



Commitment examples and suggestions

Movement of the Grand Economic Circle of Indigenous Peoples and Quebec (GECIPQ)

Document intended for Quebec businesses and municipalities

COMMITMENT – PARTNERSHIP – RECONCILIATION

A movement towards greater inclusion of Indigenous peoples in the Quebec economy

Many businesses and municipalities in Quebec wish to invest in the movement of reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and contribute to strengthening economic relations. However, many of them are wondering what to do, what the right approach is, and especially, where to begin?

In 2021, Indigenous peoples adopted a vision for the future in terms of economic development. A vision in which their strengths, combined with those of the business community and civil society of Quebec, would allow all their ambitions to come to fruition. A vision, which when realized, will change not only the economic situation of Indigenous peoples, but also Quebec's.

Inspired by this vision of the future, this document contains suggestions for commitments with the potential to generate measurable, tangible, and significant benefits for a better inclusion of Indigenous peoples in the Quebec economy, particularly in the areas of housing, tourism, employment and training, entrepreneurship and reconciliation.

“Establishing constructive, mutually beneficial relationships and partnerships with Indigenous communities will contribute to their economic growth, improve community health and well-being, and ensure environmental sustainability that will ultimately benefit Indigenous peoples and all Canadians.”

Excerpt of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, p.305

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1. HOUSING

CURRENT SITUATION	<p>The housing problems in many Indigenous communities are glaring. They are partly caused by the financial constraints of the Indian Act and exacerbated by population growth. The number of housing units is insufficient to meet all needs, and many of these units require major repairs. Significant social and health issues arise from this, such as overcrowding and homelessness. Due to a lack of housing, many members of our peoples are forced to leave our communities to live in cities.</p> <p>The gap continues to grow between the Indigenous communities and the rest of Quebec. On average, 200 to 250 units are built in these communities per year while the need is for 10,435 units over 5 years.</p>
VISION OF THE FUTURE	<p>The housing catch-up efforts are taking off and construction activities in our communities are substantially increased. Indigenous peoples are important players in this growth with the support of committed partners.</p> <p>Our members have access to safe, adequate, and healthy housing that meets their needs and in sufficient quantities. They have barrier-free access to individual property.</p> <p>Indigenous suppliers in the field of construction and related fields operate in a viable environment with prospects that go beyond the short term; opportunities are available to them both inside and outside our communities.</p>
EXAMPLES OF COMMITMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish measures to facilitate access to financing and individual property.• Offer loans to Indigenous individuals or communities with borrowing costs, deadlines, approval criteria and conditions that are similar to those available outside their communities.• Support financially (or in any other way) the construction of housing that is adapted to the needs and realities of the Indigenous populations in communities or in urban areas.• Support the renovation, repair, and decontamination of housing.• Conclude agreements with a neighbouring Indigenous community to allow for the sharing of services and infrastructure such as the water supply network, waste collection, street lighting, etc.• Create partnerships to support housing for homeless or low-income Indigenous people.• Support affordable and culturally adapted social housing projects intended for certain targeted Indigenous groups (transitional housing, shelters for women and families, accommodations for students, etc.).• Support and simplify the process for the building of social housing for Indigenous people in urban areas.

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2. EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

CURRENT SITUATION	<p>Currently, the unemployment rate among First Nations is three times higher than Quebec's. The employment rate in the communities stands at 41.8% compared to 59.9% in Quebec. More than half of our working age members do not have a high school diploma, which directly impacts their ability to land a job.</p> <p>Systemic discrimination and racism pose significant barriers to the urban employability of the Indigenous workforce.</p>
VISION OF THE FUTURE	<p>Our population, whose average age is lower than Quebec's, is an integral part of the solution to alleviate the labour shortage that Quebec is currently facing. The unemployment rate in our communities has significantly decreased thanks to the creation of new jobs. Young people are supported in pursuing their studies and the graduation rate is on the rise.</p> <p>Our members and our businesses participate in the realization of major economic development projects in Quebec. They hold quality jobs in various fields.</p> <p>Quebec businesses are made aware of our realities and our members are effectively integrated into their work teams. The business community relies on the knowledge of our organizations to ensure that our members are properly integrated into their jobs.</p>
EXAMPLES OF COMMITMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase representativeness and promote equitable access for Indigenous peoples to jobs, management positions and professional development opportunities.• Create positions or offer internships intended specifically for Indigenous people.• Promote hiring, integration, and retention in terms of employment among Indigenous Peoples, especially young people and women.• Support the advancement and mobility of Indigenous employees among all sectors and employment levels.• Develop or support the creation of training adapted to linguistic, cultural, social, and individual realities that are conducive to academic pursuits.• Offer workshops to raise awareness of Indigenous realities to employees to promote the maintenance of inclusive workplaces.• Offer scholarships to Indigenous students to encourage continued studies.• Offer summer jobs to Indigenous students.• Establish accommodation and support measures for the work-study-family life balance of Indigenous employees or students.

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3. ENTREPRENEURSHIP

CURRENT SITUATION	<p>Our businesses are numerous and diverse, but not well known. They are active mainly in our communities and their services are mainly used by our members.</p> <p>Several factors harm the development of our businesses, including difficulties associated with access to financing. Interest rates are higher, and some assets are more difficult to finance in our communities.</p>
VISION OF THE FUTURE	<p>Our businesses and the overall economic contributions of Indigenous peoples to the Quebec economy are known and recognized. Our businesses can benefit from the same advantages as Quebec businesses (technologies, access to financing, etc.), allowing them to grow and develop.</p> <p>Indigenous entrepreneurs and businesses operate in conditions that allow them to prosper. Large companies and governments have procurement policies that take into account the specificities of our businesses and promote the development of their capacities and their inclusion in the Quebec economy.</p>
EXAMPLES OF COMMITMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create scholarships or competitions to encourage and promote Indigenous entrepreneurship, especially youth and female entrepreneurship.• Implement measures that make it possible to facilitate access to financing and insurance products for Indigenous businesses.• Establish incentives, including funding, internships, and scholarships, to increase Indigenous participation in entrepreneurial training and certification.• Create a consultation committee to promote the inclusion of Indigenous businesses in the regional economy.• Support the promotion of Indigenous products and services, especially through the ID1N identification that is specifically intended for them.• Support the development of the capacities of Indigenous entrepreneurs.• Create conditions in which Indigenous entrepreneurs can thrive locally and regionally through mentoring programs to support the launch and growth of their businesses.• Adopt a minimum annual rate for awarding contracts to Indigenous businesses.• Develop a procurement strategy with Indigenous businesses, in collaboration with economic players and Indigenous nations.• Provide networking opportunities and visibility to Indigenous businesses and entrepreneurs as part of your local or regional events.• Develop tools to support business acquisition (the takeover or purchase of local businesses by Indigenous people).

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4. TOURISM

CURRENT SITUATION	<p>There are more than 250 Indigenous tourism businesses in Quebec, spread across 17 of the 21 tourist regions and in 40 of the 55 Indigenous communities. These businesses are active in four major sectors, namely arts and culture, accommodations and food services, nature and adventure, and hunting and fishing. However, Indigenous tourism businesses unfortunately cannot benefit from the same prosperity as others within the province due to difficulties related to accessing financing or their remote locations, among other things.</p>
VISION OF THE FUTURE	<p>Indigenous tourism continues to grow and is one of the most important economic sectors within our communities. Indispensable Indigenous tourism is considered a must in addition to being a strong vector of rapprochement and one of the greatest strengths of the tourism destination that is Quebec.</p> <p>Access to regions and communities is greatly improved and Indigenous communities are clearly visible as part of Quebec’s tourism offering. Investment in Indigenous tourism is made easier thanks to new programs dedicated to this sector.</p>
EXAMPLES OF COMMITMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote the integration and representativeness of Indigenous communities in the iconography and strong points of local or regional tourism.• Improve signage and directions to Indigenous tourist attractions or to nearby communities.• Create more accessible financing measures for Indigenous tourism.• Provide greater visibility for Indigenous tourist attractions among the main gateways to international tourism, Quebec City and Montreal.• Promote the presence of Indigenous tourism businesses during national or international events.• Establish new financing mechanisms such as “loan guarantees” to compensate for the unseizable nature of promoters “on-reserve”.• Support and promote Indigenous tourism businesses officially recognized by the ID1N.• Establish a lasting partnership with a neighbouring Indigenous community to promote mutually beneficial local impacts.• Support the promotion, development and influence of Indigenous cultures, contemporary artists, and artisans.• Support the organization and holding of Indigenous cultural and artistic events.• Collaborate in the creation and dissemination of exhibitions on Indigenous history.• Integrate elements of Indigenous history and culture into the training of tourist guides.• Collaborate with Indigenous tourism businesses to offer local or regional tourism circuits.

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5. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

CURRENT SITUATION	<p>For a long time, Indigenous peoples have been placed on the sidelines of economic and social development in Quebec, which particularly prevents us from exercising our right to development in accordance with our own needs. The socio-economic context in which we currently operate does not allow us to eliminate the enormous gap that separates our living conditions from those of Quebecers.</p> <p>Although our population is large in certain regions of Quebec, our participation in discussions surrounding their development is rare or completely non-existent, and the business relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people differs from one region to another. The issues related to the occupation and exploitation of the land's resources are an obstacle to the fair participation of Indigenous peoples in territorial development and the resulting major projects.</p>
VISION OF THE FUTURE	<p>Indigenous peoples are recognized as active participants in Quebec's economy rather than as minorities who must be considered. We benefit from equitable access to projects and opportunities in sectors leading to significant and long-term economic and social benefits. The environment is conducive to investments and fair participation of Indigenous peoples in territorial development and the major projects that result from such development.</p> <p>Indigenous businesses are an integral part of the regional business environment. Large companies and governments have procurement policies that promote the development of our businesses and their inclusion in Quebec's economy. The Indigenous workforce is recognized as one of the solutions to the labour shortage in Quebec and Indigenous people are included in strategies to respond to the shortage of workers.</p>
EXAMPLES OF COMMITMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Add one or more Indigenous businesses to the list of your suppliers and/or create long-term partnership agreements with these businesses.• Add a clause to procurement practices that encourages purchasing from Indigenous businesses.• Commit to creating a local economic development consultation committee in collaboration with neighbouring Indigenous communities.• Make your market more accessible to First Nations, Inuit and Métis businesses and increase opportunities for Indigenous-owned businesses.• Promote accessibility to remote regions by improving the quality and diversity of the road and air network.• Conclude agreements aimed at resolving land occupation and resource exploitation issues.• Identify an elected official within your council or a representative of your administration and make them responsible for relations with Indigenous peoples.• Commit to exchanging and communicating on a regular basis with elected officials from Indigenous communities located near your municipality or business.• Increase the participation and representativeness of Indigenous people within consultative and decision-making bodies.• Integrate traditional Indigenous knowledge into the development of strategies for the development and protection of the land and natural spaces.

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6. RECONCILIATION

CURRENT SITUATION	<p>The Indian Act of 1876 and the residential school system, which aimed to separate Indigenous children from their families and cut them off from their culture to assimilate them into the dominant culture, are two major elements of colonial history that have contributed to dissolving Indigenous identity from public space, the social landscape and even historical memory. Many effects are still felt today and are manifested by the many gaps that separate Indigenous people from the rest of the population. In recent years, various commissions of inquiry and other events of a public or political nature have exposed the need for real change and to initiate real reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.</p>
VISION OF THE FUTURE	<p>Strong, lasting ties, which are based on respect, partnership, and recognition of rights, are created with Indigenous peoples with a view to advancing their self-determination and prosperity. Our cultural heritage is respected, protected, and valued because of its integration into Quebec's economy. Indigenous peoples can understand and be understood in the context of political, legal, and administrative procedures. The progress made contributes to reducing and closing the social, economic and health gaps we face.</p> <p>Quebec companies and municipalities have adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and apply its related standards and principles to organizational policies and main operational activities that have an impact on Indigenous peoples, their lands, and their resources. Cities and companies cooperate in good faith with Indigenous peoples before adopting and implementing measures that may affect them in order to obtain their free and informed consent.</p> <p>Indigenous peoples are present and adequately represented in the public and media space. They benefit from objective, balanced and bias-free media coverage.</p>
EXAMPLES OF INITIATIVES	<p>Recognition and promotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.• Support the integration of Indigenous languages into different public areas, activities, and projects.• Review municipal structures, procedures and services that are geared towards the urban Indigenous population with a view to initiating true reconciliation.• Develop collaborative processes while respecting the right of Indigenous peoples to self-determination as guaranteed by articles 3 to 5 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.• Highlight Indigenous history, cultures and languages in your activities, events, establishments, or toponymy.• Participate in or highlight thematic holidays or days, weeks or months related to Indigenous peoples.• Allow employees to benefit from paid leave to mark the days of June 21st and September 30th.• Support the creation of culturally adapted gathering places designed in collaboration with Indigenous peoples.• Recognize the history, historical presence and unceded territory of Indigenous nations and communities in your public interventions.• Include representation of First Nations, Inuit and Métis in historic sites and monuments.• Enhance your collection of Indigenous works of art in your establishments. <p>Fight against racism and discrimination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide employees and managers with training on the history and realities of Indigenous peoples, including topics such as residential schools and Indigenous rights.

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- Combat prejudice and eliminate discrimination to promote tolerance, understanding and good relations between Indigenous peoples and your business or municipality.

Consultation and collaboration

- Create seats designated for Indigenous people on municipal tables and committees.
- Hold meaningful consultations, establish respectful relationships, and obtain the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous peoples before launching economic development projects.

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THE 5 QUALITY CRITERIA OF A COMMITMENT

Do you have an inspiring idea that you want to transform into a commitment in the context of the GECIPQ Movement, but are wondering how to properly formulate said commitment? Starting from the principle that all ideas are good and that the desire to engage in the movement already constitutes an important step forward, your commitment will benefit from being well thought out to ensure its successful realization on all levels.

In any project or process, the targeted goals make it possible to determine the actions to be taken to bring it to a successful conclusion. The well-known SMART method used in project management defines criteria which make it possible to establish ideal, clear, and effective objectives to be achieved.

Inspired by this method, here are the five quality criteria you should keep in mind when formulating an optimal commitment. Please note that these are not necessarily presented in order of importance. Each criterion has equal value in raising the quality of a commitment.

Tangible	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The commitment is clear, specific and unambiguously states what will be accomplished.
Profitable	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The commitment provides for positive spin-offs from which Indigenous peoples will be able to benefit.
Aligned	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The commitment is relevant and consistent with the Vision of the Future of Indigenous peoples.
Collaborative	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The commitment calls for contributions from Indigenous peoples to be achieved.
Unifying	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The commitment contributes to rapprochement and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

In an ideal world, each commitment would meet these five criteria, but since this is not always realistic, we encourage you to consider as many of these criteria as possible. Basing a commitment on one, two or three of these criteria already goes a long way towards ensuring its quality.