

Framework Agreement

THIS AGREEMENT is made in duplicate this 1st day of February 2017.

BETWEEN

HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN
in right of the Province of Alberta,
as represented by the Minister of
Indigenous Relations
(hereinafter referred to as “Alberta”)

AND

THE MÉTIS NATION OF ALBERTA,
which has incorporated the Métis Nation of
Alberta Association
to act as its legal and administrative arm,
as represented by its President
(hereinafter referred to as the “MNA”)

(hereinafter referred to collectively as the “Parties” and individually as a “Party”)

WHEREAS a distinct Indigenous people—known as the Métis Nation—emerged in west central North America with their own language (Michif), culture, traditions, and way of life and forms of self-governance;

AND WHEREAS the Supreme Court of Canada has recognized that this Métis people was one of the Indigenous peoples who were living on the Prairies prior to Canada’s westward expansion as a country following Confederation;

AND WHEREAS Alberta recognizes and respects the Métis Nation’s unique history, traditions, culture and rights as an Indigenous people within Alberta as well as its important role in the history and development of western Canada generally and Alberta specifically;

AND WHEREAS section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, states that “the existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed” and that “the ‘aboriginal peoples of Canada’ includes the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples;”

AND WHEREAS the Supreme Court of Canada has recognized that the fundamental objective of the modern law of aboriginal and treaty rights is the reconciliation of Aboriginal peoples and non-Aboriginal peoples and their respective claims, interests and ambitions;

AND WHEREAS the MNA receives its mandate to represent members of the MNA living within Alberta (“Citizens”) through a centralized registration system wherein Citizens voluntarily authorize the MNA to promote, pursue, and defend aboriginal, legal, constitutional and other rights of Métis in Alberta and Canada;

AND WHEREAS these Citizens are democratically represented through the MNA’s Provincial Council, Regional Councils and Local Councils, which work—together—to provide effective and accountable representation of Citizens across Alberta;

AND WHEREAS Alberta recognizes the MNA’s representative role on behalf of its Citizens and is committed to working with the MNA, on a nation-to-nation basis, through this Framework Agreement, in order to advance reconciliation and enhance the MNA-Alberta relationship through recognition, collaboration, respect for Métis rights and working towards the advancement of Métis self-government and self-determination;

AND WHEREAS Alberta and the MNA have worked cooperatively for many decades in order to improve the socio-economic conditions of Alberta Métis, and, through this Framework Agreement, re-commit to working together on joint planning and developing collaborative policies, initiatives and programs that attempt to close the gap between Alberta Métis and other Albertans;

AND WHEREAS Alberta and the MNA also agree to work collaboratively through this Framework Agreement in order to find shared and practical understandings on how the principles set out in the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* can be implemented in Alberta in a manner that is consistent with the Canadian Constitution and Alberta law;

NOW THEREFORE Alberta and the MNA covenant and agree as follows:

1. PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of this Framework Agreement is to:

- Promote and facilitate the advancement of Alberta Métis by providing a process through which the parties will work cooperatively to develop and implement methods and measures to address the agreed needs and aspirations of Citizens as well as to preserve Métis identity and cultural heritage throughout Alberta.
- Build upon and enhance the respectful and cooperative relationship between Alberta and the MNA through clarifying and defining the nation-to-nation relationship between the parties as well as promoting reconciliation between Aboriginal peoples and non-Aboriginal peoples through the advancement of Métis rights.

2. PRIORITY ACTIONS

In order to achieve the purpose of this Framework Agreement, the Parties agree to the following priority actions:

2.1 Renewing and Strengthening the Nation-to-Nation Relationship between the Parties

In support of this goal, the Parties agree to:

- An annual meeting between the Premier of Alberta and the MNA President to discuss mutually agreeable subject matters and the progress achieved through the Framework Agreement;
- Quarterly meetings between the Minister of Indigenous Relations and the MNA President in order to assess the progress being made through the Framework Agreement;
- Recognition and support for the MNA's organizational structure, including negotiating a mutually agreeable multi-year arrangement to provide core operational funding to the MNA as well as other potential funding arrangements on a case-by-case basis to support the purpose and priority actions contemplated under the Framework Agreement;
- Engage with the Government of Canada in relation to the existing Alberta-Canada-MNA tripartite self-government negotiation process as well as the implications of the Supreme Court of Canada's decision in *Daniels v. Canada* for Alberta Métis;

- Discussing options for the legislative recognition of the MNA and its governance structures; and
- Other initiatives mutually agreed to by the Parties.

2.2 Facilitating the recognition and respect of Métis rights in Alberta that upholds the honour of the Crown and advances reconciliation

In support of this objective, the Parties agree to:

- Undertake appropriate collaborative historic and contemporary research on Métis communities in Alberta;
- Explore developing evidence informed, policy-based approaches to Métis rights recognition and related issues;
- Work towards the development of a non-Settlement Métis Consultation Policy that is consistent with provincial Aboriginal consultation policies in force in Alberta, subject to provincial Cabinet approval;
- Pursue collaborative discussions with the Ministry of Environment and Parks with respect to Métis harvesting rights;
- Pursue collaborative discussions with the Government of Canada on Métis rights issues, collaborative research and the Crown's consultation duties, where appropriate; and
- Other initiatives mutually agreed to by the Parties.

2.3 Develop a 'whole-of- government' approach to Métis issues that is culturally relevant, relies on evidenced-based and informed strategies and enhances the socio-economic well-being of Alberta Métis

In support of this goal, the Parties agree to:

- Facilitate strategic, collaborative MNA-Alberta partnerships across government;
- Work on developing a mutually agreeable approach to increase Alberta's engagement with the MNA in relation to its appointment process for provincial agencies, boards and commissions with a view to increasing MNA and/or Métis representation;
- Develop mechanisms that promote Alberta Ministries engaging with the MNA in the development of and design of policies, programs and initiatives that impact Alberta Métis;
- Work collaboratively to develop Métis-specific policies, programs and services that address the unique socio-economic needs and realities of Alberta Métis, including the potential delegation of appropriate provincial programs and services to the MNA;
- Develop capacity within Alberta to work with the MNA on research and assessment of Métis-specific socio-economic needs, outcomes and provincial service utilization through empirical data, including the potential use of the MNA's Citizenship registry; and
- Other initiatives mutually agreed to by the Parties.

2.4 Increase economic opportunities for Alberta Métis with a view to enhancing community and individual wellbeing

In support of this goal, the Parties agree to:

- Develop the capacity of Métis individuals, businesses and communities to participate in economic opportunities;
- Improve the health and wellbeing of Alberta Métis;
- Improve academic achievement levels, learning outcomes as well as employment and training opportunities for Alberta Métis;
- Improve housing conditions and access to housing for Alberta Métis;
- Improve Métis access to justice and pursue Métis restorative justice measures;
- Improve the access that Alberta Métis have to provincial services, including health, education, and social supports;
- Pursue initiatives to support Métis children, youth and seniors; and
- Other initiatives mutually agreed to by the Parties.

3. STRATEGIES

3.1 Strategic Partnership Development and Joint Planning

3.1.2 Joint Planning

To facilitate appropriate participation of the MNA in the design of Alberta policies and programs which significantly affect its Citizens, the Parties will support joint planning and action between Alberta Ministries and the MNA. The MNA's identified primary interests include, but are not limited to:

- Environment and Climate Change;
- Education and Training;
- Health and Wellness;
- Women's Issues;
- Economy and Employment;
- Housing and Infrastructure; and
- Culture and Heritage.

Subject to appropriations by the Legislative Assembly, funding to support sector specific work plans in the above-mentioned joint planning areas will be determined annually through negotiations between the MNA and relevant Ministries.

3.2 Coordinating Committee of Senior Officials

In the interests of achieving the goals of this Framework Agreement and the joint planning set out above, the Parties agree to the creation of a Coordinating Committee of Senior Officials, co-chaired by one representative appointed by the MNA and one representative appointed by Alberta. The Coordinating Committee will also include the Deputy Ministers or designate from each of the participating Ministries. The Coordinating Committee will work collaboratively to identify and propose policy direction to the MNA President and relevant Alberta Ministers as well as call upon individuals, agencies, other institutions and resources as required to ensure strategies are in accordance with the intent and purpose of this Agreement. In order to guide its work, the Coordinating Committee shall develop mutually agreeable terms of reference and be required to prepare an annual report on its progress.

4. CAPACITY AND FUNDING

4.1 The Parties will work together to identify the capacity requirements necessary to develop and implement the goals, priority actions and strategies referred to in paragraphs 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, and 3.1, and 3.2 of this Framework Agreement.

4.2 Where agreed upon, the Parties will work to develop and implement capacity building strategies to enhance the organizational, administrative and managerial capacity of the MNA, including its Local Councils and Regional Councils, including the development and implementation of a MNA business plan.

4.3 Subject to appropriation by the Legislative Assembly, a contribution towards the core funding of the operations of the MNA as well as support for its participation in the process set out by this Framework Agreement will be provided by the Government of Alberta through a funding agreement negotiated between the MNA and Alberta.

4.4 The parties agree that efforts will be made for multi-year contribution agreements to be achieved.

4.5 Subject to appropriation by the Legislative Assembly, the MNA and other Government of Alberta Ministries will enter into additional funding arrangements to support specific, mutually agreed upon objectives that will be identified in the business plans of the MNA and Government of Alberta Ministries.

5. REVIEW

5.1 The Parties will develop mutually agreeable Terms of Reference for a joint review of progress.

5.2 Based upon these Terms of Reference, a joint review on progress of the Framework Agreement will be conducted in 2018, 2021 and 2024 to assess the progress being made regarding the priority items identified in this Framework Agreement.

6. EXISTING AND FUTURE AGREEMENTS

6.1 Government of Alberta Ministries with existing funding relationships with the MNA will be encouraged to ensure that renewals or changes will be consistent with the objectives of this Framework Agreement.

7. NON-DEROGATION

- 7.1 Nothing in this Framework Agreement affects, abrogates or derogates from, or recognizes, affirms or creates any rights of the Métis people or Métis communities in Alberta.**
- 7.2 Nothing in this Framework Agreement shall be construed so as to limit or expand the responsibilities and authorities of Alberta Ministries, departments and agencies in relation to their respective mandates.**
- 7.3 The language and terms employed in this Framework Agreement are not intended to have legal meaning or effect or connote the legal positions of either the MNA or Alberta.**

8. GENERAL

- 8.1 The term of this Framework Agreement shall be from the date it is signed by both Parties until March 31, 2027.**
- 8.2 The progress evaluation in 2024 referred to above may provide the basis for possible renewal of this Framework Agreement in 2027.**
- 8.3 This Framework Agreement may be amended from time-to-time by mutual consent in writing and renewed for a subsequent term.**
- 8.4 Nothing in this Framework Agreement shall be construed so as to limit or restrict access by the MNA to other sources of potential provincial support and funding consistent with applicable policies and programs and services criteria.**
- 8.5 This Framework Agreement is not legally binding, but reflects the Parties’ intentions and political commitments to each other.**

IN WITNESS WHEREOF this Framework Agreement has been executed as of the date first written above.

Original Signed

Audrey Poitras
President
Métis Nation of Alberta

Original Signed

Rachel Notley
Premier
Government of Alberta

Original Signed

Member of Provincial Council
Métis Nation of Alberta

Original Signed

Richard Feehan
Minister of Indigenous
Government of Alberta