are supported through cooperatively established institutions and processes that are fair, just and accessible, integrate Indigenous laws and protocols, and use the court system only as a last resort.
- First Nations benefit socially, culturally and economically from land and resources in their territories, including having access to multiple and diverse streams of revenue to finance their governments and deliver services to their citizens.
- Through their governments, Indigenous Peoples exercise their autonomy to set their own priorities, allocate fiscal resources and determine how to deliver programs and services to their citizens.
- Indigenous Peoples have meaningful and sufficient access to abundant and healthy traditional foods and have peaceful enjoyment of their harvesting rights.
- First Nations exercise their right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development, use and/or stewardship of their traditional territories and other resources.

2022-2027 ACTIONS

The Province recognizes the need to shift from patterns of litigation, and expensive and slow negotiations about title and rights, to cooperative implementation through effective government-to-government relationships.

To advance this, the Province will take the following actions in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples from 2022 to 2027:

- 2.1 Establish a Secretariat to guide and assist government to meet its obligation to ensure legislation is consistent with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and is developed in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples. (*Declaration Act Secretariat*)
- 2.2 Finalize the [Draft Principles that Guide the Province of British Columbia's Relationship with Indigenous Peoples](#).¹¹ (*Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation*)

- 2.3 Issue guidelines from the Attorney General of B.C. to the Ministry of Attorney General legal counsel regarding the conduct of civil litigation involving the rights of Indigenous Peoples. *(Ministry of Attorney General)*
- 2.4 Negotiate new joint decision-making and consent agreements under section 7 of the Declaration Act that include clear accountabilities, transparency and administrative fairness between the Province and Indigenous governing bodies. Seek all necessary legislative amendments to enable the implementation of any section 7 agreements. *(Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, Ministry of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship)*
- 2.5 Co-develop and employ mechanisms for ensuring the minimum standards of the UN Declaration are applied in the implementation of treaties, agreements under sections 6 and 7 of the Declaration Act and other constructive arrangements with First Nations. *(Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation)*
- 2.6 Co-develop strategic-level policies, programs and initiatives to advance collaborative stewardship of the environment, land and resources, that address cumulative effects and respects Indigenous Knowledge. This will be achieved through collaborative stewardship forums, guardian programs, land use planning initiatives, and other innovative and evolving partnerships that support integrated land and resource management. *(Ministry of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship, Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, Ministry of Forests, Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation, BC Oil and Gas Commission)*
- 2.7 Collaborate with First Nations to develop and implement strategies, plans and initiatives for sustainable water management, and to identify policy or legislative reforms supporting Indigenous water stewardship, including shared decision-making. Co-develop the Watershed Security Strategy with First Nations and initiate implementation of the Strategy at a local watershed scale. *(Ministry of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship)*
- 2.8 Collaborate with Indigenous partners on issues related to conservation and biodiversity in B.C., including the protection of species at risk. *(Ministry of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship)*
- 2.9 Develop new strategies to protect and revitalize wild salmon populations in B.C. with First Nations and the federal government, including the development and implementation of a cohesive B.C. Wild Pacific Salmon Strategy. *(Ministry of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship)*
- 2.10 Reform forest legislation, regulations and policy to reflect a shared strategic vision with First Nations that upholds the rights and objectives of the UN Declaration. *(Ministry of Forests)*
- 2.11 Integrate traditional practices and cultural uses of fire into wildfire prevention and land management practices and support the reintroduction of strategized burning. *(Ministry of Forests, Emergency Management BC)*
- 2.12 Collaboratively develop and implement CleanBC and the Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy to support resilient communities and clean economic opportunities for Indigenous Peoples that benefit our shared climate and advance reconciliation. *(Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy)*

- 2.13** Identify and advance reconciliation negotiations on historical road impacts and road accessibility with First Nations on reserve, treaty and title lands, including reporting-out on the completion and implementation of these negotiations collaboratively with First Nations partners. (*Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure*)
- 2.14** Modernize the *Mineral Tenure Act* in consultation and cooperation with First Nations and First Nations organizations. (*Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation*)





THEME

3

Ending Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination

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THEME 3. Ending Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination

GOAL

Indigenous Peoples fully express and exercise their distinct rights, and enjoy living in B.C. without interpersonal, systemic and institutional interference, oppression or other inequities associated with Indigenous-specific racism and discrimination, wherever they reside.

OUTCOMES

A British Columbia where:

- All citizens have a constructive and respectful understanding of the distinct history and unique rights of Indigenous Peoples in B.C.
- The overrepresentation of Indigenous Peoples in the justice system is eliminated.
- Indigenous Peoples feel safe accessing the health-care system, knowing that they will receive high quality care, be treated with respect and receive culturally safe and appropriate services.
- Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+^f people enjoy full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination.
- Indigenous Knowledge, laws and legal orders are affirmed and recognized as part of decision-making.
- Indigenous learners feel welcomed, respected, and comfortable learning and being Indigenous in schools and other educational institutions.

2022-2027 ACTIONS

The Province recognizes that systemic racism and discrimination against Indigenous Peoples exists throughout British Columbia and that fundamental changes to systems, behaviours, attitudes and beliefs are needed.

To advance this, the Province will take the following actions in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples between 2022 and 2027:

- 3.1** Develop essential training in partnership with Indigenous organizations, and deliver to the B.C. public service, public institutions and corporations that aims to build foundational understanding and competence about the history and rights of Indigenous Peoples, treaty process, rights and title, the UN Declaration, the B.C. Declaration Act, the dynamics of proper respectful relations, Indigenous-specific racism, and meaningful reconciliation. *(Public Service Agency, Ministry of Finance – Crown Agencies and Board Resourcing Office)*
- 3.2** Establish an operational approach to set and achieve targets for equitable recruitment and retention of Indigenous Peoples across the public sector, including at senior levels. *(Public Service Agency, Public Sector Employers' Council Secretariat)*

^f 2SLGBTQIA+ refers to two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual and other sexually and gender diverse people.

- 3.3 Conduct an external review of Indigenous-specific racism and discrimination in the provincial public education system, and create a strategy, including resources and supports, to address findings. *(Ministry of Education and Child Care)*
- 3.4 Implement a mandatory course or bundle of credits related to First Peoples as part of graduation requirements in B.C. and co-create culturally relevant provincial resources with Indigenous people for use by all educators across the K-12 education system. *(Ministry of Education and Child Care)*
- 3.5 Provide resources to Indigenous organizations to improve public understanding of Indigenous histories, rights, cultures, languages and the negative impacts of Indigenous-specific racism. *(Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport)*
- 3.6 Introduce anti-racism legislation that addresses Indigenous-specific racism. *(Ministry of Attorney General)*
- 3.7 Implement recommendations made in the [In Plain Sight: Addressing Indigenous-specific racism and discrimination in B.C. health care](#)¹² report, striving to establish a health care system in B.C. that is culturally safe and free of Indigenous-specific racism. *(Ministry of Health)*
- 3.8 Develop and implement community-driven activities to end violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ people, beginning with the foundational activities in [A Path Forward: Priorities and Early Strategies for B.C.](#)¹³ and steps towards achieving the mandate commitment to develop a gender-based violence action plan. *(Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Ministry of Attorney General, Ministry of Finance - Gender Equity Office)*
- 3.9 Identify and implement multi-modal transportation solutions that provide support and enable the development of sustainable, safe, reliable and affordable transportation options for First Nations communities. *(Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure)*
- 3.10 Implement improvements to public safety oversight bodies and complaints processes, such as enhanced investments in the B.C. Human Rights Tribunal and new models for including Indigenous laws in complaints resolution. *(Ministry of Attorney General, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General)*
- 3.11 Develop and implement comprehensive policing reforms to address systemic biases and racism. This will include: updating the *Police Act*, [BC Provincial Policing Standards](#)¹⁴ and mandatory training requirements; enhancing independent oversight; clarifying the roles and responsibilities of police officers in the context of complex social issues such as mental health, addiction and homelessness; and contributing to the modernization of the federal First Nations Policing Program. *(Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Ministry of Attorney General, Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions)*
- 3.12 Prioritize implementation of the First Nations Justice Strategy to reduce the substantial overrepresentation of Indigenous Peoples involved in and impacted by the justice system. This includes affirming First Nations self-determination and enabling the restoration of traditional justice systems and culturally relevant institutions. *(Ministry of Attorney General, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General)*
- 3.13 Prioritize endorsement and implementation of the Métis Justice Strategy to reduce the substantial overrepresentation of Métis Peoples in and impacted by the justice system. This includes affirming Métis self-determination, and enabling the restoration of traditional justice systems and culturally relevant institutions. *(Ministry of Attorney General, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General)*

- 3.14** Advance the collection and use of disaggregated demographic data, guided by a distinctions-based approach to Indigenous data sovereignty and self-determination, including supporting the establishment of a First Nations-governed and mandated regional data governance centre in alignment with the First Nations Data Governance Strategy. *(Ministry of Citizens' Services)*
- 3.15** Adopt an inclusive digital font that allows for Indigenous languages to be included in communication, signage, services and official records. *(Ministry of Citizens' Services)*





THEME

4

Social, Cultural and
Economic Well-being

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THEME 4. Social, Cultural and Economic Well-being

GOAL

Indigenous Peoples in B.C. fully enjoy and exercise their distinct rights to maintain, control, develop, protect and transmit their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, languages, food systems, sciences and technologies. They are supported by initiatives that promote connection, development, access and improvement, as well as full participation in all aspects of B.C.'s economy. This includes particular focus on ensuring the rights of Indigenous women, youth, Elders, children, persons with disabilities and 2SLGBTQIA+ people are upheld.

OUTCOMES

A British Columbia where:

- Indigenous Peoples, communities and nations in B.C. are thriving and prospering as full participants in the social, cultural and economic landscape of the province.
- Indigenous Peoples design, control and set the standards and policies for the services that support and facilitate the well-being of Indigenous citizens.
- Indigenous Peoples care for their own children and youth in their communities, and exercise jurisdiction over their own child and family services through systems and practices they determine for themselves, with family preservation prioritized and children and youth kept within their families and communities.
- Indigenous children in need of protection are cared for by their community, and where they cannot be cared for by their community, they are connected to their communities and cultures.
- Health, social and education systems apply an intersectional lens to meet the needs and honour the worldviews, cultures, lived experiences, knowledge and histories of Indigenous Peoples.
- Indigenous languages are living, used, taught and visible throughout their respective territories, including in the provincial public education system.
- Indigenous food systems are recognized and supported in their foundational and interconnected role in providing for cultural, social, environmental and economic well-being.
- Indigenous learners lead graduation rates, are supported to pursue their own excellence, and can access relevant and responsive post-secondary education and skills training.
- Government functions in such a way that distinct Indigenous cultures and identities are understood, upheld and respected, including how Indigenous Peoples access and interact with all provincial government services.
- Respect for Indigenous cultures is tangibly demonstrated through Indigenous maintenance, control, protection and development of their cultural heritage resources, intellectual property, art, spiritual traditions, knowledge systems, economic systems, food systems and spiritual and sacred sites.

- Indigenous Peoples are thriving in their role as stewards and managers of their cultural heritage and receive funding and support to develop community-based cultural heritage plans and programming that will assist with: documenting oral histories and cultural traditions; managing cultural heritage sites, objects and systems; and supporting the intergenerational transmission of cultural knowledge; and showcasing and commemorating Indigenous cultural heritage.
- First Nations create archives for historical community records, mapping services and place-naming.
- Governance of the economy respects, acknowledges and upholds Indigenous rights and interests and First Nations title, is co-led with Indigenous Peoples, and ensures that all First Nations have economic opportunities and benefit from the lands and resources in their territories.
- Indigenous Peoples freely determine their economic development goals, priorities and strategies, and exercise their right to maintain and develop their economic systems and institutions to support self-governance, along with traditional and other economic activities.
- The Province and Indigenous Peoples collaborate and participate in ongoing, meaningful, and enduring dialogue to achieve a more inclusive, innovative, and sustainable economy for the benefit of present and future generations that reflects Indigenous values, interests, goals and worldviews.
- The Province and Indigenous Peoples collaborate through meaningful dialogue to create more inclusive, sustainable and low carbon economies for the benefit of present and future generations and a just climate transition.
- Indigenous peoples with disabilities are supported in accessing culturally relevant care and services.

2022-2027 ACTIONS

The Province recognizes that social and economic disparities exist in British Columbia with particular impacts on Indigenous Peoples, and that addressing these disparities while supporting the cultural distinctiveness of Indigenous Peoples is fundamental to upholding human rights.

To advance this, the Province will take the following actions in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples from 2022 to 2027:

Social

- 4.1 Identify and undertake concrete measures to increase the literacy and numeracy achievement levels of Indigenous students at all levels of the K-12 education system, including the early years. *(Ministry of Education and Child Care)*
- 4.2 Develop and implement an effective recruitment and retention strategy to increase the number of Indigenous teachers in the K-12 public education system. *(Ministry of Education and Child Care, Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training)*
- 4.3 Co-develop and implement a framework for the involvement of Indigenous Education Councils in school district financial planning and reporting. *(Ministry of Education and Child Care)*
- 4.4 Identify, develop and implement mechanisms and approaches to enable boards of education to better support Indigenous students, including increasing and ensuring equitable access to education and safe environments. *(Ministry of Education and Child Care)*

4.5 Co-develop a policy framework for Indigenous post-secondary education and skills training that includes:

- supporting post-secondary institutions to be more culturally relevant and responsive to the needs of First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners and communities;
- expanding the Aboriginal Service Plan program to all 25 public post-secondary institutions;
- ensuring that Indigenous learners have access to student housing that is safe, inclusive, and enables them to thrive personally, academically, and culturally;
- developing mechanisms for First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners and communities to play an integral role in public post-secondary institutions' decision-making; and
- identifying legislative amendments needed to ensure all public post-secondary institution boards include at least one Indigenous person.

(Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training)

4.6 Promote culturally relevant sport, physical activity and recreation initiatives and opportunities that increase Indigenous engagement, participation and excellence in both traditional and mainstream sports for individuals in both urban and rural or remote areas. *(Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport)*

4.7 Demonstrate a new and more flexible funding model and partnership approach that supports First Nations to plan, design and deliver mental health and wellness services across a full continuum of care and to address the social determinants of health and wellness. *(Ministry of Health, Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions)*

4.8 In alignment with the tripartite health plans and agreements, continue to strengthen and evolve the First Nation health governance structure in B.C. to ensure First Nations are supported to participate as full and equal partners in decision-making and service delivery at local, regional and provincial levels, and engage First Nations and the Government of Canada on the need for legislation as envisioned in the tripartite health plans and agreements. *(Ministry of Health, Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions)*

4.9 As a part of the implementation of the *Accessible British Columbia Act*, support the identification, prevention and removal of barriers for Indigenous persons with disabilities. This includes ensuring that the development of accessibility standards considers the rights recognized and affirmed by the UN Declaration. *(Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction)*

4.10 Prioritize the implementation of Primary Care Networks, the First Nations-led Primary Health Care Initiative, and other primary care priorities, embedding Indigenous perspectives and priorities into models of care to increase Indigenous Peoples' access to primary care and other health services, and to improve cultural safety and quality of care. *(Ministry of Health)*

4.11 Increase the availability, accessibility and the continuum of Indigenous-led and community-based social services and supports that are trauma-informed, culturally safe and relevant, and address a range of holistic wellness needs for those who are in crisis, at-risk or have experienced violence, trauma and/or significant loss. *(Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions)*

4.12 Address the disproportionate impacts of the overdose public health emergency on Indigenous Peoples by:

- applying to the Government of Canada to decriminalize simple possession of small amounts of illicit drugs for personal use, and continuing campaigns and other measures to help end the stigma and shame associated with addiction;
- expanding prescribed safer supply and other harm reduction measures; and
- ensuring accessibility of recovery beds, and evidence-based, culturally relevant and safe services to meet the needs of Indigenous Peoples, including youth.

(Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Ministry of Attorney General)

4.13 Increase the availability and accessibility of culturally safe substance use services, including through the renovation and construction of Indigenous-run treatment centres and the integration of land-based and traditional approaches to healing. *(Ministry of Health, Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions)*

4.14 Increase the availability and accessibility of resources to Indigenous partners in COVID-19 pandemic health and wellness planning and response, including the implementation of the [Rural, Remote, First Nations and Indigenous COVID-19 Framework](#)¹⁵ to ensure access for all Indigenous Peoples to immediate and culturally safe and relevant care closer to home. *(Ministry of Health, Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions)*

4.15 Incorporate Indigenous experiences and knowledge of poverty and well-being into ongoing poverty reduction efforts and the 2024 Poverty Reduction Strategy. The strategy will recognize the ongoing impacts of colonialism and include Indigenous-identified actions and progress measures. *(Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction)*

4.16 Co-develop a B.C.-specific fiscal framework, in partnership with First Nations, Métis and Inuit, and in consultation with key Indigenous organizations, to support and move forward with jurisdiction over child and family services. *(Ministry of Children and Family Development)*

4.17 In collaboration with B.C. First Nations and Métis Peoples, and Inuit, continue implementing changes to substantially reduce the number of Indigenous children and youth in care through increased prevention and family support services at all stages of contact with the child welfare system. *(Ministry of Children and Family Development)*

4.18 As committed to in the First Nations Children and Youth in Care Protocol, co-develop and implement measures to support improved education outcomes of current and former First Nation children and youth in care, including meaningful data collection to inform policy planning and service delivery. *(Ministry of Education and Child Care, Ministry of Children and Family Development, Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training)*

4.19 As part of a commitment to an inclusive, universal childcare system, work in collaboration with B.C. First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples to implement a distinctions-based approach to support and move forward jurisdiction over child care for First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples who want and need it in B.C. *(Ministry of Education and Child Care)*

- 4.20** Advance a collaborative, whole-of-government approach in the partnership between the Métis Nation of British Columbia and the Province of B.C., respecting Métis self-determination and working to establish more flexibility and sustainability in funding. *(Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation)*
- 4.21** Bring together key Indigenous urban leaders to create a provincial urban Indigenous advisory table to develop and implement a five-year plan to address the priorities of urban Indigenous Peoples, including a focus on Elders, youth, children, women, men, 2SLGBTQIA+ and persons with disabilities. *(Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction)*
- 4.22** Ministers and executives across the provincial government social sector will meet annually with urban Indigenous service organization leaders, such as the provincial urban Indigenous advisory table (see Action 4.21), to discuss successes, innovations, and challenges of supporting the social, cultural and economic needs of urban Indigenous Peoples. *(Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation)*
- 4.23** Undertake a cross-government review of provincial supports and services for Indigenous Peoples in urban settings and develop a plan with clear timelines that will provide greater collaboration and coordination to meet needs. *(Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation)*
- 4.24** Expand support to Aboriginal Friendship Centres and other urban Indigenous organizations that serve the needs of urban Indigenous people in B.C. while also acknowledging that Aboriginal Friendship Centres and other urban Indigenous organizations play a vital role for those that wish to connect to their cultures and traditions. *(Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation)*
- 4.25** Work with Indigenous Peoples to build more on- and off-reserve housing and pursue new federal contributions. *(Ministry of Attorney General, Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation)*
- 4.26** Strengthen the health and wellness partnership between Métis Nation British Columbia, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions, and support opportunities to identify and work to address shared Métis health and wellness priorities. *(Ministry of Health, Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions)*



Cultural Heritage

- 4.27 Review the principles and processes that guide the naming of municipalities and regional districts, and evolve practices to foster reconciliation in local processes. *(Ministry of Municipal Affairs)*
- 4.28 Draft a report with recommendations for how BC Parks can better reflect Indigenous Peoples' histories and cultures in provincial parks and protected areas. *(Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy)*
- 4.29 Establish an Indigenous-led working group to develop a strategy for the revitalization of Indigenous languages in B.C., including potential legislative supports. *(Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, Ministry of Education and Child Care, Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training)*
- 4.30 Support Indigenous language revitalization through sustainable funding. *(Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training)*
- 4.31 Develop full-course offerings in First Nation languages and implement the educational Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in the K-12 education system. *(Ministry of Education and Child Care)*
- 4.32 Co-develop a K-12 First Nations Language Policy and associated implementation plan for the public education system with the First Nations Education Steering Committee, including ensuring that the language and culture of the local First Nation(s) on whose territory(ies) a board of education operates schools are the ones primarily reflected in any First Nations language and culture programs and services of the board. *(Ministry of Education and Child Care)*
- 4.33 Co-develop a policy framework to support repatriation initiatives. *(Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport)*
- 4.34 Reset the relationship between the Royal BC Museum and Indigenous Peoples in B.C. by ensuring that Indigenous voices are prioritized and inform the development of narratives, exhibitions and learning programs. *(Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport)*
- 4.35 Work with First Nations to reform the *Heritage Conservation Act* to align with the UN Declaration, including shared decision-making and the protection of First Nations cultural, spiritual, and heritage sites and objects. *(Ministry of Forests, Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport)*

Economic

- 4.36 Ensure every First Nations community in B.C. has high-speed internet services. *(Ministry of Citizens' Services)*
- 4.37 Provide funding to assist Indigenous tourism businesses that have been financially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, in order to further support recovery of the Indigenous tourism sector in B.C. *(Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport)*
- 4.38 Provide investments to Indigenous Tourism B.C. to support Indigenous tourism, Indigenous job creation, preservation of Indigenous languages, celebration of Indigenous cultures and the stewardship of territories, and to tell the stories of Indigenous Peoples in B.C. in their own words. *(Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport)*

- 4.39 Work with the Province's Economic Trusts and First Nation partners to develop a mechanism that ensures inclusion of First Nations at a regional decision-making level. *(Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation)*
- 4.40 Ensure Indigenous collaboration in the development and implementation of the BC Economic Plan, including a technology and innovation roadmap. *(Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation)*
- 4.41 Work with First Nations, Métis chartered communities and urban Indigenous organizations to provide funding for self-determined, community-led programs for Indigenous Peoples to upgrade skills, obtain credentials, secure employment, and develop and support community economies. *(Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training, Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction)*
- 4.42 Co-develop economic metrics to help evaluate progress as reconciliation is advanced. The baseline data will begin to address the persistent gap in Indigenous-specific economic metrics and through this co-designed effort, build a comprehensive set of data to measure Indigenous economic well-being and track progress over time. *(Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation, Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation)*
- 4.43 Co-develop recommendations on strategic policies and initiatives for clean and sustainable energy. This includes identifying and supporting First Nations-led clean energy opportunities related to CleanBC, the Comprehensive Review of BC Hydro, and the BC Utilities Commission Inquiry on the Regulation of Indigenous Utilities. *(Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation)*
- 4.44 Review, evaluate and improve B.C.'s Indigenous Youth Internship Program. *(Public Service Agency)*
- 4.45 Prioritize and increase the number of technology sector training opportunities for Indigenous Peoples and other groups currently under-represented in B.C.'s technology sector. *(Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation)*
- 4.46 Improve economic supports for Indigenous workers and employers by increasing access for Indigenous clients to the Ministry of Labour's services and programs, including employment standards, workers' compensation and workplace safety. *(Ministry of Labour)*
- 4.47 Advance a collaborative approach to cannabis-related governance and jurisdiction between First Nations and the Province that reflects common objectives to protect youth, prioritize public health and safety, strengthen First Nations governance capacity and secure economic benefits for First Nations. *(Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General)*
- 4.48 Work with the B.C. Indigenous Advisory Council on Agriculture and Food and other Indigenous partners to identify opportunities to strengthen Indigenous food systems and increase Indigenous participation in the agriculture and food sector. *(Ministry of Agriculture and Food)*
- 4.49 Review existing provincial mandates to enhance treaty and self-governing Nations' fiscal capacity to deliver services to their citizens. *(Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation)*

ACCOUNTABILITY AND IMPLEMENTATION

The Province's development of the action plan was undertaken in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples in B.C. and centred around the shared understandings outlined on page 6. The process to implement the action plan will be approached in the same way: comprehensive, distinctions-based, diverse, legally plural, principled, cooperative, enabling, impactful and transparent.

Ministries across government will continue to work in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples across the province to implement actions identified in this plan, reflecting our mutual commitment to work together in partnership. Identified ministries are accountable for their actions as well as ensuring effective monitoring and reporting on progress. As the action plan is province-wide in scope, it requires an all-of-government approach with coordination across ministries to support implementation.

The Province will work with Indigenous Peoples to identify suitable tools, indicators and measures for monitoring, assessing and reporting progress on implementation of the Declaration Act. Progress under the action plan will be reviewed on an annual basis and publicly reported in an annual report that will be prepared consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples, and submitted to the B.C. Legislature by June 30 each year. The action plan will be comprehensively updated within five years.

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