

Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

2024/25 – 2026/27 Service Plan

February 2024



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Minister's Accountability Statement



The Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation 2024/25 – 2026/27 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".

Honourable Murray Rankin
Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation
February 9, 2024

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Strategic Direction

In 2024/25, the Government of British Columbia will remain focused on providing the services and infrastructure that people depend on to build a good life. Government will continue delivering results that matter to British Columbians including helping people with costs, attainable and affordable housing, strengthened health care, safer communities, and a secure, clean and fair economy. Government will continue working collaboratively with Indigenous Peoples as it implements the Action Plan for the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act and delivers initiatives that advance reconciliation in ways that make a difference in communities throughout the province.

This 2024/25 service plan outlines how the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation will support the B.C. 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 or MIRR) 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.

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 the B.C. government to deepen relationships with Indigenous Peoples through an [action plan](#) that outlines measures to advance the objectives of the UN Declaration. The alignment of provincial laws with the UN Declaration enables government to enter into shared decision-making 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 lasting relationships with Indigenous Peoples through flexible agreements that can evolve over time and collaborative approaches to policy making.

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.

The Ministry engages with First Nations governments, communities, organizations, as well as treaty, federal, and municipal 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 anti-racist, 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.

The Ministry is also responsible for the [Minister's Advisory Council on Indigenous Women](#), which provides advice to the B.C. government on how to improve the quality of life for Indigenous women in B.C., and the [First Peoples' Cultural Council](#) (FPCC), a provincial Crown corporation formed by the Government of British Columbia in 1990 to administer the First Peoples' Heritage, Language and Culture Program.

Operating Environment

Reconciliation is a provincial imperative in B.C., embedded in law, that represents a shared commitment to ensure that the province is a place where the rights of First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples are recognized. In this work, MIRR is guided by the UN Declaration, the TRC of Canada's 94 Calls to Action, the [Draft Principles that Guide the Province of British Columbia's Relationship with Indigenous Peoples](#), the British Columbia Treaty Commission Act and the First Nations Treaty process, Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) and relevant case law.

Global pressures including a shifting economic forecast and ongoing climate-related emergencies impact every British Columbian. These external conditions amplify the importance of working in partnership to advance reconciliation and strengthen government-to-government relationships with First Nations across the province so that we can continue to meet these challenges together. Despite these continued times of significant challenge and the disproportionate impacts on First Nations communities, as well as the ongoing trauma of revelations from former residential school sites, Indigenous leaders continue to work collaboratively with the Ministry towards our shared reconciliation goals. They have contributed their time and resources to ensure Indigenous knowledge and expertise are brought into this work, benefiting all British Columbians.

As we approach this work, the Ministry and the provincial government are committed to a distinctions-based approach, which means working with First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples in a manner that distinguishes and respects the differences between the specific rights, interests, priorities and concerns of each. This commitment requires that the Government of

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.

B.C.'s relationship and engagement with First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples may include different approaches or actions and result in different outcomes.

In supporting the government's broader mandate priority to fight racism and promote equity, the Ministry is implementing an action plan arising from an internal Anti-Racism and Equity Audit. The Ministry is working towards more inclusive hiring practices and retention with an emphasis on Indigenous employees.

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 First Nations 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

- Provide continued support to First Nations-led investigations at the sites of former Indian Residential Schools and Indian Hospitals in B.C. to 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.
- Continue to support urban Indigenous organizations and leadership, including Aboriginal Friendship Centres and urban Indigenous coalitions to deliver Indigenous-centered services, support cultural connections, and support online and in-person dialogues around organizing urban Indigenous voices to address urban reconciliation priorities.
- With support from the Minister of Housing, work with First Nations to address the housing shortage throughout the province and establish/participate in a dedicated joint working group to enhance alignment of housing programs on and off reserve.

Discussion

The Ministry continues to work in close consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples to ensure that communities' health, wellbeing, and sociocultural priorities throughout the province are actionable. These partnerships invest in economic development, cultural revitalization, human resource capacity building, education, justice, health and family services, and institutional and infrastructure development.

The Ministry provides annual operational funding to the First Peoples' Cultural Council and their mandate to revitalize languages, and cultural heritage. 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. The Ministry supports reconciliation priorities identified by urban Indigenous Peoples through the implementation of Actions 4.21-4.24 in the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* Action Plan.

Work is underway to further develop indicators that report on reconciliation outcomes associated with implementation of the Declaration Act Action Plan. As this work continues to evolve, the Ministry is developing an outcomes framework, in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples, tied to the Declaration Action Plan, to highlight opportunities for alignment. The Ministry will seek opportunities to introduce performance measures in future service plans to support reporting on this objective.

Objective 1.2: Support First Nation communities in advancing self determination and governance building

The Ministry works with First Nations 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 First Nations governments.

Key Strategies

- Continue engagement on the new distinctions-based fiscal framework, co-developed with First Nations in partnership with the Ministry of Finance, that supports the operation of First Nations' governments.
- Continue to advance work with other ministries and First Nations partners to co-develop and implement new policy frameworks for resource revenue-sharing and other fiscal mechanisms with First Nations.
- Collaborate, align and leverage opportunities with the federal government to support First Nations self-governance, culture, language and heritage.

Discussion

The Ministry, in partnership with the Ministry of Finance, continues engagement on the new fiscal framework with First Nations. As the New Fiscal Framework is co-developed, the ministry will re-evaluate performance measures and targets to ensure consistency with new revenue sharing and other fiscal mechanisms.

As described in the discussion section underneath Objective 1.1, the Ministry will review 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	2023/24 Forecast	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target
[1a] Cumulative number of community ¹ well-being initiatives	16	28	32	36	40

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 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.

These arrangements involve highly complex, trust-based relationships which take time to nurture, and require significant internal resources from the Ministry and First Nation(s) to develop. The baseline was chosen as it most accurately reflects the formal emergence of these relationship-driven reconciliation initiatives, which are not generally lands-based or negotiations-based.

Performance Measure	2023/24 Forecast	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target	2026/27 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.

The Province has committed to co-developing and implementing new distinctions-based policy frameworks for resource revenue-sharing. The Province expects the target for this performance measure (i.e., four opportunities per year) to continue until this work is completed and new models for revenue sharing are available. The Declaration Act Action Plan contemplates a five-year timeline for this work.

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 Relevant Case Law.

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

- As part of implementing the Declaration Act, provide clarity for public servants on how the provincial government engages with distinct Indigenous Peoples in B.C through the Distinctions Based Approach Primer and release a companion document providing guidance on the provincial government's relations with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.
- Support cross-government implementation of the Declaration Act by providing advice to government ministries and agencies to integrate the objectives of the UN Declaration into their policy and operations.
- Deliver a Declaration Act annual report that includes measures, indicators, and metrics developed in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples to report on progress made to implement the Declaration Act. This includes an [online dashboard](#) with meaningful icons, which provides a snapshot status of all actions.
- Develop a protocol with the Ministry of the Attorney General to effectively engage and honour the Directives on Civil Litigation involving Indigenous Peoples.

Discussion

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

The Declaration Act Secretariat ([Appendix A](#)), which is a central agency within government and distinct from the Ministry, continues to lead and guide the alignment of laws with the UN Declaration. The Ministry continues to advance objectives outlined in the Declaration Action Plan and is working to ensure laws and policies within the scope of its own mandate are aligned with and contribute to implementation 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.

To support this work, the Declaration Act Secretariat created “The Interim Approach to Implement the Requirements of Section 3 of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act.” It provides every ministry and sector of government with clear, transparent processes for how they can work together with Indigenous Peoples in developing provincial laws, policies and practices, as required under the Declaration Act. Also, the Ministry continues to work with First Nations to advance decision-making agreements as outlined in the Declaration Act, to develop effective approaches to legislative amendments to avoid delays in implementing these agreements, and releasing annual reports to highlight work and progress on implementation of the Act.

The Ministry provides financial support through the Declaration Act Engagement Fund which supports First Nations’ efforts to work with the Province to implement the Declaration Act Action Plan and align provincial laws with the UN Declaration. This fund supports this critical work by helping offset the costs for First Nations to engage with the Province on Declaration Act implementation. The DAEF is flexible, and can support staffing, training, community-level meetings, and other resources required to enhance government-to-government work.

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 First Nations jurisdiction.

Key Strategies

- In partnership with First Nations, implement new approaches to negotiations that result in long-term, enduring agreements that recognize and support reconciliation, self-determination, and economic independence.
- Continue to advance engagement with First Nations and other Indigenous Governing Bodies throughout the province on the development of decision-making agreements as outlined in the Declaration Act.
- The Province and Alliance BC Modern Treaty Nations continue to advance commitments identified in the [Shared Priorities Framework](#) to improve treaty implementation and relations across government.
- Work with partner ministries to expand opportunities for engagement that advance the Province’s relationship with Métis people in British Columbia.

Discussion

This Ministry continues its work to ensure that the negotiation and implementation of treaties, shared decision-making mechanisms, and other constructive arrangements uphold First Nations rights, including title, and support long-term, flexible agreements that can evolve over time.

As outlined in the Shared Priorities Framework, the Ministry and Alliance of BC Modern Treaty Nations continue to prioritize appropriate fiscal arrangements to fulfil treaty rights and

obligations. This meaningful involvement of modern treaty nations in legislative and policy initiatives, and corresponding comprehensive organizational and policy changes advance a whole-of-government approach to treaty implementation.

The Declaration Act requires the B.C. 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 towards implementing the Action Plan and alignment of laws.

Performance Measures

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.

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 have been finalized as committed to in the [2023/24 – 2025/26 Service Plan](#).

Performance Measure	2023/24 Forecast	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target
[2a] First Nations or Indigenous Governing Bodies that have reached major milestones in negotiations.				
Other Constructive Agreement Negotiations (Tripartite) ¹	19	20	20	22
Other Constructive Agreement Negotiations (Bilateral) ²	30	25	24	26

Data source: Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

¹Includes tripartite Comprehensive Reconciliation Agreements (CRAs) and other constructive arrangements; excludes revenue sharing agreements as these are captured in the performance measure for Objective 1.2

²Includes bilateral Accommodation Tools, Economic Benefit Agreements, Settlement Agreements, G2G Agreements, and other constructive arrangements; excludes revenue sharing agreements as these are captured in the performance measure for Objective 1.2

Discussion

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.

This measure 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. In the past, agreement reporting was based on completed agreements. In many cases, however, the agreements can take several years to negotiate. In the case of treaties, it is decades. Major milestones have been selected as a measure as they better demonstrate progress in negotiations. Milestones can vary between different types of agreements and may include: receiving a negotiation mandate from Treasury Board, bringing a formal offer of lands and/of cash to a negotiation, formal acceptance of an offer by a First Nation, concluding an incremental agreement or concluding a full agreement. The intention is that the milestones are an indicator of substantial progress in a negotiation.

These performance measure targets are based on emerging trends from the current fiscal year forecast to the 2024/25 year forecast. The target remains relatively flat as the measure counts agreement negotiation milestones at a point in time. For example, new agreements will be counted when they are mandated, again when they are recommended to the principals³, again when they are signed, but then removed from the count the following year. These numbers will be non-cumulative, but the targets are intended to reflect that we are maintaining the current pace of negotiations.

Generating out-year targets is difficult due to the nature of negotiations and uncertain funding under the Negotiation Plan contingency fund. Out-year targets are based on shorter term trends and reflect conservative progress.

Performance Measure	2023/24 Forecast	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target
[2b] First Nations within British Columbia exercising self-governance. ¹	10	10	11	14

¹This measure specifies 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.

Discussion

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 specifies the number of First Nations within British Columbia exercising self-governance 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. Targets show a moderate growth trend, as this measure is a cumulative count

³ 'principals' refers to the parties who can act on behalf of the Nation(s) to sign an agreement.

anticipated to increase slowly year-to-year and reflect moderate growth year-to-year as new agreements are signed and implemented.

Financial Summary

(\$000s)	2023/24 Restated Estimates ¹	2024/25 Estimates	2025/26 Plan	2026/27 Plan
Operating Expenses				
Negotiations and Regional Operations Division	16,187	17,897	17,897	17,897
Strategic Partnerships and Initiatives Division	22,617	24,763	25,183	25,183
Reconciliation Transformation and Strategies Division	3,419	3,558	3,558	3,558
Executive and Support Services	12,705	12,784	12,784	12,784
Treaty and Other Agreements Funding	116,159	94,704	96,974	108,512
Declaration Act Secretariat	4,431	4,567	4,567	4,567
First Citizens Fund	1,716	1,823	2,046	2,209
Total	177,234	160,096	163,009	174,710
Capital Expenditures				
Executive and Support Services	3	3	3	3
Total	3	3	3	3
Other Financing Transactions				
British Columbia First Nations Gaming Revenue Sharing Limited Partnership				
Disbursements	110,000	100,000	101,000	104,000
Receipts	(110,000)	(100,000)	(101,000)	(104,000)
Net Cash Requirements (Source)	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000
Land Transfers				
Disbursements ²	39,800	43,867	0,000	0,000
Receipts	(0,000)	(0,000)	(0,000)	(0,000)
Net Cash Requirements (Source)	39,800	43,867	0,000	0,000
Total Disbursements	149,800	143,867	101,000	104,000
Total Receipts	(110,000)	(100,000)	(101,000)	(104,000)
Total Net Cash Requirements (Source)	39,800	43,867	0,000	0,000

¹ For comparative purposes, amounts shown for 2023/24 have been restated to be consistent with the presentation of the 2024/25 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 a central agency 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.

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 9, 2024, the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation is responsible and accountable for the following:

[BC Treaty Commission](#)⁴

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](#)⁵

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.

⁴ With reference to the BC Treaty Commission, responsibility and accountability is limited and defined through [the Treaty Commission Act](#).

⁵ With reference to the Haida Gwaii Management Council, responsibility and accountability is limited and defined through the [Kunst'aa guu – Kunst'aayah Reconciliation Protocol](#).

