



BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

1992 Landooz Road
Prince George, BC V2K 5S3
Website: www.bcafn.ca

BCAFN SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
March 4 & 5, 2026
In person & online via Zoom

Resolution 09/2026

SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A FIRST NATIONS CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

Moved BY: CHIEF DON SAM, ?AKISQNUK FIRST NATION

SECONDED BY: CHIEF JOHN POWELL, MAMALIKULLA FIRST NATION

DECISION: CARRIED

WHEREAS:

- A. British Columbia lacks a distinctions-based First Nations certification framework to verify the ownership and authenticity of First Nations' businesses, goods and services, limiting transparency and restricting advocacy for First Nations participation in provincial and federal procurement;
- B. First Nations in British Columbia (BC) are self-determining peoples with the inherent right to govern their own political, economic, and cultural systems, including verification mechanisms that protect First Nations' ownership, control, and authenticity in representation, commerce, and procurement;
- C. the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration), which the government of Canada has adopted without qualification, and has, alongside the government of BC, committed to implement, affirms:
Article 3: Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right, they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social, and cultural

Certified copy of a resolution adopted on the 5th day of March 2026

Terry Teegee, BC Regional Chief

development;

Article 4: Indigenous peoples, in exercising their right to self-determination, have the right to autonomy or self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs, as well as ways and means for financing their autonomous functions;

Article 20:1. Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and develop their political, economic, and social systems or institutions, and to engage freely in all their traditional and other economic activities;

Article 31:1. Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions;

- D. the BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) has consistently affirmed the advancement of First Nations rights and jurisdiction in BC through distinctions-based frameworks. BCAFN Resolution 28/2023 rejects any conflation of First Nations rights with other groups residing in BC and affirms that BC First Nations are rights holders under section 35 of the *Constitution Act*. BCAFN Resolution 06/2020 further recognizes the need to protect First Nations' knowledge and cultural expressions through First Nations-led intellectual property and authenticity frameworks;
- E. there is currently no distinctions-based First Nations certification program in BC that verifies ownership, control, and authenticity of First Nations businesses, goods, and services, limiting the ability of First Nations in BC to ensure that economic benefits, including procurement opportunities, are directed to First Nations;
- F. existing Indigenous certification models in BC and Canada are not distinctions-based, including all First Nations, Inuit, and Métis. The pan-Indigenous model conflates the distinct rights, governance systems, and economic identities of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. This approach prevents accurate tracking of First Nations participation in procurement, limits accountability for reconciliation-based spending, and obscures whether economic benefits are reaching First Nations rights holders in BC;
- G. advancing the development of the proposed distinctions-based First Nations Certification Program framework builds on BCAFN's existing policy advocacy and economic development work, including opportunities to increase First Nations participation in procurement identified through BC's Indigenous Procurement Initiative, currently under development; and
- H. a distinctions-based, First Nations certification program would enable rights and titleholders to advocate for establishing provincial and federal procurement targets specific to First Nations businesses, ensuring that economic reconciliation initiatives do not erode First Nations rights

Certified copy of a resolution adopted on the 5th day of March 2026



Terry Teegee, BC Regional Chief

through pan-Indigenous or colonial classifications. Establishing a First Nations Certification Program will advance economic sovereignty, protect cultural and intellectual property, and assert First Nations jurisdiction within BC and Canada's distinctions-based frameworks.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly direct the Regional Chief and BCAFN to develop a proposed framework for a distinctions-based First Nations Certification Program that verifies ownership, control, and authenticity of First Nations-led enterprises, goods, and services in British Columbia in collaboration with interested First Nations, relevant First Nations Organizations in BC;
2. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly call upon Canada and BC to support and resource the development of a BC First Nations Certification Program framework and to establish distinctions-based procurement targets for First Nations businesses consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*; and
3. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly direct the Regional Chief to report back to the next Assembly on progress toward the development of the First Nations Certification Program framework, including policy advocacy and funding opportunities that ensure the program remains First Nations-led and distinctions-based.

Certified copy of a resolution adopted on the 5th day of March 2026



Terry Teegee, BC Regional Chief