

BRIEFING NOTE

TO: UBCIC Chiefs Council
FROM: FNLC Project Team
DATE: June 2-3, 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 prepared for, conducted, and has assessed information gathered from the Strategy’s regional community engagement sessions held on February 5, 12 and 16, 2021.
- The Project Team convened and established a First Nations Technical Advisory Group (“**TAG**”) in February 2021 with diverse representation from First Nation communities across the province as well as representation from elders and/or Knowledge Holders and First nation women and youth.
- The Project Team has worked closely with the TAG to develop a draft vision, outline, guiding principles, goals, strategies, and actions. The Project Team continue to work closely with the

TAG and continues to collaborate with First Nations in BC to review and revise the Strategy drafts.

- The Project Team is currently planning additional engagement activities for the Project, including a youth engagement session in June 2021.

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 August 2021, allocated within four phases.

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 Project Team convened and established the Technical Advisory Group (“**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 liaising with the FNLC and other relevant partners on an ongoing basis. A Call for Expression of Interest for Advisory Group membership was distributed in early January 2021 and the TAG was established in February 2021. The TAG and FNLC Project Team met on March 9, March 24, April 26 and April 27, 2021 to review and develop a draft outline, vision, guiding principles, goals, strategies and actions for the Strategy. The FNLC continues to work in collaboration with the TAG.

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. The Project Team continues to engage with First Nations in BC and will be planning additional engagement sessions throughout June and July of 2021, including a session aimed for First Nations youth and a session to seek regional feedback on the draft Strategy.

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. First draft of the Strategy to be finalized in June 2021.
2. Youth Engagement Session to be held in June 2021.
3. Second draft of the Strategy to be finalized in July 2021.
4. Final draft of the Strategy to be complete in August 2021.
5. Approval of Climate Strategy and Action Plan via Resolutions in September (UBCIC/BCAFN) and October 2021 (FNS).

APPENDIX “A”
Draft Guiding Principles

BC First Nations Climate Strategy and Action Plan
Draft Guiding Principles

1. Self-Determination and Self-Government

We are the first peoples of the land. Prior to settler arrival, we lived on the land with our individual laws, territories and thriving economies and societies. We have effectively protected and cared for the land, water, air and our traditional resources. Asserting our inherent jurisdiction over our territories and the rights to self-determination and self-government must be priorities in any climate discussion, including climate legislation, policies and actions. The Crown and other relevant entities must recognize and respect our Title, Rights and Treaty Rights, both hereditary and elected leadership systems of individual Nations, and must fully implement the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, BC's *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, and other federal legislation which could emerge.

2. Culture and Tradition:

Historical and ongoing colonial practices impact our ability to share and protect our culture, values, and identity, including Traditional Knowledge, language, and laws specific to each individual Nation. Climate change further threatens our identity. It is essential to protect and facilitate intergenerational sharing of these core elements to thrive in a climate crisis. The strength of this knowledge must be recognized and implemented alongside scientific knowledge in developing climate strategies and action items.

3. Guardianship and Stewardship:

We have a collective responsibility to recognize the climate emergency with an urgency to act immediately and in the long-term to maintain the integrity and functionality of the environment. This includes helping to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions at all levels, including those related to economic development in our traditional territories. When making decisions, it is important to consider reciprocity, restoration, cooperation, and collaboration with the earth to ensure ecosystem health and stability for generations to come. Guardianship and stewardship must be conducted through a holistic and pre-cautionary approach in line with our individual legal orders and inherent responsibilities to the lands, waters, and air.

4. Collaboration and Partnership:

Climate change is an urgent threat that transcends jurisdictional boundaries, making collaboration and partnership essential. There must be collaboration and true partnerships between First Nations in BC and governments, corporations, and Indigenous Peoples. As inherent Title and Right holders, entities must come to the table ready to recognize our jurisdiction and authority to manage and control our territories and to lead climate initiatives and responses. This involves First Nations consistently practicing Free, Prior, and Informed Consent in climate response and project development. Past and present harms of colonization must be acknowledged and addressed as an essential component of developing accountable relations. Opportunities for collaboration within communities, between Nations and elsewhere must be developed while also integrating First Nation Elders, youth and women

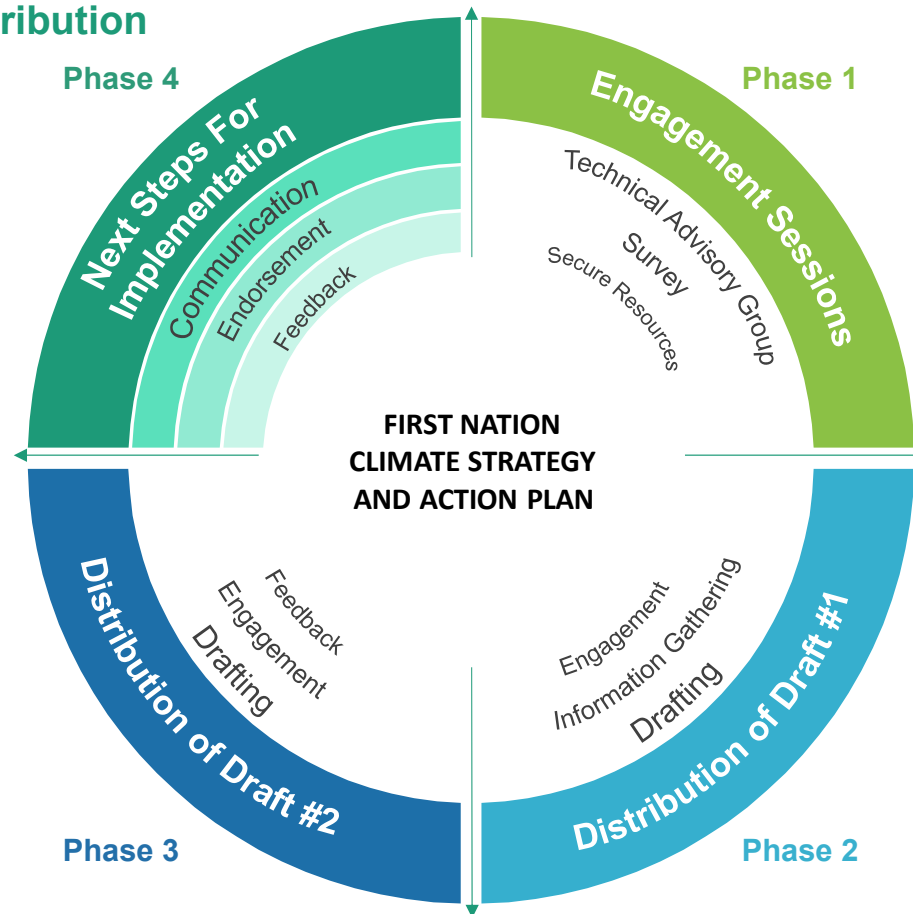
5. Empowerment, Leadership and Self-Sufficiency:

Despite the impacts from the legacies of colonization and ongoing colonial practices, we are climate leaders. We have historically effectively responded to climate change and we continue to advocate for the protection of our traditional territories, foods and cultural identity. However, climate change will continue to impact our communities, our individual identity, and our traditional resources will continue to be impacted by climate change more than any other group in Canada. We must strengthen our capacity, build climate resiliency and empower the future generations to come in responding to the climate crisis. This includes becoming self-sufficient, meeting our capacity and food security needs, 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: BCAFN Resolution 04/2019; and UBCIC Resolution 2019-02

