

Terms of Reference for the Indigenous Food and Wellness Advisory (IFWA)

Supporting Indigenous-led, distinction-based tools for food and wellness in British Columbia

Project Summary

In 2019, Canada's food guide was updated with the goal of being more relevant to all Canadians. However, the need for distinctions-based healthy eating tools for Indigenous peoples has been clearly identified by many across B.C., including the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA), Indigenous Health team leaders within regional health authorities, the Métis Nation of BC, the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres, and Indigenous communities directly.

In conjunction with the release of the 2019 Canadian food guide, the the BC Ministry of Health (HLTH) was endorsed to lead a task group to support implementation of Canada's food guide across policy and practice. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, priorities were forced to shift and therefore some of this work has been stalled.

In 2021, the Population and Public Health Division, BC Ministry of Health and the Office of Nutrition Policy and Promotion, Health Canada held discussions around collaborating on a joint initiative to support the development of distinctions based tools. These discussions allowed for a federal transfer of funds to HLTH, who would facilitate this work in BC. HLTH proposed that this project be Indigenous-led, and transferred funds to Indigenous Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation Council (ISPARC) to lead the project. ISPARC will be working alongside HLTH, as well as Alderhill Planning Inc (An Indigenous-owned planning firm), to support the goals of this project.

Beginning in Summer 2022, the first project milestone is the establishment of an Indigenous-led project advisory, which will provide oversight, guidance, and advice to support the development of distinctions-based tools related to food and wellness in B.C. The Advisory will develop an engagement plan (Phase 1) for Indigenous health system partners, health champions and communities across B.C., based on the distinct and diverse needs for tools on food and wellness of Indigenous communities from across the province. The advisory will continue supporting and directing this project through Phases 2 and 3 until project completion, which is projected for March, 2025 (for timeline details, see below).

Once the priorities are determined, Indigenous-led development of tools to address the priorities identified will follow. The final phase of the project will consist of the launch and communications to promote the tools.

Given the historical harms suffered by Indigenous peoples from government policies around food and nutrition it is critical that the process undertaken is Indigenous-led, culturally safe and improves the resources available to Indigenous peoples. The ultimate guiding values for the project are that it is self-determined (meaning that Indigenous communities and organizations will direct the project) and honors Indigenous food sovereignty. This work seeks to uphold the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and progress the Calls to Action on health identified by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC), specifically closing the gap in health outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities and recognizing and raising up Indigenous knowledge and traditional practices¹. This project is being undertaken with the desire to raise up Indigenous knowledge and strengths, ensure reciprocity and develop processes and outcomes that will be meaningful to as many communities as possible.

Membership

The Advisory will consist of 10 Indigenous individuals and/or individuals who have been selected to represent an Indigenous community/organization. Membership is intended to be inclusive of broad geographic and demographic representation (inclusive of diverse ages and genders). At **least** one seat each will be reserved for an Elder representative, a youth representative, and the group will seek additional diverse perspectives including 2SLGBTQQAANP+².

Members of the Advisory will *ideally* have at least 2 years of experience (academic, professional or lived) within any of the fields below:

- Food and nutrition
- Indigenous knowledge systems.
- Use of Indigenous knowledges alongside other forms of knowing (i.e. western science) related to food and wellness.
- Indigenous-led food and wellness planning initiatives.
- Indigenous engagement, participation, collaboration, and partnership.

Working Group Mandate

The overall mandate of the Advisory is to provide advice on engagement methodologies and project direction for distinctions-based food and wellness tools. Once the engagement plan is complete (Sept. 30th), the Advisory will continue to support ISPARC, Ministry of Health, and Alderhill by debriefing engagements, reassessing the engagement plan as needed, and

¹ UNDRIP Articles: 3, 4, 21.1, 23, 24.2, 29.3. TRC Calls To Action: 22.

² Two Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transexual, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Assexual, Agender, Non-binary, Pansexual plus any other gender or sexual identities.

providing feedback on the creation of the tools. The Advisory and Alderhill will work to ensure that the tools appropriately reflect the voices heard throughout engagements.

Timeline

PHASE 1: Planning & Engagement (July 2022 – May 2023)

Number of Advisory meetings projected: 6-8

There will be two half-day meetings (or three, two-hour meetings) during September, 2022, which will determine an engagement plan. Following September, meetings will be held as needed, until project completion.

August 26, 2022	Establishment of Advisory
September 6 - September 30, 2022	Development of engagement plan
October 1, 2022 - February 2023	Engagement with Indigenous health system partners, health champions and communities across B.C. to determine the distinct and diverse needs for tools on food and wellness.
March, 2023	Development of engagement summary report
April 2023 to May 2023	Analysis of findings from engagement

PHASE 2: Development & Consultation (May 2023 – September 2024)

Number of Advisory meetings projected: 4

May 2023 to February 2024	Development of one or more tools to support priorities identified in Phase I
February 2024 to March 2024	Development of consultation plan to gather feedback on draft tools
April 2024 to May 2024	Implementation of consultation plan on draft tools
May 2024 to June 2024	Analysis and integration of feedback from consultation and development of summary report
July 2024 to September 2024	Finalization of tools

PHASE 3: Launch & Communications (July 2024 – March 2025)

Number of Advisory meetings projected: 2-4

July 2024 to September 2024	Development of communication and dissemination plan
October 2024 to February 2025	Implementation of communication and dissemination plan
March 2025	Development of a summary report on launch and communications

Roles

IFWA Members will advise this project by:

- Attending meetings, when available, via Zoom video conferencing (most of these meetings will be half-day [4-hour] sessions).
- Participating in other activities (such as questionnaires) to provide additional feedback.
- Selecting a Chair to liaise closely with Alderhill, ISPARC, Ministry of Health and other IFWA members between meetings. The Chair will be selected in phase II and will be the default Spokesperson for IFWA (with the power to delegate this role to another member) and will be the signatory to any formal correspondence.

Alderhill Planning inc. will provide administrative support to the Advisory by:

- Working to create a safe, supportive meeting space.
- Scheduling meetings and sending meeting invitations.
- Keeping high-level, record-of-decision meeting minutes to be circulated to members as soon as possible after each meeting (within a week's time).
- Conducting research or providing research services to inform the Advisory's discussions and decisions.
- Maintaining regular and prompt correspondence with the Advisory.
- Managing the Advisory's records, including maintaining an accessible group folder to make records available to members.
- Coordinating compensation and reimbursement of costs to Advisory members.

ISPARC and Ministry of Health will:

- Work closely with Alderhill and the Chair in structuring agendas and materials.

- Practice active and attentive listening during meetings.
- Provide appropriate personnel to lead technical discussions as required.

Shared Values and Guiding Agreements

It is desired for the Advisory, ISPARC, Ministry of Health, and Alderhill to embody the values identified below. The key values are:

Respect: Recognize and uphold the knowledge systems, laws, epistemologies (worldview, traditions, cultures) of Indigenous peoples; within their historic and contemporary experiences. Respect also links to reconciliation, which requires reciprocity and responsibility.

Collaboration: Indigenous-led processes are key to creating effective and culturally appropriate tools for food and wellbeing. Meaningful co-management, partnerships and new opportunities with Indigenous governments, communities and organizations must be prioritized.

Holism: Food and wellness tools must acknowledge the interconnectedness of all beings (animate and inanimate) to ensure regenerative practices that work to sustain life of all forms.

Addressing Inequities: Food and wellness tools must acknowledge and respond to food and wellness access and other existing inequities and structural barriers.

Working effectively: To collaborate with each other in a transparent and open manner, building trust and relationships in the pursuit of advancing food and wellness in B.C.

Clear, consensus-based recommendations: In order to understand and contribute to the development of any initiatives, we will use clear language and strive to address all concerns and incorporate different perspectives into engagement plans and tool development.

Equity and inclusion: All parties involved, including Advisory members, the Alderhill team, ISPARC and the Ministry of Health will strive for balanced representation and no one's voice will be heard louder than another's.

Meeting Protocols

The Advisory Group will:

- Strive for consensus in their feedback and advice to ISPARC and Ministry of Health.
- Respect other members' confidentiality by sharing ideas, not names, outside of group meetings.
- Strive for meetings that support wellbeing; including flexibility, ceremony, check-ins, visual aids, sufficient breaks, and follow-up for members who can't attend. Extra wellbeing support can also be made available by request after meetings that are triggering for members.
- Meet online via Zoom or by phoning in.

Compensation

Advisory members will be provided an honoraria of \$250 for any meetings ranging from 2.5-4 hours and \$150 for meetings under 2.5 hours. \$50 will be provided to all members who complete a questionnaire/survey or provide additional commentary outside of meetings.