



Community-Based Climate Monitoring Initiative

Engagement Phase 2018 - 19 Highlights



OVERVIEW

The Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) Community-Based Climate Monitoring Initiative (CBCM) aims to design and implement an environmental monitoring program to understand the effects of climate change on the Métis community. The initiative has a three-phased approach:



WHAT WE DID

As part of the engagement phase, sessions were held across all six MNA regions (i.e. three sessions per region) by the Climate Leadership team between October 2018 and February 2019. Locations were selected based on Métis population centres around Alberta. The feedback provided will shape the program as it moves forward into *Phase 2: Planning*. Each session focused around discussion of two key questions:

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- What are some key areas of concern (in terms of climate and environment) in your region?
- How would a Métis monitoring program be carried out? What are the key components?



BY THE NUMBERS

- **249** citizens in **18** different communities participated.
- **194** participants (**78%** of all attendees) completed a survey to provide feedback and demographic information for quality assurance.
- **89%** of survey responses agreed they would recommend the workshop to other communities.
- Over **100** session attendees agreed or strongly agreed their awareness of climate initiatives, such as community-based monitoring, increased because of the MNA's CBCM engagements.
- **70%** of attendees agreed or strongly agreed the workshop helped to explain how MNA initiatives and programs are developed.
- Nearly **40%** of session attendees surveyed indicated that having round-table discussion time was their favorite part of the session, as they were able to share and hear other Métis community members and Elders.
- More than **20** critical issues were identified by citizens for a successful, Métis-specific program to be developed, including harvesting related challenges, land use, and water quality among others.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

Based on overall CBCM themes heard from MNA citizens, the recommendations/next steps for Phase 2 are:

- **Report to Community Members on Engagement Phase [This Report]:** Continue involving and collaborating with community participants throughout the CBCM program development process.
- **Develop a Community-led Advisory/Decision-making Entity** such as a committee of selected Métis to advise or make decisions related to environment and climate change.
- **Complete a Scan of Currently Available Data and Resources:** Find available monitoring programs and areas to avoid overlap, as the MNA does not want to replicate data which already exists at selected sites.
- **Develop a Traditional Knowledge Protocol** which encouraging transfer of knowledge, while protecting sensitive information from misuse.
- **Conduct a Pilot Project:** Design and complete an initial MNA environmental monitoring program to determine strengths and weaknesses for future projects.

WHAT WE HEARD



Citizens are concerned changes to the climate will ultimately lead to environmental problems, resulting in a loss of Métis traditional and cultural knowledge and practices, and a decline in the health of Métis individuals and their communities. The MNA is taking a holistic approach for this initiative, as it is not just limited to climate change. Therefore, this initiative will be known as **Askîy** (Earth); balancing environmental monitoring with MNA citizen feedback in a culturally sensitive way.

The results of the MNA's CBCM engagement sessions provided the following key themes per question:

Question 1:

What are some key areas of concern (in terms of climate and environment) in your region?

Plant and Animal Biodiversity Loss threatens traditional Métis practices such as harvesting and medicine making, displaces animal populations, and increases invasive species.

Water Quality and Quantity Concerns: Ecosystem changes in plant and animal life such as lower fish populations, increases in wildfires due to droughts, changes in precipitation patterns, and lower water levels in lakes and streams.

Land Use: Restricted land access due to industry (agriculture, oil, and gas) and recreational use (human), increased pollution, and deforestation.

Question 2:

How would a Métis monitoring program be carried out? What are the key components?

Youth and Elder led: The MNA provides opportunities for the transfer of knowledge to preserve the Métis ways of life and pass cultural practices on to future generations.

Community-driven: The new program offers paid and volunteer positions locally and includes communities throughout the engagement, design, implementation, and decision-making process.

Protection of Traditional Knowledge: The program monitors the cause of plant and animal losses using strong Métis-specific data management tools.

Partnerships and Relationship Building: Other organizations help monitor areas such as Traditional Land Use Areas and other local areas to achieve long term program success.

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