



BC First Nations Climate Strategy and Action Plan

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Background

In 2019, Chiefs in BC mandated the First Nations Leadership Council to prepare a draft **First Nations Climate Strategy and Action Plan** for the Chiefs' review and approval.

(Resolutions: BCAFN Resolution No. 4/2019 & UBCIC Resolution 2019-02)



The resolutions state that the climate strategy will be:

- aligned with United Nations' (IPCC) recommendations on greenhouse gas emission reductions
- based on Indigenous Knowledge and worldviews, and
- co-created with First Nations in BC.



Context for a First Nations Climate Strategy

First Nations Climate Strategy and Action Plan will address three issues related to the current context:

1

Climate crisis and its impacts on First Nations

2

Protection of First Nations' inherent Rights and Title through Indigenous Climate Leadership

3

Current political and legislative context.



Context for a First Nations Climate Strategy

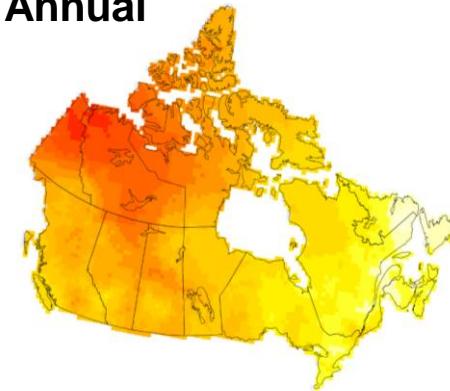
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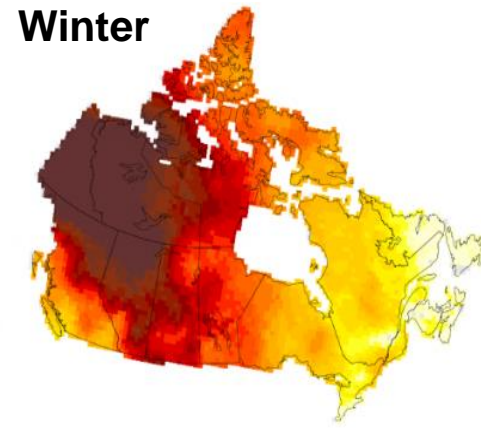
- GHG emissions in the atmosphere are producing global warming;
- The effects of global warming impact First Nations and threaten our ways of life;
- Canada's and BC's GHG emissions are increasing.

Annual



Annual average temperature increased by **1.7°C** (1948 - 2016)

Winter



Winter average temperature increased by **3.3°C**

Source: Canada's Changing Climate Report (2019)



The Strategy and Action Plan needs to:

- Strengthen **Indigenous climate leadership** to build capacity, understanding and resilience in First Nation communities;
- Recognize the **socio-economic gaps** and other legacies of colonization;
- Help **reduce greenhouse gas emissions**; and
- **Build off the experiences and lessons** from many communities who have already started. **There are already many First Nation climate champions in BC.**

Context for a First Nations Climate Strategy

First Nations Climate Strategy and Action Plan will address three issues related to the current context:

1

Climate crisis and its impacts on First Nations

First Nations play a key role in addressing the climate crisis.



2

Protection of First Nations' inherent Rights and Title through Indigenous Climate Leadership

The Strategy and Action Plan will communicate to governments that just and effective climate action requires:

- Recognizing that **securing First Nations' inherent jurisdiction** over lands and territories, and the **right to self-determination**, are **priorities** in any **climate action** discussion;
- **Being rooted** in First Nations' **beliefs, values, and respect for Mother Earth** (a holistic and precautionary approach).
- **Incorporating Indigenous Knowledge** to help guide climate emergency responses

3

Current political and legislative context.

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The Strategy and Action Plan needs to respond to the opportunities coming from:

- **First Nation recognition of the climate emergency:** In July 2019, AFN Chiefs-in-Assembly unanimously declared a Global Climate Emergency.
- **Legislative context:** B.C *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People Act*, and federal commitment to pass UN Declaration legislation are opportunities to align climate legislation and policies with Indigenous rights to:
 - position climate action as a rights-based activity.
 - elevate the role of First Nations to fight climate change while respecting our inherent Rights,
 - Ensure co-development of climate legislation and policies and implementation through government-to-government partnerships.
- **The implementation of BC and Canada's plans to meet climate goals.** There are opportunities to:
 - ensure that climate planning protects our lands, resources, culture and Indigenous knowledge;
 - support Indigenous climate leadership; and
 - develop clean economic opportunities post-pandemic.

Timeline for Development

Endorsement & Public Distribution

- The FNLC will prepare a **final draft** of the BCFNCSAP with the support of BC First Nations and the Advisory Group.
- The BCFNCSAP will be presented to Chiefs in their respective Assemblies for **approval via resolutions**.
- The BCFNCSAP will be made public and for will be **presented to partners**.
- The FNLC Project Team will identify next steps to establish a basis for BCFNCSAP **implementation**.

BCFNCSAP Draft #2

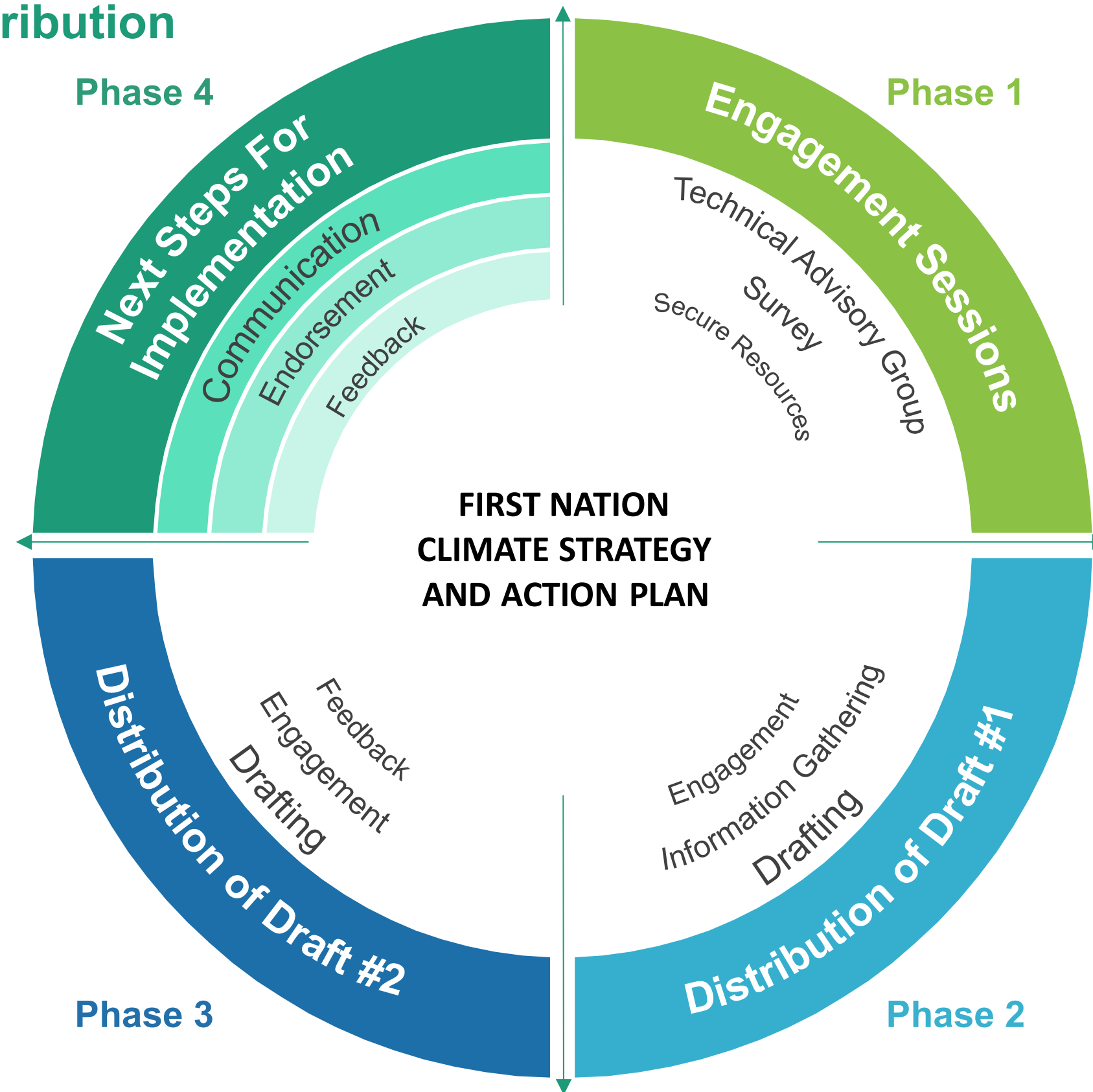
- BC First Nation and Advisory Group **feedback** re Draft #1 will be incorporated to produce Draft #2.
- There will be **ongoing engagement** throughout the scope of the project.
- Draft #2 will be reviewed by the FNLC Project Team and **distributed** to BC First Nations and the Advisory Group for feedback.

Preliminary Development

- The **Climate Emergency Survey** will seek to be delivered to gather concerns, challenges, priorities and perspectives to inform the first draft of the BCFNCSAP.
- A **First Nation Climate Action Technical Advisory Group** (“Advisory Group”) will be established. A call for membership will be distributed.
- The FNLC will conduct 3 **community engagement sessions** which will proceed throughout February 2021.

BCFNCSAP Draft #1

- There will be **ongoing engagement** throughout the scope of the project with First Nation leadership and relevant partners.
- Draft #1 will be made with the **information gathered** from Survey data, engagement, and research and policy review conducted by the Project Team.
- Draft #1 will be **distributed** to BC First Nations and the Advisory Group for feedback.



Engagement Approach and Activities

Climate Emergency Survey

- Aug and Sept of 2019.
- Identified First Nation perspectives on impacts, concerns, barriers, and priorities re climate change.
- Participation in the Survey came from 139 First Nations and Tribal Councils across all eight regions of BC. Received 221 total responses from Chiefs and Councillors, technicians, Elders, members and First nation staff.
- The data from this survey will inform the first draft and further development of the Strategy.

First Nation Technical Advisory Group

- FNLC will be convening and establishing the Advisory Group to assist in the delivery of the Strategy and Action Plan.
- Group will review and provide feedback on the first, second and final drafts of the Strategy while also liaising with the FNLC and other relevant partners on an ongoing basis.
- A call for interested was sent out in January. The FNLC received 12 submissions and will be appointment membership in February.

Community Engagement Sessions

- FNLC conducted regional community engagement sessions on Feb 5, 12 and 16th.
- During the two-hour virtual sessions, participants received background information regarding the project and participants discussed priorities re greenhouse emission reduction and climate adaptation initiatives.
- The sessions served to further support First Nations in developing their own strategies and plans to implement responses to climate issues.

Chiefs-in-Assembly Meetings

- FNLC Project Team will provide updates regarding project development, status, and next steps at the: FNS, UBCIC and BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly meetings throughout February and March 2021.

Individual Meetings

- FNLC will continuously provide the opportunity for individual one-on-one meetings with First Nation leadership and/or staff who were unable to attend engagement sessions or preferred this form of engagement.
- FNLC will also engage with, among others, First Nation orgs, leadership, staff, traditional knowledge keepers, academics and experts.

Provincial Discussions

- FNLC will present a final version of the strategy to the province of BC, once endorsed via resolutions.
- FNLC will work with the province and other potential partners to identify the important steps for implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan.

COVID-19 CONSIDERATIONS: COVID-19 introduced sudden impacts to Indigenous Peoples around the world, including First Nations in BC. If COVID-19 cases continue to rise, it may be required to postpone currently scheduled engagement initiatives as well as the Project's Community Engagement Sessions. As a result, Project development, engagement activities and delivery will be delayed.

Draft Guiding Principles

Indigenous Sovereignty

First Nations are the original stewards of the lands. Prior to settler arrival, First Nations lived on the land with their own laws, territories, economies and societies. First Nations cared for and protected their traditional lands and resources, governed their individual communities, and used their own laws and legal traditions. The Crown continues to assert its assumed sovereignty over First Nations and their territories. The Crown must recognize and respect First Nation Title, Rights and Treaty rights, hereditary and elected leadership systems of individual Nations, and the jurisdiction and authority held by First Nations in varying contexts including climate action. Securing First Nation's inherent jurisdiction over lands and territories and the right to self-determination are priorities in climate action discussion. Crown climate initiatives must respect and recognize the above.

Draft Guiding Principles

Culture and Tradition

Historic and ongoing colonial practices impact First Nations' ability to share and protect Traditional Knowledge, culture, values, and legal orders. It is essential to protect and share this knowledge in the context of climate change. The strength of this knowledge must be recognized and implemented in developing government and Indigenous climate strategies and action items. We must also facilitate intergenerational knowledge sharing with First Nation youth in order to preserve this information and prepare future generations for the ramifications of climate change. We must also respect and recognize that such knowledge, protocols, and practices are specific to each individual Nation and community.

Draft Guiding Principles

Guardianship and Stewardship

We have a collective responsibility to recognize the climate emergency with an urgency to do all that we can to maintain the integrity and functionality of the environment and develop a sustainable economy. This includes helping to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions from our activities, including those related to economic development and adapting to current and projected climate impacts. In doing so, it is important to consider reciprocity, restoration, cooperation and collaboration with the land and waters. When making decisions, environmental stewardship must strive to also protect and ensure ecosystem health and stability for seven generations to come. Guardianship and Stewardship must be conducted through a holistic and pre-cautionary approach.

Draft Guiding Principles

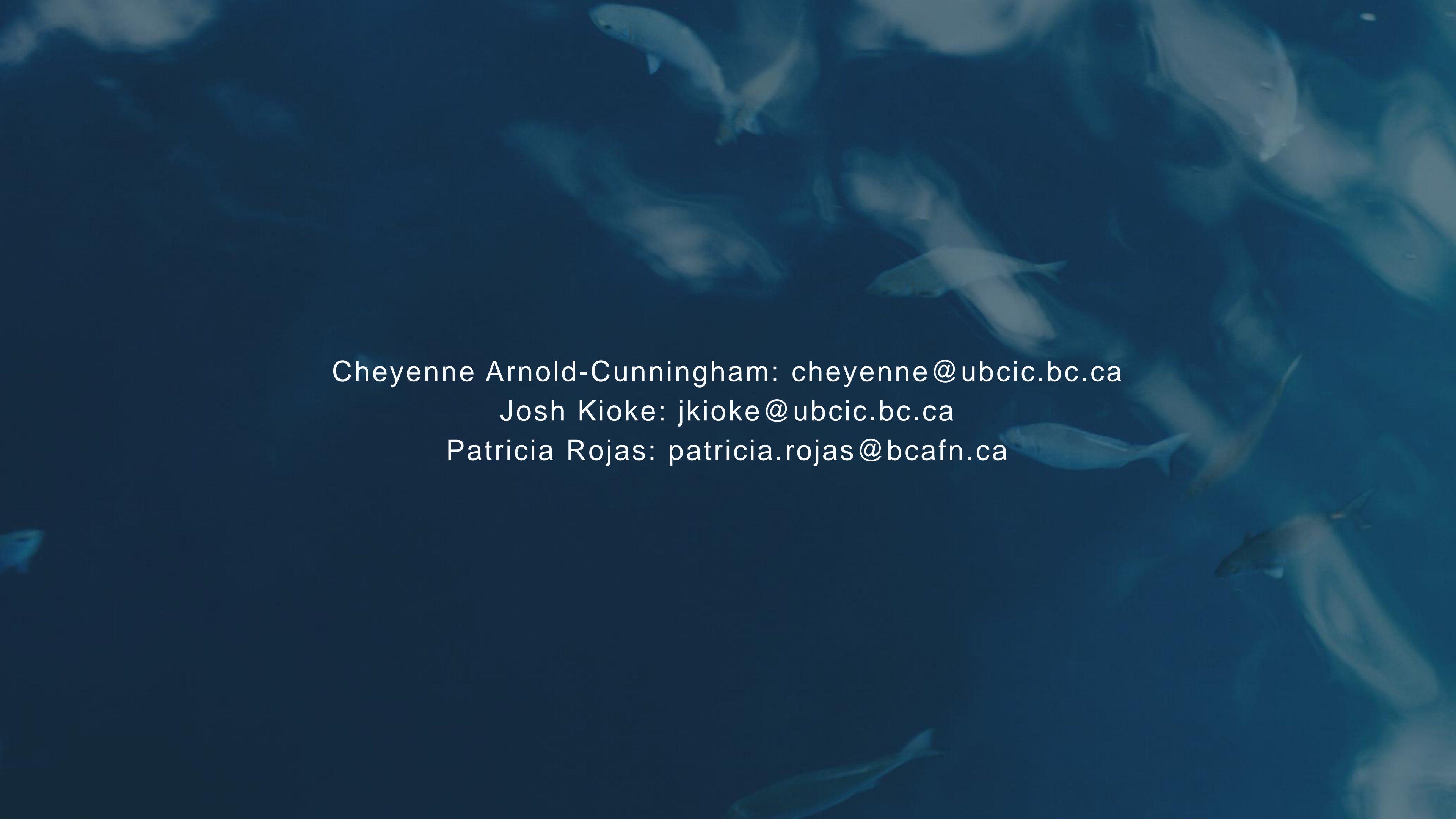
Collaboration and Partnership

Climate change is an issue that transcends jurisdictional boundaries - mere consultation on climate initiatives is not sufficient. There must be collaboration and partnership between First Nations, the Crown, and corporations. Past and present harms must be addressed and acknowledged as an essential part of developing accountable relations. There must also be recognition and implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, BC's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, and other federal legislation that could emerge. It must be recognized that First Nations come to the table with the jurisdiction and authority to manage and control their territories, to lead climate initiatives and responses, and to be part of policy and legislative development. The opportunities for collaboration and partnership within communities and between Nations must also be developed.

Draft Guiding Principles

Climate Resiliency

First Nations in British Columbia are climate leaders. Legacies of colonization and current colonial practices limit First Nation jurisdiction and capacity, yet First Nations continue to advocate for the protection of their lands, waters, traditional foods and cultural identity. We must work to strengthen our capacity and build up resilience to face current and future climate impacts. This includes renewing a strengthened identity and culture, recovering our languages and ensuring our rightful place in a fair and clean economy.



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