

# BCAFN FNCL Engagement Plan 2023-2025

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\*\*Note - this plan is intended to be adjusted based on feedback and experiences throughout the engagement process, including advice from the Steering Committee and information gathered at the initial “What is Co-development” session. The contents of this document *should* change because we intend to listen deeply and in an ongoing way to the people we meet with.

## Project Purpose

As part of a federal government commitment to build regional and national capacity and progressively vest authority and resources for climate action in the hands of First Nations, the *Co-development of the BC First Nations Climate Leadership Agenda, Engagement and Report Writing* is a crucial opportunity to support the self-determination of diverse First Nations in BC in and beyond climate change planning. To that end, Naqsmist will provide Climate Change Engagement and Report Writing Consultation services, including research, engagement planning, facilitation, note taking and report writing that seeks to promote community-based leadership, enhance First Nations’ capacity and resilience to climate change, ensure that federal and provincial climate plans are created with meaningful First Nations input, advocate for federal and provincial investment in Indigenous climate leadership, and uphold Title, Rights, and Treaty Rights.

The following working agreement expresses our planned approach to relationships with others and with ourselves as we go through this work - it expresses our underlying philosophy about how to do work in a good way.

### **Naqsmist Working Together Agreement (NWTA)**

Naqsmist is a space that supports people to do work through storytelling, facilitation, and using tools for a decolonized approach to business, governance, and decision-making.

Naqsmist’s understanding and translation of “colonial” is work done from a place of fear and control. Naqsmist approaches all work from a place of trust, faith and love.

This agreement is our commitment to work with each other in the following ways:

**Well-being of Mind, Body and Spirit:** We will not put timelines above mental, physical, and spiritual health and well-being. We will always find ways to support each other wherever we are. We will uphold our responsibilities to each other by asking for support, being honest about what is on our hearts and minds, and not endorsing silence and shame. This process of reflective practice allows us to identify and communicate the progress of the work. We value people over deadlines, and our well-being-centered support system ensures we have the resources and capacity to deliver work by agreed-upon deadlines.

**Meaningful Inclusion:** We will do our best to practice disciplined listening and witnessing of all voices and perspectives. This includes those we don't always agree with, get along with, or understand.

**Freedom:** We will support each other and those we work with by promoting freedom in how we work with each other. We might not always understand the reasoning behind certain actions or decisions; however, we will always support one another from a place of trust.

**Validation:** We will validate and value each other for our unique gifts. Each of us will contribute from our own experiences and ways of knowing. Each team member brings value. To continue serving outside of ourselves, we must validate and value each other and work to see each other's contributions, even when they don't mirror our own ways of working and contributing.

**Personal Responsibility through Understanding Self:** We will strive to actively work from a systems-thinking approach. The work that we ask others to do is the work we must continually do ourselves. We will provide communal support to individuals who need help on our teams while also asking that individuals work to know when they might need to step back and take care of themselves so our team can continue contributing to the overall work of families, communities and nations. We will do our best to check in with ourselves to cultivate a sense of safety, connection and belonging to support each other and those we work with. We will remind each other how trauma, grief, and cumulative stress impact us and our humanness and know when to rest so these things do not impact our work with others. We will practice our trauma resilience tools to approach our work in the best way possible.

## Engagement Approach

Our engagement approach is founded on experience conducting several previous engagements with rights and title holders in BC at a similar scale. The following are essential components of our approach and how we intend to uphold the 9 Guiding Principles throughout this process:

### UNDRIP

- In all of our work, we strive to adhere to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and we recognize that the BC First Nations Climate Strategy and Action Plan emphasizes articles 18, 25, 26, 28, 29, 32 and 39. In addition, we believe articles 3, 4, 5, and 22 are particularly important to climate-related work with Indigenous communities.

### First Nations Knowledge Systems and Ethical Space

- We use Cultivating Safe Spaces (CSS) as a framework to reaffirm the importance of including all voices in decision-making and listening to one another to make good decisions. Similar to Ethical Space, we use CSS as the setting in which we will have discussions that require honouring both Indigenous and western knowledge systems.

Building a bridge between both knowledge systems requires a deep understanding of self and a willingness to listen and understand a different perspective from your own. More details on CSS can be found under the [Engagement Process](#).

- Governance is community-driven and Nation-based. Knowledge, language, and the land are interconnected. Governance comes from language and a relationship with the land. Engagements will take place at a regional level, emphasizing local languages as a tool for understanding the governance relationships between First Nations and instructions for how to interact with the Land.
- Some questions in breakouts may focus on particular words in languages that are meaningful to the topic at hand; local language speakers will be invited to present relevant aspects of the language of a given region to the work.
- Questions will also focus on the specific mechanisms in government that can be addressed to better support First Nations self-determination in climate governance.

### **Legacy of colonization and land dispossession**

- The engagement questions and final report will recognize and honour the legacy of colonization and land dispossession, as this is the reason for the current conditions of Indigenous Peoples and their land. The FNCL Agenda and UNDRIP will serve as reminders of the tragic events of Canada's history but also show and focus on the steps forward to heal the people and land for the next seven generations.

### **Direct engagement with rights and title holders**

- Throughout this process there will be an emphasis on attempting to engage all 204 First Nations in BC. This is always challenging, but we intend to use the many different engagement platforms as an opportunity to reach groups that do not always participate. Focus groups for 2SLGBTQQIA+, Elders Gatherings, Youth sessions, and leveraging 1:1 interviews and written submissions are opportunities to target certain Nations/groups of people that we have not heard from yet. As we move through each engagement, we will reflect on who is missing and how we can tailor future sessions in order to reach missing groups.

### **Transparency**

- We share our notes and reports transparently (anonymously) as soon possible after engagement sessions to ensure that participants can see their information and so that they might be able to take some learnings away from the sessions. We share our work with communities to provide benefits through engagements rather than just simply extracting information.
- The BCAFN FNCL Steering committee will be notified of any changes in the scope of work, and we will request their feedback on process, approach, and methodologies throughout the project, knowing this will be an ever-evolving process.

### **Clear Recommendations**

- Deep consideration will be taken when developing guiding questions so that conversations lead to recommendations that are specific enough to influence concrete government action.
- We strive to make meaningful recommendations based on respect for the diversity of all 204 First Nations in BC. We strive to listen deeply and with discipline to participants and hear what they are saying so that we can represent their views honestly in our reports.
- We strive to create recommendations that uphold and prioritize Indigenous Knowledge while recognizing that the system confines opportunities for change and thus we intend to make every effort to ensure recommendations are targeted and tailored for maximum impact.

### **Trust and Confidentiality**

- The BCAFN will own the final work products on behalf of BC First Nations; no information gathered during this process will at any point be deemed to be owned by the Canadian government.
- Information collected but not included in the work products will be safely stored (but not owned) on Naqsmist servers (located outside Canada), and participants may request to remove any of their information from our system indefinitely.
- Data will be stored safely on Naqsmist's Google Drive (servers outside Canada). No participant identifying information will be shared with a wider audience unless explicitly requested by a participant. Participants may request access to the anonymized session notes at any time after the completion of the sessions and may request certain data be removed from these notes indefinitely.
- We include a [consent statement](#) in our session agendas advising participants of our informed consent protocols, including our approach to OCAP principles.
- No information shared by any steering committee members will be shared outside of that setting; all information contributed by SC members will be deemed to be confidential.

### **Meaningful Involvement**

- We will ensure all voices from the BC Steering Committee are heard and included in our processes and approaches.
- We will respect the time we have with the SC and ensure we are prepared and transparent with any relevant documents or changes to the process that we require their feedback on.
- We will seek participation from as many BC First Nations as possible and will do our best to practice disciplined listening and witnessing of all voices and perspectives. This includes those we don't always agree with, get along with, or understand.
- Our processes will seek to energize and give back to participants rather than simply extract information; this will be done by emphasizing language, Indigenous processes, and Indigenous ways of being and knowing.
- Our recommendations will be created with an emphasis on maximum impact so that the voices of participants are strengthened as they move into the cabinet review process.

- Where there are inherent limitations to what is possible in this process, we will seek to be transparent with participants so that they can participate with informed consent.

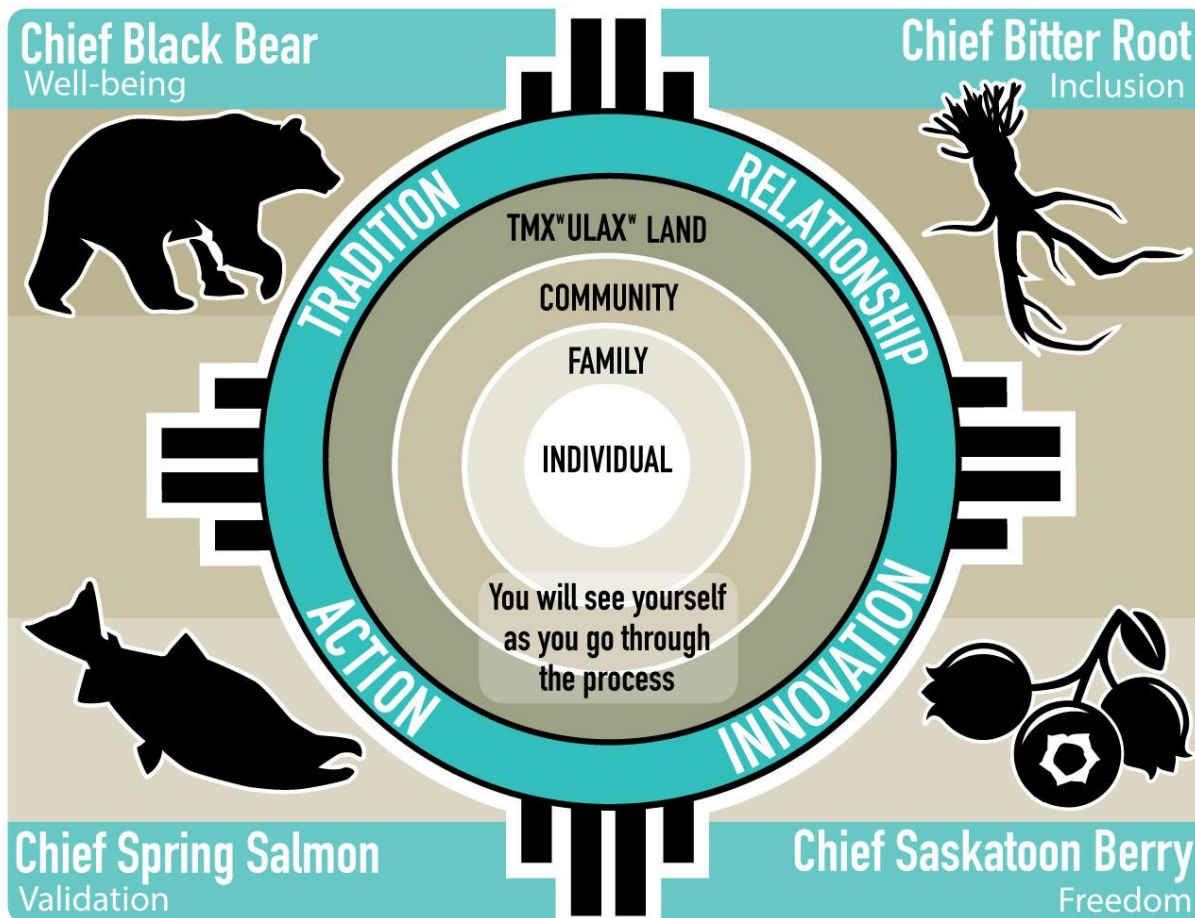
### **Holistic Viewpoints**

- Our guiding questions will include recognition and understanding of Indigenous knowledge and traditions, recognizing that these are not single issues but that they are all interconnected. Everything relates back to the Land; we believe that you can measure the health of all living beings and the problems they are experiencing by the current health of the land. All our work is interconnected, and this belief will guide our question development and recommendations.
- We will use and build upon previous reports and engagements when developing our guiding questions. We recognize the amount of information that already exists when it comes to Indigenous climate needs, and want to ensure we are respectful of the time First Nations are giving us by not asking questions that have already been asked, ultimately, not contributing to engagement fatigue.

## **Engagement Process**

We use **transformative storytelling and whole systems healing** to build confidence and promote feelings of safety within individuals, teams, organizations and communities in order to promote good governance. We help guide people through conflict, trauma, grief and disconnect and share our processes and tools for people to use so they can improve the way they show up in their personal and work lives to solve problems and contribute to change in an effective and meaningful way.

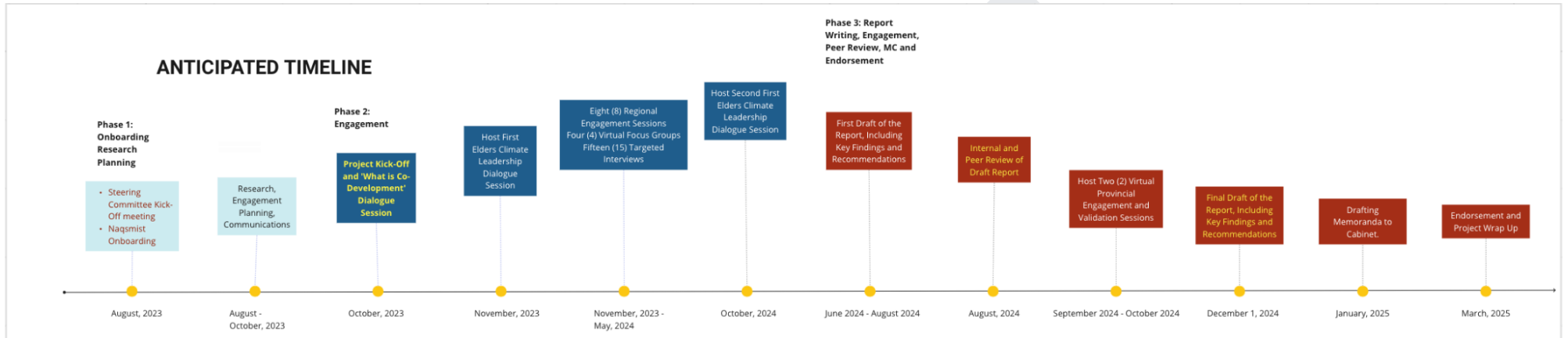
**Cultivating Safe Spaces (CSS)** is a decolonization/trauma-informed practice training in which our facilitators, writers, and project team are trained. We use CSS as a framework to reaffirm how important it is for us to include all voices in decision-making and how to listen to each other so we can make good decisions. There are very specific protocols that we set out at the beginning of our discussions that allow us to honour one another's voices in our deliberation. Through this process, we acknowledge that we all have different perspectives, experiences, and ways of doing things but that each voice is important.



The engagement sessions will be facilitated by either **Elaine Alec** or **Kyle Alec** with support from our projects team. Local Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and/or Language Speakers will be invited to open and close the space to honour the jurisdiction of First Nations Rights and Title Holders, and local cultural support will be provided during each engagement. We hope to gain access to local Language Speakers who can help us focus on language as a tool for governance - a key aspect of our engagement questions. Participants will choose which perspective group they would like to participate in, and each perspective table will have one small group facilitator taking notes. These discussions will be guided by questions that are provided before each session. However, this is not a concrete agenda; conversations will move where the groups see fit. One important thing to note is that apart from the 7 in-person regional engagement sessions, the first Elders Gathering, and the kick-off/co-development session, the other engagement activities may be subject to change based on learnings throughout the course of the process to ensure that the co-development/engagement process is responsive and adaptable.

Our detailed engagement approach is listed below, starting with a broad timeline.

# Timeframe



Note: Broad engagements (regional, virtual focus groups, and interviews) will be informed by co-development session and Knowledge Keepers Gathering.



# Engagement Methods

## i. One (1) Co-Development Kick-Off Session

**Objective:** We recognize that true co-development cannot be achieved until First Nations have equal decision-making power, and would like to centre this session around defining what “meaningful engagement” is for First Nations in BC, and seek to find more appropriate terminology for “co-development with First Nations” This will further inform the engagement plan and the question development throughout engagements and recommendations in the final WWHR.

**Who:** All 204 First Nations, Self-government and Treaty Nations, Rights and title holders  
- Access through BCAFN contacts, Band/National governments, social media

**Methods:** Our facilitators and systems thinkers will collaborate with BCAFN staff and the steering committee to develop questions that set the stage for moving the co-development conversation forward from a strengths-based approach, taking into account research and cutting-edge information on co-development processes. In the lead-up to the co-development session and until shortly after its completion, we will invite participants to provide feedback on the co-development of the Climate Agenda via invitations to make suggestions for the agenda and by providing opportunities to follow up after the session with additional thoughts or contributions. This is to ensure accessibility for participants with varying technical backgrounds and to ensure that participants are involved in developing the process with us. While our engagements themselves are rooted in consensus-based processes, we recognize that the political complexity and diversity among the 204 BC First Nations presents a challenge for developing consensus mechanisms and ultimately arriving at concrete decisions. From the first kickoff session, we will invite community feedback to iterate what consensus might look like during the approvals and decision-making processes to take place later in this work. Elaine Alec will host the virtual co-development session.

**Deliverables:**

- Roll-up notes (anonymized, edited for redundancy, and shared on the project website)
- What we heard summary report
  - Key findings;
  - Recommendations that will influence the remainder of the co-development/engagement process; and
  - Recommendations for the final BCFNCL Agenda.

## ii. Two (2) Elders gatherings

**Objective:** To gather Elders and Knowledge Keepers to identify and provide guidance and leadership to individuals, communities, governments, and society for the future of Lands and Waters. This gathering will inform all remaining engagement sessions.

**Methods:**

Elders Gathering One: Elder Chief Darryl Bob (St'at'imc Nation) will plan and host the first Elders' gathering in November, 2023. Naqsmist staff will attend as witnesses and note-takers in order to capture information shared and create recommendations for the co-development/engagement process and BCFNLC Agenda.

*\*We recognize the unique opportunity of being invited to witness the Elders gathering led by Darryl Bob, and therefore, will not be invoicing BCAFN for our team's time supporting that session.*

Elders Gathering Two: In-person, two-days. Naqsmist will host the session, present what has been heard so far, host discussions on themes and priority areas that have been raised, however, this session will be guided by the Elders, and our team will mostly act as witnesses and notetakers.

***\*This gathering is dependent on the budget.***

**Potential Dates:**

1. November 17-19, 2023: Darrell Bob led, Tseil-Waututh Territory
2. TBD

**Deliverables:**

- What we heard summary report including
  - Key findings;
  - Recommendations that will influence the remainder of the co-development/engagement process; and
  - Recommendations for the final BCFNCL Agenda.

**iii. Four (4) Focus Groups**

**Objective:** To delve deep into themes and key priority areas identified by the Elders Gathering, the BC First Nations Climate Strategy and Action Plan, the Steering Committee and Project team and/or participants at engagements to further provide engagement and policy direction and recommendations.

**Who:** Leaders in Indigenous climate work, specific networks within identified communities in BC such as youth or 2SLGBTQQA+ people, academics, policy experts, think tanks, etc.; Access through BCAFN contacts, Band/National governments, social media, facilitator networks.

**Method:** Based on discussions with the Steering Committee, we will determine four key themes and facilitate focus groups based on these themes. We suggest hosting two focus groups towards the start of the engagements and two focus groups towards the end of engagements to provide input into both the process and the end result. Participants will again be notified of focus group sessions at their previous engagements and via external communications from Naqsmist and BCAFN, including email and social media, with encouragement to spread to personal circles. Focus groups will host a maximum of 10 participants each.

Safe space will be cultivated for people of diverse ages and identities to participate in all of our sessions (including questions based on supporting diverse groups). However, we see the focus groups as potentially fruitful settings to have deeper conversations with specific identity groups such as women, 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, people with disabilities, and children/youth. They may also present an opportunity to engage political and/or funding experts to host deep discussions on the nature of BC First Nations' structural and systemic relationships with the federal government, among other things and with attention to the SC's priorities.

Some **potential** focus group topic areas:

<b>Before In-person engagements (November 2023)</b>	<b>After in-person engagements (May-June 2024)</b>
1. 2SLGBTQQIA+ (facilitator - Tiaré Lani)	3. Policy and Governance (facilitator TBD)
2. Healing and governance between First Nations (facilitator - Tiaré Lani)	4. TBD - Language revitalization and climate action? (Facilitator TBD)

**Deliverables:**

- Roll-up notes (anonymized, edited for redundancy, and shared on the project website)

iv. (7) Regional/Language Group-Based Engagements

**Objective:** Based on what was learned at the Knowledge Keepers Gathering, participants will be asked to identify and provide priority actions, policy directions, and concrete recommendations to the federal government for implementing and advancing the FNCL Agenda in BC, ensuring the guiding principles are upheld (Appendix 1 in BCAFN RFP).

**Who:** All 204 First Nations, Self-government and Treaty Nations, Rights and title holders

- Access through BCAFN contacts, Band/National governments, social media;
- Local Knowledge Keepers present to open session and share stories on/in the language around the topic at hand and introduce the group and facilitators to local protocols to ensure respect for each Nations/region's sovereignty.
- Chiefs, Leaders, Technicians, Youth, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, (all First Nations community members).

**Methods:** In person. We intend to follow a language and place-based approach to the in-person engagement sessions and will take direction from the Steering Committee on the specifics of locations and distribution of sessions. Subject to change based on SC feedback, we intend to conduct our in-person sessions in a central location within each of BC's seven major language families: Wakashan, Salishan, Tsimshianic, Athabaskan-Eyak-Tlingit/Na-Dene, X̱aayda Kil, Ktunaxa, and Algonquian. The locations **proposed (subject to change)** are as follows:

1. Salishan - Squamish, Fraser Valley, TBD
2. Interior Salishan - Kamloops
3. Athabaskan-Eyak-Tlingit/Na-Dene - Prince George
4. Algonquian - Fort St. John
5. Ktunaxa - Cranbrook
6. Tsimshianic - Prince Rupert
7. Wakashan - Campbell River
8. X̱aayda Ki - Daajing Giids/Sandspit

Since engagements typically gain popularity as the process unfolds, we will work with the SC to choose the locations and dates to strategically increase participation from various areas as more and more people hear of this work via word of mouth, potentially starting with larger centres and filtering through smaller locations in order to give more notice to areas with more rural and smaller participant groups. We will utilize email and social media and encourage the circulation of the invitations to expand its reach.

**Deliverables:**

- Roll-up notes (anonymized, edited for redundancy, and shared on the project website)
- Summary Report
  - Key findings
  - Recommendations

#### v. Fifteen (15) Interviews

**Objective:** To further efforts to reach all 204 Nations and any other voices missed throughout the engagements. Also presents an opportunity to speak to key regional climate and Indigenous Knowledge experts as part of ongoing iterations of the process itself, not just the end goal of receiving feedback on the Climate Agenda.

**Who:** First Nations organizations, key leaders, and interested First Nations communities, particularly those that have not participated in the engagement sessions.

**Method:** Based on research conducted in the early phases of the work, we will identify Nations that have not been amply involved in previous rounds of engagement and/or individuals identified as beneficial contributors, and reach out directly for interviews. BCAFN will provide specific contacts from whom they would like to hear, and Naqsmist will conduct the interviews.

**Deliverables:**

- Roll-up notes (anonymized, edited for redundancy, and shared on the project website)
  - Key findings
  - Recommendatinons

## vi. Twenty (20) Written Feedback Submissions

**Objective:** To offer another way of engaging anyone who could not attend in-person or who wanted to offer more input post engagement, in particular First Nations governments, leaders, experts, or identified voices whose perspectives BCAFN would like to prioritize in the engagements

**Method:** We typically offer opportunities for written submissions for participants to follow up after sessions, but in this case, we will focus more specifically outside of session participants to Nations or individuals who may not have had access to the engagement events but who have ideas to contribute to the work.

**Who:** First Nations governments and organizations with particular interests/suggestions for the BC FN Climate Leadership Agenda. Based on an invitation to submit an Expression of Interest as part of initial invite and ongoing invitation reminders throughout the process. Decisions on who to involve, if more respondents than 15, will be determined by the project team and steering committee based on expressions of interest.

**Deliverables:**

- Roll-up notes (anonymized, edited for redundancy, and shared on the project website);
- Incorporating themes and recommendations into BC FNLC Climate Agenda Report.

## vii. Two (2) virtual engagement sessions to validate recommendations

**Objective:** To validate the themes and recommendations that emerged from the engagements.

**Who:** Past Engagement Participants and Interested BC First Nations who have not yet participated

**Method:** Two virtual engagement sessions will be hosted upon completion of the Draft What We Heard Report and Recommendations for the broad engagement series. As we have done in the past, we will have some of our facilitating team do witness sharing as part of a practice of oral tradition. This reflects the deep responsibility of witnesses to accurately remember and share information from sessions. We will also review recommendations in detail and ensure that participants have opportunities to provide feedback in an effort to move towards consensus on the Climate Agenda.

**Deliverables:**

- Roll-up notes (anonymized, edited for redundancy, and shared on the project website)

## viii. Feedback and Peer Review of Draft Report/Recommendations

The BCAFN project team will identify peer reviewers from around BC from a diversity of First Nations who will be paid honorariums for time spent providing comments on the Draft Report. Naqsmist will collect and integrate their feedback as part of the writing process.

- Coordinate peer review process with First Nations Experts

## Ownership, Control, Access, Possession (OCAP) Principles and Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC)

We will always include a statement on all of our agendas about OCAP Principles and how we store and use the data collected from our engagement sessions. We have included a sample statement below.

### OCAP Principles

- Naqsmist strives to adhere to the principles of ownership, control, access, and possession, as the First Nations Data Governance Initiative outlines. Information collected during these sessions will support the BCAFN, the government of Canada, and Indigenous communities and organizations in advancing the co-development of the BC FNCL Agenda. What We Heard Reports and raw session notes will be shared anonymously via email with participants from the sessions, on Naqsmist's public project website, BCAFN's project website, and in a What We Heard Report. The final BC FNCL Agenda will be used by the government of Canada to inform the continued development of the Canada-wide FNCL Agenda. Additionally, all What We Heard Reports from the engagements and all anonymized notes will be stored on Naqsmist's Google Drive and will be accessible by request indefinitely. If you would like to advise us on how to use, store, or share your data from these sessions, please do not hesitate to reach out to [ylan@naqsmist.com](mailto:ylan@naqsmist.com)

### Safely Sharing Information

- During our engagements, we typically collect information that could indirectly identify participants, such as names of locations. For that reason, if, during the sessions, you feel uncomfortable with any of the information you share reaching a wider audience (including personal stories, location information, Traditional Knowledge, or other information you would like to keep private), please let our facilitators know. We can exclude this information from our notes/and/or reports.

### Removal of Information

- Participants will have opportunities to request the removal of information from the notes once it has been recorded. We will send all raw notes from sessions back to the participants that attended and will give 1-2 weeks for review. That being said, if at any point during the engagement period, you decide that any information you have shared with us should be removed from our website, database and/or Final Reports, please let us know, and we will do our best to accommodate that request. After **DATE\*\***, we are unable to remove information from the report, which will become the it is ownership of BCAFN.

## Guiding Questions - Process

This project is a federally-funded, BCAFN-led initiative where we are hoping to leverage the BC First Nations Climate Strategy and Action Plan as well as other federal plans, budgets, and UNDRIP in order to provide a roadmap and policy direction by completing the following project objectives:

1. Implement the BC FN Climate Strategy. Define First Nations climate priorities for climate action in BC while respecting self-determination and upholding inherent and constitutionally protected title, rights, and treaty rights.
2. Strengthen the BC FN Climate Strategy by validating the priority objectives and actions to support the Strategy's implementation (particularly Themes 1.1, 1.2, 1.4 and 2.3).
3. Transfer of federal funding. Identify barriers and opportunities to address First Nations' challenges in accessing federal climate funding and provide recommendations.
4. Collaborative decision-making on climate. Identify barriers and opportunities for First Nations' participation in federal climate governance, decision-making and policy development and provide recommendations.
5. Addressing barriers to climate action. Provide recommendations for a long-term path forward to consolidate First Nations climate leadership in BC as outlined in the vision statement presented in the BC FN Climate Strategy.
6. Supporting capacity, expertise, and governance. Provide recommendations on how the federal government could provide sustained support to help build/grow the capacity, expertise, institutions, and/or other supports necessary to implement First Nations climate actions.
7. First Nations knowledge systems, Laws and Languages. Provide recommendations on how the federal government:
  - a. support the preservation and use of First Nations Knowledge, laws and languages as a foundation to build climate resilience;
  - b. include Indigenous Knowledge in climate policy development and action.

In short, the goals of this project are less about validating the BCFNCSAP recommendations (although one aspect of this work is seeking to prioritize these) and more about leveraging that work to create meaningful pathways for change at the federal level in order to get better climate change support and stand up FN governance on climate change in BC. Therefore recommendations that ultimately flow from this work will be almost entirely directed toward federal processes with the intent to support a memorandum to the cabinet for a funding dispersal and policy change. In other words, from a systems thinking perspective, we are seeking to understand the federal-BC First Nations funding and decision-making pathways and advance First Nations priorities within this specific "ecosystem".

On the other hand, in all of our work, we seek to serve First Nations communities by not simply focusing on opportunities confined to colonial structures but rather by expanding the context of conversations to include questions of First Nations governance, identity, healing, and decolonizing.

These understandings will inform our question development process, wherein we will iteratively establish engagement questions in collaboration with the BCAFN project team and the SC. Questions and the specific agenda for each session will be drafted and sent to participants one week prior to each session so that participants have the opportunity to review the content and provide feedback if they wish.

DRAFT