

Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

2023/24 – 2025/26 Service Plan

February 2023



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Minister's Accountability Statement



The Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation 2023/24 – 2025/26 Service Plan was prepared under my direction in accordance with the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*. I am accountable for the basis on which the plan has been prepared.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Murray Rankin". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Honourable Murray Rankin, KC
Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation
February 10, 2023

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Strategic Direction

In 2023/24, the Government of British Columbia will continue our work to make life better for people in B.C., improve the services we all rely on, and ensure a sustainable province for future generations. Government will focus on building a secure, clean, and fair economy, and a province where everyone can find a good home – whether in a rural area, in a city, or in an Indigenous community. B.C. will continue working toward true and meaningful reconciliation by supporting opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to be full partners in an inclusive and sustainable province. The policies, programs and projects developed over the course of this service plan period will focus on results that people can see and feel in four key areas: attainable and affordable housing, strengthened health care, safer communities, and a secure, clean and fair economy that can withstand global economic headwinds.

This 2023/24 service plan outlines how the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation will support the government’s priorities including the foundational principles listed above and selected action items identified in the [December 2022 Minister’s Mandate Letter](#).

Purpose of the Ministry

The [Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation](#) (the Ministry) guides and helps coordinate the Province of British Columbia’s efforts to achieve true and lasting reconciliation with [Indigenous Peoples](#)¹ by working in respectful partnerships that recognize inherent rights.

Reconciliation is important to everyone as we work together to address historic wrongs through the path laid out by the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission \(TRC\) of Canada: Calls to Action](#). These efforts create a better province for all British Columbians.

As the first province in Canada to recognize and uphold Indigenous Peoples’ human rights in law through the [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#) (Declaration Act), British Columbia is implementing the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) (UN Declaration) as our shared framework for reconciliation.

The Declaration Act supports government in deepening relationships with Indigenous Peoples through an [Action Plan](#) that outlines actions to advance the objectives of the UN Declaration, through the alignment of provincial laws with the UN Declaration, by enabling government to enter into shared decision-making agreements, and allowing flexibility for the Province to enter into agreements with a broad range of Indigenous governments.

The Ministry furthers [reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples](#) by collaboratively developing policy and practices, and negotiating and implementing proactive, enduring [agreements, partnerships, and treaties based on recognition of rights](#). The Ministry’s focus is to build

¹ The term “Indigenous” used throughout this document is inclusive of all peoples of Indigenous ancestry, including First Nations (status and non-status), Métis and Inuit.

lasting relationships with Indigenous Peoples through flexible agreements that can evolve over time and collaborative approaches to policy making.

The Ministry engages with Indigenous governments, communities, organizations, as well as federal, municipal and treaty partners, stakeholders, and the public. While reconciliation is a whole-of-government responsibility, the Ministry provides guidance and leadership to other areas of government on establishing and enhancing relationships with Indigenous Peoples.

[Reconciliation commitments](#) are achieved by prioritizing collaboration and engagement with Indigenous Peoples through trauma-informed and culturally safe practices. [Strengthening relationships with Indigenous communities](#)² and leveraging Indigenous knowledge and perspectives improves social and economic outcomes for Indigenous Peoples and all British Columbians.

Operating Environment

Global pressures including the continued presence of COVID-19, a shifting economic forecast, and ongoing climate-related emergencies impact every British Columbian. These external conditions raise the importance of working in partnership to advance reconciliation and strengthen government-to-government relationships with Indigenous Peoples across the Province so that we can continue to meet these challenges together.

Supporting these efforts, the Province has adopted a [distinctions-based approach](#) to advancing reconciliation and implementing the United Nations Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This means the B.C. Government's work with [First Nations](#), [Métis](#), and Inuit Peoples is conducted in a manner that acknowledges the specific rights, interests, priorities, and concerns of each while respecting and acknowledging these distinct Peoples with unique cultures, histories, rights, laws, and governments.

The release of the Action Plan in February 2022 outlines actions to be undertaken over the next five years by all of government in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples across the province. The Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation is well represented within the plan and partners with several other ministries on various actions that support implementation of the Declaration Act and advance reconciliation in British Columbia.

Established in 2022, the [Declaration Act Secretariat](#) has taken the lead on guiding government's efforts to align provincial laws with the UN Declaration as required by the Declaration Act. As an independent office within the provincial government, the Secretariat reports directly to the Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation and works alongside all B.C. Government ministries to support implementation of the Declaration Act.

² The term "communities" means the diversity of Indigenous communities as defined by Indigenous Peoples and includes descriptions such as urban, rural, metropolitan, remote, land-based and reserve.

Performance Planning

Goal 1: Advance equitable social and economic outcomes of Indigenous Peoples

The Ministry is committed to advancing social and economic outcomes in Indigenous communities in comprehensive and holistic ways that are determined by and organized around each community's priorities. These efforts include sharing the benefits of economic development with Indigenous communities and increasing opportunities for the participation of Indigenous Peoples in the economy.

Objective 1.1: Partner on shared initiatives that improve the quality of life of Indigenous Peoples

The Ministry works with Indigenous, provincial, and federal agencies and partners to advance opportunities that improve the health and wellness of Indigenous communities through community-focused initiatives.

Key Strategies

- Coordinate funding between federal, provincial, and Indigenous partners to support First Nations-led investigations at former Residential Schools and Indian Hospital sites in B.C. and enhance Indigenous-delivered mental health, wellness, and cultural supports for residential school and intergenerational survivors.
- Work with the [Minister's Advisory Council on Indigenous Women](#) and the [First Peoples' Cultural Council](#) to advance solutions that support their respective mandates.
- Expand supports to urban Indigenous organizations and leadership, including Aboriginal Friendship Centres and urban Indigenous Coalitions, to deliver Indigenous-centered services and support cultural connections, and support online dialogues around organizing urban Indigenous voices to address urban reconciliation priorities.

Discussion

The Ministry continues to work in close consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples to ensure that communities' health, wellbeing, and sociocultural priorities across the province are actionable.

Work to support investigations at the sites of former Residential Schools and Indian Hospital Sites in B.C. is complex and challenging. The Ministry continues to implement the BC Residential School Response Fund that provides funding to First Nations investigating these sites and continues to engage with federal, provincial, and Indigenous partners to promote a coordinated, culturally safe, and trauma-informed response to site research and investigations.

The Ministry also continues to engage with the Minister's Advisory Council on Indigenous Women to identify and action priorities that support the wellness of Indigenous women in B.C., and with the First Peoples' Cultural Council to secure long-term funding that will enable long-term and sustainable Indigenous culture, language, and arts programming.

Work is underway to develop indicators that report on reconciliation outcomes associated with implementation of the Declaration Act Action Plan. As this work continues to evolve, the Ministry will seek out opportunities for alignment and to introduce performance measures in future Service Plans to support reporting on this objective.

Objective 1.2: Support Indigenous communities in advancing self-determination and governance building

The Ministry works with Indigenous Peoples to advance self-determination and governance building, supporting economic, social, and cultural initiatives aligned with the priorities of individual communities and transitioning delivery of public services to Indigenous governments.

Key Strategies

- Co-develop with Indigenous Peoples, in partnership with the Ministry of Finance, a [new distinctions-based fiscal framework](#) that supports the operation of Indigenous governments.
- Work with other ministries and Indigenous partners to co-develop and implement new policy frameworks for resource revenue-sharing and other fiscal mechanisms with Indigenous Peoples.
- Collaborate, align, and leverage opportunities with the federal government to support Indigenous self-governance, culture, language, and heritage.
- Partner with Indigenous Peoples and other ministries to advance CleanBC objectives by promoting increased Indigenous participation in the clean energy sector and supporting diesel displacement initiatives in remote communities, and supporting Indigenous communities to adapt to, and recover from, the impacts of climate change.

Discussion

Indigenous governments, like all governments, require sources of revenue to deliver services and meet accountabilities to their citizens. The Ministry, in partnership with the Ministry of Finance, is leading the co-development of a new fiscal framework with Indigenous Peoples, with an initial focus on co-development of principles and objectives for a new fiscal framework and co-development of a new forestry revenue sharing model. Over the long term, the vision of this work is to implement a coherent, principled, and rights-based fiscal framework that recognizes, respects, and supports self-determination.

As described in the discussion section underneath Objective 1.1, the Ministry will be reviewing opportunities for alignment of Action Plan indicators as they become available to support reporting under this objective in future Service Plans.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure	2019/20 Baseline	2022/23 Forecast	2023/24 Target	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target
[1a] Cumulative number of community ¹ well-being initiatives	16	24	28	32	36

Data source: Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

¹ The term community is inclusive of all First Nations, Métis, and urban Indigenous communities.

Discussion

Community well-being initiatives are reconciliation processes where Indigenous communities and the B.C. government work in partnership to identify and implement socio-cultural priorities. These partnerships invest in economic development, cultural revitalization, human resource capacity building, education, justice, health and family services, and institutional and infrastructure development.

Performance Measure	2022/23 Forecast	2023/24 Target	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target
[1b] Number of new opportunities ¹ for First Nations to participate in revenue sharing	4	4	4	4

Data source: Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

¹This includes new revenue sharing opportunities negotiated into particular agreements.

Discussion

Sharing revenue with First Nations communities is an important reconciliation tool that supports implementation of the UN Declaration and the self-determined pursuit of economic, social, and community development. Like all governments, First Nations require sources of revenue to support capacity and service delivery. Ensuring First Nations share in the wealth generated by economic opportunities helps support economic growth in First Nations communities and for all British Columbians.

Goal 2: Work in partnership to achieve true and lasting reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples

True and lasting reconciliation is a cross-government priority requiring collaboration with ministry partners and engagement with all British Columbians.

Objective 2.1: Implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action, and the Tsilhqot'in Supreme Court decision.

All ministries are accountable for implementing Provincial reconciliation commitments. Supporting this, the Ministry works to develop cross-government tools and approaches that achieve the objectives of the UN Declaration through implementation of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, and other relevant legislation and case law.

Key Strategies

- Support government ministries and agencies to integrate the objectives of the UN Declaration into their policy and operations, including cross-government implementation of the Declaration Act.
- Work in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples, in line with government agencies, to implement ministry commitments in the Declaration Act Action Plan.
- Work with ministry partners to support efforts that engage with Indigenous Peoples and advance reconciliation initiatives within their respective mandates.
- Ensure that the diversity of Indigenous voices is brought into government planning, processes, policies, and practices.

Discussion

The Ministry continues its work to support implementation of government's reconciliation commitments and uphold Indigenous rights and title in line with legislation and case law in the context of an evolving legal landscape.

Alignment of laws related policy work is continuing under the guidance of the newly established independent office of the Declaration Act Secretariat. The Ministry is working to ensure laws and policies within the scope of its own mandate are aligned with and contribute to implementation of and the UN Declaration.

The first-ever Declaration Act Action Plan, released in 2022, outlines 89 actions to be undertaken by the B.C. Government over the next five years to advance the objectives of the UN Declaration. The Ministry is responsible for working in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples for many of these actions and is working to support, where indicated in the plan, other ministry partners on shared actions.

Objective 2.2: Negotiate and implement treaties and other constructive agreements with Indigenous Peoples

The Ministry works with Indigenous Peoples and other ministry partners to establish treaties and other agreements that affirm self-determination and support new approaches to developing a framework for cooperation and co-existence of Indigenous jurisdiction.

Key Strategies

- In partnership with Indigenous Peoples, implement new approaches to negotiations that result in long-term, enduring agreements that recognize and support reconciliation, self-determination, and economic independence.
- Develop a policy approach to legislation for implementing decision-making agreements with Indigenous governing bodies as outlined in the Declaration Act.
- Develop a cross-sector approach to strengthen and promote collaborative negotiation and agreement processes that advance reconciliation objectives in partnership with Indigenous Peoples.
- Engage with partner agencies and members of the Alliance of BC Modern Treaty Nations to improve and advance treaty implementation in line with commitments identified in the [Shared Priorities Framework](#).
- Work with partner ministries to expand opportunities for engagement that advance the government-to-government relationship with Métis Nation B.C. and support implementation of shared priorities.

Discussion

This Ministry works to ensure that the negotiation and implementation of treaties, shared decision-making mechanisms, and other constructive arrangements uphold Indigenous rights, including title, and support long-term, flexible agreements that can evolve over time. Central to these efforts, the Ministry continues to engage with partner ministries and agencies to ensure negotiation and implementation of agreements are in line with reconciliation commitments.

The Declaration Act requires government to work in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples to align provincial laws with the UN Declaration, develop and implement an action plan to meet the objectives of the UN Declaration, and deliver an annual report that details progress to implement the Declaration Act. Through delivery of its reporting commitment, the Ministry outlines, on an annual basis, measures taken towards implementing the Action Plan and alignment of laws.

Performance Measures

Discussion

Reconciliation is a complex and enduring effort that is founded in the relationships that exist between governments. Measuring progress should reflect the evolution of these relationships and capture progress accurately, appropriately, and respectfully.

No measure on its own can encompass the complexity of reconciliation, but measures are selected for their ability to demonstrate progress in the Ministry's approach to improving relationships as we shift from transactional, short-term agreements to long-term, enduring relationships with First Nations and all Indigenous Peoples within the Province.

In recent years, the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation has undertaken development of new measures that capture these relationships and reflect nuances within them. Two measures are currently in development while the Ministry continues its internal process of refining methodology and data collection processes to ensure continuity and accuracy in reporting for years to come.

The measures are designed to reflect progress made on the following:

2a) First Nations or Indigenous Governing Bodies that have reached major milestones in negotiation.

The first of the two measures in development is designed to report on incremental progress made by achieving milestones in specific treaties, agreements, and other constructive arrangements between the Province and First Nations or other Indigenous Governing Bodies.

Treaties, agreements, and other constructive arrangements serve as a foundation for government-to-government relationships and are key to advancing reconciliation in the province. Guiding this work are policy and legislative tools designed to implement a transformed approach to negotiations that supports the pursuit of self-determination and the inherent right to self-government.

2b) First Nations within British Columbia exercising self-governance.

Self-government is a substantial reconciliation outcome of treaties and other negotiated agreements that establish jurisdictional authority on matters of significance to each First Nation and enhance government-to-government relationships in accordance with the UN Declaration.

This measure will specify the number of First Nations within British Columbia exercising self-government, either through a treaty or other negotiated agreement addressing governance, that enables the self-determined pursuit of cultural, social, economic, and other priorities of First Nations.

These measures are designed to be complementary to reporting mechanisms already in place that provide additional detail through narrative-focused, qualitative reporting on outcomes, including the Annual Service Plan and Declaration Act Annual Reports.

The Ministry is working to finalize methodology to support reporting on these measures and will provide an update on progress on this work in the 2022/23 Annual Service Plan Report. Once methodology is confirmed, the Ministry will aim to begin comprehensive reporting for the 2024/25 Service Plan.

Financial Summary

Core Business	2022/23 Restated Estimates ¹	2023/24 Estimates	2024/25 Plan	2025/26 Plan
Operating Expenses (\$000)				
Negotiations and Regional Operations Division	15,341	16,465	16,736	16,736
Strategic Partnerships and Initiatives Division	18,439	25,147	25,526	25,946
Reconciliation Transformation and Strategies Division	3,260	3,419	3,446	3,446
Executive and Support Services	12,775	12,881	12,912	12,912
Treaty and Other Agreements Funding	108,329	116,159	104,550	105,363
Declaration Act Secretariat	3,213	4,431	4,482	4,482
First Citizens Fund	1,686	1,716	1,742	1,911
First Nations Clean Energy Business Fund special account	7,576	8,044	8,155	8,209
Total	170,619	188,262	177,549	179,005
Capital Expenditures (\$000)				
Executive and Support Services	3	3	3	3
Total	3	3	3	3
Other Financing Transactions (\$000)				
British Columbia First Nations Gaming Revenue Sharing Limited Partnership Receipts	(101,000)	(110,000)	(111,000)	(112,000)
British Columbia First Nations Gaming Revenue Sharing Limited Partnership Disbursements	101,000	110,000	111,000	112,000
Land Transfers Disbursements ²	34,260	39,800	180	0
Total Receipts	(101,000)	(110,000)	(111,000)	(112,000)
Total Disbursements	135,260	149,800	111,180	112,000
Total Net Cash Requirements (Source)	34,260	39,800	180	0

¹ For comparative purposes, amounts shown for 2022/23 have been restated to be consistent with the presentation of the 2023/24 Estimates.

² Reflects the current known requirements and will be updated as part of the annual budget process.

* Further information on program funding and vote recoveries is available in the [Estimates and Supplement to the Estimates](#).

Appendix A: Declaration Act Secretariat

Purpose of the Organization

The [Declaration Act Secretariat](#) (DAS) is an independent office within the provincial government that works to coordinate and assist the cross-government effort to work in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples to align provincial laws with the UN Declaration as per section 3 of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (Declaration Act):

Measures to align laws with Declaration

"In consultation and cooperation with the Indigenous peoples in British Columbia, the government must take all measures necessary to ensure the laws of British Columbia are consistent with the Declaration."

Strategic Direction

The Declaration Act was unanimously passed by the Legislative Assembly in 2019. Section 3 of the Declaration Act requires the Province, in consultation and co-operation with Indigenous Peoples, to take "all measures necessary" to ensure consistency between the laws of British Columbia and the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

Since 2019, the Province has taken some measures pursuant to section 3. The most significant measure was the formation of the Declaration Act Secretariat, established in Budget 2022. The mandate of the Secretariat is to ensure legislation is consistent with the UN Declaration and is developed in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples, as required by Section 3 of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act.

Reporting directly to the Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, but distinct from the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, the Secretariat guides and assists ministries in meeting the alignment of laws obligations, collaborates within government on changes to government's legislative and policy processes, and helps establish government's legislative priorities related to alignment of laws.

The Secretariat's core functions are to:

- provide guidance on consultation and cooperation and consistency of laws;
- develop processes and measures to support alignment of laws;
- inform government's legislative agenda; and
- serve in an interlocutor role.

An Advisory Forum will be established to provide advice to the Secretariat on legislative proposals and initiatives and provide a means for Indigenous expertise and experience with meeting the standards of the UN Declaration to be brought into government.

The Secretariat also provides guidance and advice on how to ensure required consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples takes place. Examples of relevant amendments include

the *Interpretation Act*; *Forest and Range Practices Act*; *FOIPPA*; *Emergency Program Act*; *Indigenous Self-Government in Child and Family Services Act*; and development of the *Anti-Racism Data Act*. Additionally, through internal learning processes since the passage of the Declaration Act, as well as work with Indigenous partners, the Secretariat co-developed guidance on "*Interim Approach: Involving Indigenous Peoples in Policy and Legislation*".

Appendix B: Public Sector Organizations

As of February 10, 2023, the Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation is responsible and accountable for the following:

[BC Treaty Commission](#)³

The BC Treaty Commission is an independent body responsible for facilitating treaty negotiations among First Nations and the governments of Canada and British Columbia.

[First Peoples' Cultural Council](#)

The First Peoples' Cultural Council is a First Nation-run Crown corporation that supports the revitalization of Indigenous languages, arts, culture, and heritage in British Columbia.

[Haida Gwaii Management Council](#)⁴

The Haida Gwaii Management Council is a strategic-level joint decision-making body for land and natural resource decisions on Haida Gwaii, as set out in the [Kunst'aa guu – Kunst'aayah Reconciliation Protocol](#).

[Minister's Advisory Council on Indigenous Women](#)

The Minister's Advisory Council on Indigenous Women provides advice to the Government of British Columbia on how to improve the quality of life of Indigenous women across B.C.

³ With reference to the BC Treaty Commission, responsibility and accountability is limited and defined through [the Treaty Commission Act](#).

⁴ With reference to the Haida Gwaii Management Council, responsibility and accountability is limited and defined through the [Kunst'aa guu – Kunst'aayah Reconciliation Protocol](#).

