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To: [Matiation, Stefan \(AADNC/AANDC\)](#)
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Subject: Draft Research Funding Guidelines
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Attachments: [image001.png](#)
Importance: High

Dear Stefan,

I hope today finds you well.

I understand from Aaron and Jesse that you recently (March 24th) circulated updated draft research funding guidelines to the AFN for comment and indicated your intention to publish the guidelines online in April 2021. The research community has not seen this draft, including the National Claims Research Directors (NCRD) or the CRU-NSD working group. The research community would like the opportunity to provide comments on the latest version of the guidelines and discuss it via the CRU-NSD working group prior to public release.

I confess to being blindsided by this news. The NCRD prepared a report last July summarizing concerns with research funding processes ("Specific Claims Research Funding: Emerging Challenges and Principles for Collaboration", NCRD, July 6, 2020). In the report the NCRD affirmed its support for the former CRU-NSD working group as a key mechanism for a transparent and collaborative approach to making decisions about research funding and called for the working group to be reconvened as soon as possible to address the research community's concerns. A copy of this report was sent to NSD Director Shelie Laforest and we requested a meeting.

Shelie accepted our invitation and agreed to reconvene the working group, which held its first meeting in August 2020. At this meeting, representatives from NSD presented research funding guidelines to the CRU side and we were told that the guidelines were in the process of being redrafted. We gave feedback on this draft and provided comments on a second iteration of the document at a subsequent meeting in October.

In view of the guidelines being redrafted and in the context of longstanding concerns with the administration of research funding, the NCRD provided a written submission to NDS on November 18th, which advanced recommendations for short and long-term changes to research funding processes. I received a response to the submission from NSD in early December and was told then that there would be further discussion about the revised research funding guidelines through the working group. I was also told that there would be direct engagement with individual First Nations, and that an April 1, 2021 deadline had been set to finalize the guidelines.

The CRU-NSD working group has not met since October 2020 and I have not been made aware of any direct engagement with individual First Nations. NSD has not shared the latest draft of the research funding guidelines with either the NCRD or the CRU side of the working group.

In the meantime, revised templates were included in the call for proposals this year. I received important feedback from claims practitioners that significant challenges with the new templates remained. At UBCIC's February Chiefs Council meeting and the Our Gathering event, the BC Specific Claims Working Group informed you and ADM Martin Reiher that the NCRD was preparing a report outlining these challenges. Despite SCB's knowledge that this work was underway, neither the NCRD nor the CRU side of the working group was informed that finalized guidelines were imminent. There was no attempt to engage on proposed long-term changes that the CRU-NSD had previously identified as requiring engagement.

To honour Canada's obligations under the UN Declaration, and its public commitments to transparency and working in true partnership with Indigenous Nations, I request that the new research funding guidelines not be made public until the NCRD and CRU side of the CRU-NSD working group have had the opportunity to review the latest version, provide our comments to NSD and work with you in full collaboration to develop guidelines that are fair and meet the needs of First Nations.

Sincerely,
Jody

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Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs

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We acknowledge our place of work is within the ancestral, traditional and unceded territories of the X^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Sḵwəxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətaʔ/seliłwitulh(Tsleil-waututh) Nations.