

BRIEFING NOTE

TO: BCAFN Chiefs in Assembly
FROM: FNLC Project Team
DATE: March 3-4, 2021
RE: BC First Nations Climate Strategy and Action Plan Update

PURPOSE

To provide an update on the development of the BC First Nation Climate Strategy and Action Plan (the “**Climate Strategy and Action Plan**” or, the “**Project**” or, the “**Strategy**”).

BACKGROUND

- In 2019, First Nations leadership passed resolutions calling for the development of a BC First Nations Climate Strategy and Action Plan (UBCIC Resolution No. 2019-02: “Climate Emergency and BC First Nations Climate Emergency Plan” and BCAFN Resolution No. 04/2019: “Climate Emergency and Support for the Development of a BC First Nations Climate Change Strategy”). The FNLC has been mandated to develop the Strategy.
- In July and August 2019, the FNLC delivered an online Climate Emergency Survey (the “**Survey**”) to gather information to inform the development of the Strategy.
- In November 2020, the provincial government communicated with the FNLC regarding its support of \$350,000 for the development of the Strategy for this fiscal year. The funding allocation is being administrated by the UBCIC.
- The new conditions posed by COVID-19 compelled adjustments to the Project such as changing from in-person All-Chiefs meetings to virtual engagements sessions, and accordingly, adjustments to the budget.

CURRENT STATUS

- The Project is being led by a Project Team composed of technical representatives from the FNLC organizations and with the coordination from a Project Manager.
- A FNLC cover letter with attached communications documents were distributed to First Nations in early January 2021 announcing the initial development of the Project and inviting First Nations leadership, staff and community members to participate in the engagement activities described in more detail below.
- The Project Team conducted preliminary development work, including the hosting of the Project’s regional Community Engagement Sessions on February 5, 12 and 16. These sessions are described in more detail below. Through these sessions, the Project Team and First Nations in BC have developed guiding principles for the Strategy. Please see the “Draft Guiding Principles” document in **Appendix “A”**.
- The Project Team is currently finalizing appointment of the First Nation Technical Advisory Group (“**TAG**”) and is conducting ongoing engagement activities.

ANALYSIS

The objective of the Strategy is to identify strategies and actions to strengthen Indigenous climate leadership, to reduce vulnerability to impacts, build capacity and resilience in First Nation communities, while also aiming to reduce GHG emissions and supporting First Nations leadership in transitioning to a just, low carbon economy. The Strategy is intended to help guide climate responses while also communicating to governments and partners of priority areas. The Strategy will, in turn, remind governments and partners that climate action is possible only when co-created with First Nations in ways that protect and strengthen Title, Rights, and jurisdiction, and when Indigenous Knowledge and unique connections to territories are respectfully acknowledged and thoroughly incorporated in all aspects of climate planning and action.

The Climate Strategy and Action Plan will ensure consistency with the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* through the implementation of the *Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, as well as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call's to Action.

Project Development will take place between December 2020 and May 2021, allocated within four phases as further described in "Figure 1.0" in **Appendix "B"** and the "Overview Graphic" in **Appendix "C"**.

2. Engagement Approach

Climate Emergency Survey

To begin the development of the Strategy, the FNLC hosted a Climate Emergency Survey in August and September of 2019. The Survey identified First Nation perspectives on impacts, concerns, barriers and priorities regarding climate change. Participation in the Survey came from 139 First Nations and Tribal Councils across all eight regions of British Columbia. The data from this survey will inform the first draft and further development of the Strategy.

First Nation Climate Action Technical Advisory Group

The FNLC will be convening and establishing the TAG to advise the Project Team in the development and delivery of the Climate Strategy and Action Plan. This includes reviewing and providing feedback on the first, second and final drafts of the Strategy while also meeting with the FNLC and other relevant partners. A Call for Expression of Interest for TAG membership was distributed in early January 2021. The FNLC Project Team is currently finalizing appointment of the TAG and will be scheduling a first meeting in early March.

Community Engagement Sessions

The FNLC Project Team conducted regional community engagement sessions to inform the Climate Strategy and Action Plan. These sessions were held on February 5, 12 and 16, 2021. During the two-hour virtual sessions, participants discussed First Nation priorities on addressing climate change. By way of information sharing, these sessions strived to support First Nations in developing their own strategies and plans to implement responses to current and projected climate issues.

For more information on the structure of these engagement sessions, please see the "Agenda" in **Appendix "D"**.

Individual Meetings

The FNLC Project Team will provide the opportunity for individual, one-on-one meetings with First Nations leadership and/or staff who cannot attend the engagement sessions or prefer this form of engagement. We will also engage on an ongoing basis with, among others, First Nation organizations, First Nation leadership, staff, traditional knowledge keepers, academics, and experts.

PROJECTED NEXT STEPS

1. The Advisory Group will be established in February and will meet in early March 2021.
2. Update First Nations leadership on the development of the Strategy at the respective FNLC assemblies in February and March.
3. First draft of the Strategy to be finalized in March 2021.
4. Second draft of the Strategy to be finalized in April 2021.
5. Final draft of the Strategy to be complete between May-June 2021.
6. Approval of Climate Strategy and Action Plan via Resolutions in September 2021.

APPENDIX “A” Draft Guiding Principles

BC First Nations Climate Strategy and Action Plan Draft Guiding Principles

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. 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.

APPENDIX “B”
Figure 1.0

BC FIRST NATIONS CLIMATE STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN (BCFNCSAP)*

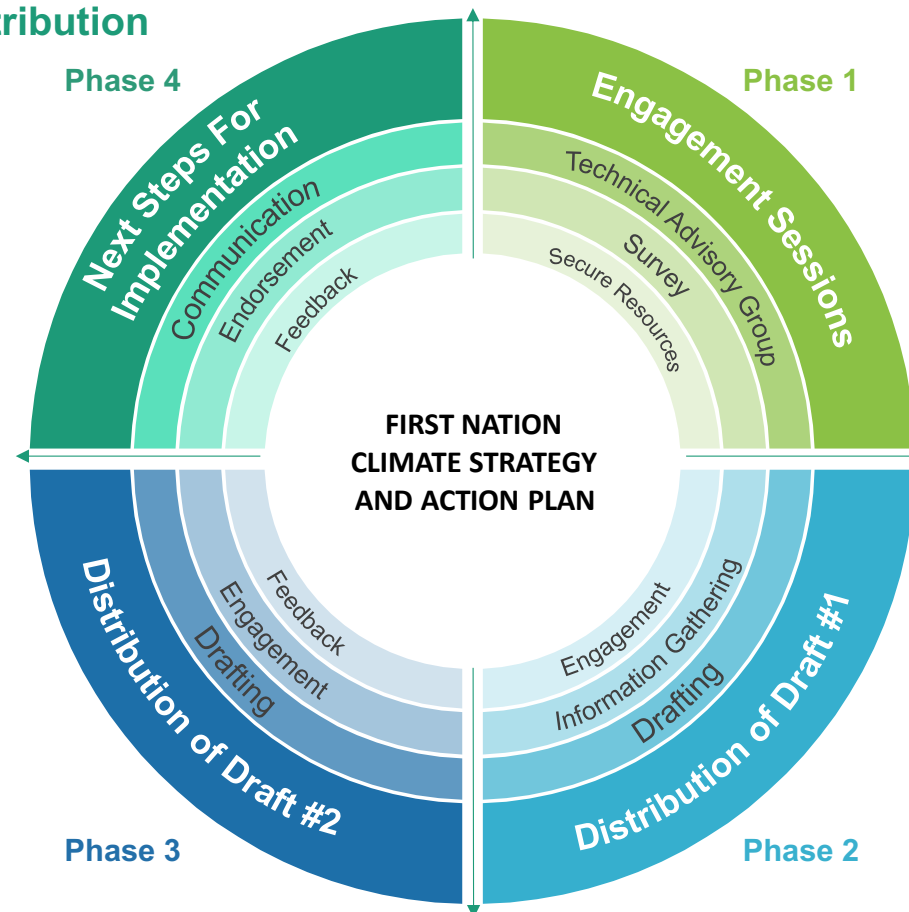
PHASE OVERVIEW

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.

* This work is mandated by: BCAF Resolution 04/2019; and UBCIC Resolution 2019-02

First Nations in BC recognized the climate emergency through resolutions to mandate the First Nations Leadership Council (BCAFN, UBCIC, FNS) to develop a

BC FIRST NATIONS CLIMATE STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN



- aligned with IPCC recommendations
- aligned with Indigenous knowledge and worldviews
- co-created with First Nations in BC



Why a BC First Nation Climate Strategy and Action Plan?

- Address the climate crisis/emergency
- First Nations in BC are climate leaders
- Build capacity and resiliency within communities
- Protect Title and Rights
- Facilitate First Nation authority and jurisdiction

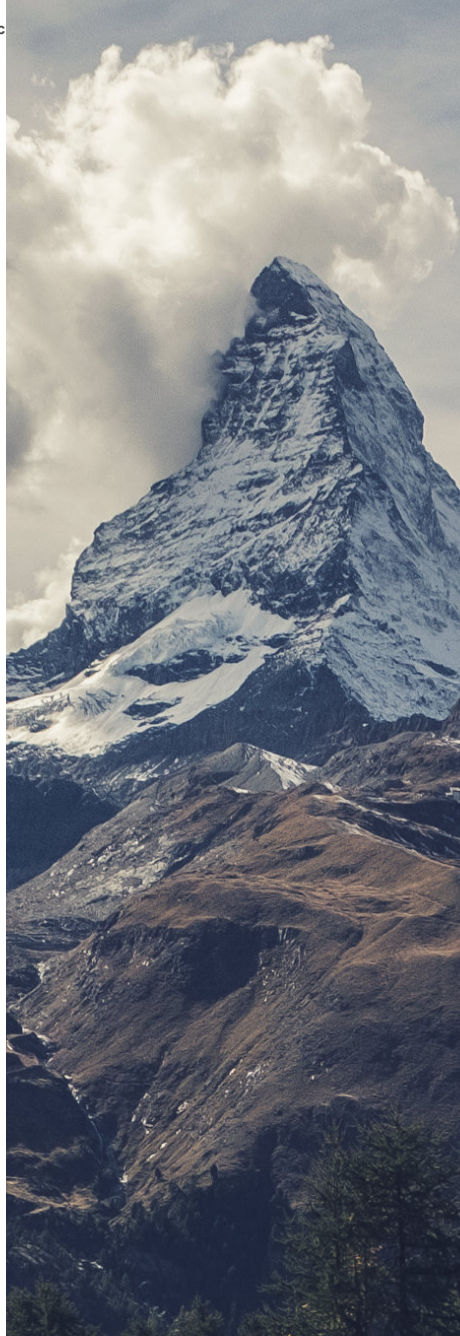


TIMELINE FOR DEVELOPMENT



Draft Guiding Principles

- Indigenous Sovereignty
- Culture and Tradition
- Guardianship and Stewardship
- Collaboration and Partnership
- Resiliency
- The Precautionary Principle



APPENDIX “D” Agenda

OPENING	
10:00 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening Prayer • Welcome and Agenda Review • Introduction to the BC First Nation Climate Strategy and Action Plan
INTRODUCTION	
10:07 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FNLC Opening Comments and Presentation
10:27 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Virtual Sharing Circles
VIRTUAL SHARING CIRCLES	
10:30 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome and Introductions
10:35 am – 11:35 am	Theme #1: Building Capacity and Resilient Communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we better build capacity within your community to respond to climate issues? • Has your community had any success in responding to climate issues? Please describe your stories of resiliency.
	Theme #2: Revitalizing Indigenous Knowledge, Language, and Worldviews in Climate Action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can traditional knowledge, teachings, language, worldviews be recognized and implemented in climate action and planning? • What does the future of your community look like in the climate context?
	Theme #3: Collaboration and Partnership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does “collaboration” and “partnership” look like for you when working with a) government, b) corporations, and c) other Nations in the climate context? • How can First Nation jurisdiction be exercised in climate change initiatives?
	Theme #4: Draft Strategies and Action Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we reduce the risks of current climate impacts? How can we prevent and prepare for future impacts? • Which economic opportunities do you see arising from climate initiatives? What would you like to see within your community in this regard?
MAIN ROOM DEBRIEF	
11:35 am	Health Break
11:40 am	Summary from Virtual Sharing Circles
CLOSING	
11:55 am	Closing Comments and Next Steps