**British Columbia First Nations’ Data Governance Initiative**

**COMMUNICATIONS PROTOCOL**

1. **Introduction**

This document represents a protocol on communications between the British Columbia First Nations Health Council (FNHC), Province of British Columbia (B.C.), and the Government of Canada (the Parties) regarding the Joint Work arising from the document entitled “BC First Nations’ Data Governance Initiative Strategic Framework”, signed March 2014, which has been agreed to by the Parties.

2. **Purpose**

The purpose of the Communications Protocol is to outline the key principles and communications requirements for the Implementation of the B.C. First Nations’ Data Governance Initiative. The Communications Protocol will guide the BC First Nations Data Governance Strategic Initiative Team members throughout Framework implementation:

- **Champions** - High Level Oversight and Political Engagement
  - FNHC (representing broad political mandates), MARR and AANDC

- **Social Policy** - Data Governance Standards Development

- **Tripartite Coordination Team** - Project Coordination and Data Management Standards Development
  - AANDC Data and Policy, FNHA Data and Policy, FNTC, MARR (Provincial Data Reps)

- **Project Charter: Active Measures** (FNESC/SA, FNSDS, HRDC/ASET, AANDC...)

- **Project Charter: Identity Management** (FNHA, MOH,...)

- **Additional Project Charters**: to implement specific activities, at the organizational level

- **First Nation Community Demonstration Sites**

- **Project Implementation** – Data Collection and Reporting

Demonstration Sites.

The Parties recognize the importance of building and sustaining strong relationships to effectively and efficiently carry out future work. Excellent communication is a key component of strong relationships, and this Protocol is
meant to guide communications between and among the Parties.

The Protocol will guide joint communications efforts by the Parties, both individually and collectively, with media and the public on the implementation of the B.C. First Nations’ Data Governance Initiative.

3. Key Objectives

- To strengthen the relationships of the Parties by working in an atmosphere of trust, openness and respect;
- To ensure messaging is delivered in a timely manner;
- To establish and maintain positive, joint communications whenever possible;
- To develop common and consistent messaging when presenting and discussing the Initiative with stakeholders, media and third parties; and
- To establish a “no surprises” approach to communications.

This Protocol is not intended to hinder or discourage any of the Parties from moving forward on individual communication efforts when they determine the need to do so.

4. Guiding Principles

The key guiding principle in the conduct of communications activities for the implementation of the B.C. First Nations’ Data Governance Initiative is to ensure the use of common, consistent messaging about efforts taken to improve the governance, measuring and reporting on investments in First Nations well-being in a spirit of cooperation and partnership between all Parties.

The protocol is based on the following guiding principles:

- The implementation of the Strategic Framework for the B.C. First Nations’ Data Governance Initiative is a shared endeavour and public discussion impacts on the process and on the Parties individually.
- The Parties will utilize the same collaborative approach for communications that is used during Joint Tripartite Coordination Team meetings.
- The Parties are committed to creating awareness about the Initiative and its implementation, and what it means to First Nations people in the Province of British Columbia.
• The Parties will work together in an atmosphere of:
  ◦ trust, mutual respect and understanding; and
  ◦ flexibility, co-operation and openness.
• The Parties recognize the need to maintain an open process for sharing information, without compromising the work of the respective Parties.
• The Parties acknowledge that there may be times when a Party determines there is a need to move forward on individual communications efforts; however attempts will be made to issue joint tripartite press releases and backgrounders for the purpose of maintaining public perception that The Parties worked together on this initiative.
• The Parties are cognizant of and will respect that each Party has its own internal briefing and decision-making processes.
• The Parties appreciate the requirement for timely sharing of information and will make every effort to meet established deadlines.

5. Application
The Protocol applies to joint communication efforts between the Parties and single Party communications that deal with the Tripartite Coordination Team arising from the implementation of the B.C. First Nations’ Data Governance Initiative.

6. Procedure
With respect to the Joint Tripartite Coordination Team’s work on implementation of the B.C. First Nations’ Data Governance Initiative, the Parties will adhere to the following protocols:
  • Overall
    ○ On communications efforts, the Parties will develop joint communications strategies and messaging.
  • Communicating with the Public
    ○ All public information materials will be shared with the Parties prior to distribution.
  • Communicating with First Nations Peoples and First Nation Organizations
The Parties agree that when opportunities arise to create awareness with First Nations Peoples and First Nation Organizations, that Gwen Phillips, the Initiative’s First Nation Champion, will lead these discussions whenever possible.

- **Consulting with Stakeholders:**
  - Before contacting another Party’s internal stakeholders with respect to the Joint Working Committee work, the Parties will inform and seek guidance and/or approval from the other Parties.

- **Joint Communications Products**
  - On joint communications efforts, the Parties will utilize the communications strategies and messaging approved by each Party.
  - Parties will provide the other Parties with advance notification, as soon as possible, of interviews or communications products such as letters to the editor, op ed pieces, or media releases and backgrounders distributed from their respective organizations.

- **News Releases and Backgrounders**
  - The Parties will endeavour to issue joint news release when this initiative is ready for announcement.
  - The Parties will mutually agree on the provision of quotes from the designated representatives of Canada, B.C. and the FNHC.
  - Each Party will provide each of the other Parties with copies of communications products intend for public release such as media releases distributed to the media.
  - Each Party will provide each of the other Parties with information about what was communicated when discussing the Joint Tripartite Coordination Team work on the Implementation of the Initiative with the media.

- **Signage**
  - All Parties will ensure that appropriate signage, as provided by Canada, B.C., and the FNHC, will be given equal prominence in the location where the media event is held.

- **Cost Sharing**
Unless otherwise agreed, Canada, B.C. and the FNHC will discuss the costs associated with the development and delivery of communications products and activities on an as needed basis. This would apply to literature, letterheads, media distribution, and organization of joint media conferences or other material as established by the Parties.

7. Approval and Amendment

This Protocol is established by approval of the Joint Tripartite Coordination Team of the B.C. First Nations’ Data Governance Initiative and amendments require the approval of the Joint Tripartite Coordination Team.

Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, British Columbia

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada

First Nations Health Council