

## **Working Together Recommendations**

The values, ideas and lessons reviewed in the previous sections have informed the recommendations of the Working Together Task Force, which have been organized by time frame (short term, medium term, and long term). We want to remind readers that these recommendations have particularly been informed with reference to the vision and values, as well as the four-level perspective on how government-Aboriginal-non profit sector relationships proceed, which have been identified on the first pages of this document.

There are many innovative and positive examples of “working together” across the sectors, but we think that successfully realizing our vision across all four levels involves deep cultural, value-driven change. This requires not only commitment but also the opportunity to exchange ideas, information and promising practices – to show that these principles do work and can be adapted to other areas. Although our recommendations contain several suggestions about establishing a framework, structures, and processes, we do not believe these alone will achieve the results we envision. Indeed, with the tests of accountability and relevance in mind, we have a bias for action and practical results for organizations, communities, and citizens. We must also recognize that the sharing of innovation, stories, and promising practices often occurs through institutions and processes. This implies striking a productive balance between process and outcomes, and with this in mind, we have attempted to identify high-level milestones for each phase as well as expectations for what might have been accomplished. While we have not set out specific indicators and measures, we think this could emerge from more detailed deliberations.

## **Working Together Recommendations**

### *Short Term Initiatives (3 to 6 months)*

These initiatives seek to quickly and formally develop, recognize and galvanize an ongoing relationship between the three sectors. They seek to build off the relationships and understandings that have been developed through the GNPI process and build further momentum. Finally, they seek to foster deeper understanding across the sectors of the distinctive features, practices, perspectives and contributions/strengths of each sector.

1. Ask an all-partner steering committee – perhaps relying on a successor to the GNPI steering committee – to draft a framework for governing the relationship based on the principles, findings, and recommendations of the GNPI process.

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2. Secure approval of the framework from representatives of each sector and, underpinned by a communications strategy, publicly announce the framework.

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3. Continue with a GNPI-style structure (Government, NPS, Aboriginal NPS) to create a process for knowledge exchange, assist with data gathering, promising practices, leadership competencies, and implementation of undertakings.

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4. Identify “champions” in the government, non profit and Aboriginal sectors to work across the boundaries within and across sectors to convey the importance of GNPI and its value proposition.

5. Develop an inventory of current structures in each sector pertaining to the GNPI initiative, outlining innovations and promising practices of working together in BC to build upon, and potential champions inside and outside government to further the goals of the GNPI, including the private sector.

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6. Create a mechanism, building from the current GNPI structure, dedicated to increasing the understanding of the perspectives, practices, and challenges of each sector by moving leaders and staff across the sectors with secondments, position exchanges, and by joint training.

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7. Define simple and practical processes to guide working together at all levels of interaction between the sectors, and, where appropriate, consider structures to enhance and sustain those relationships.

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8. Develop a strategy for securing sufficient funding to ensure that the GNPI can be properly sustained for all sectors, perhaps with a foundation (examples include the recently created Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions and the proposed Pacific Centre for Social Innovation), where interest revenues could support an independent entity dedicated to furthering the relationship between all three sector.

By early 2009 we would expect to see that, following the Fall 2008 Round Table event, there would be a joint announcement by government, non profit, and Aboriginal leaders of a commitment to the framework, and identification of the structures and individuals who would work to implement the framework, including the champions. Task forces with focused mandates would be created to drive progress in the priority areas of furthering knowledge-exchange (see below), developing the inventories of current structures and innovation, mapping practical collaborative processes, and securing sustainable funding. Finally, a government/Aboriginal/NPS exchange program may have been announced.

The result would be that leaders and staff in all three sectors would have increased awareness of the GNPI process and several of its key messages and initiatives. Staff in all three sectors, as well as the public, should also have developed greater appreciation of the value of government/Aboriginal/NPS sector relationships at all levels.

*Medium Term Initiatives (6 to 18 months)*

These initiatives seek to deepen the GNPI relationship by creating a variety of means for exchanging information and perspectives, and strengthening the “legs of the GNPI stool” by encouraging further development of associational structures for each sectors. Several initiatives seek to improve the quality of information, evidence, reporting by developing performance management frameworks that not only capture the perspectives of each sector but also attach value to fostering relationships across the sectors.

9. Develop and implement a knowledge-exchange plan encompassing the following:
  - a. Sponsor an annual summit with the government, Aboriginal, and non profit sector (similar to UBCM meetings) at the provincial and regional level that identifies issues and opportunities, reviews smart practices, research topics, and promotes learning within and across the sectors.
  - b. Develop a web portal for government and the NPS, which could serve as a mechanism to share good practices and report on shifts and transitions in relationships and practices;
  - c. Identify platforms or forums for information-sharing relying on existing structures if they exist or establishing new ones as necessary;
  - d. Identify current pilots and initiatives and documenting learning;
  - e. Link information systems to provide broad based and integrated data for monitoring, planning, and decision making.
  - f. Promote the balanced use of quantitative and qualitative (i.e. promising practices, personal accounts of initiatives, story telling on impacts for citizen's and communities) evidence to identify gaps and to understand what is working and why;
  - g. Establish a cross-sector capability to review quantitative and qualitative evidence, and performance information (see below) under the auspices of the GNPI successor organization or perhaps the proposed foundation (see above).
  - h. Develop stewardship tools and other processes that infuse principles of engagement and collective practices at all levels.

10. Encourage the Government, NPS and aboriginal partners to develop associational structures that are representative, inclusive, and can canvass their constituencies, and ensure that there is proper funding to ensure these structures are effective.

11. Develop planning, evaluation and reporting vehicle by ministries on the state of their NPS practices and relationships, and encourage a similar approach in the NPS and aboriginal networks using their associational structures.

12. Review performance management frameworks and ensure there are indicators and measures that, in addition to focusing on effectiveness of programs, give priority to the value of relationship-building with all partners, and that rely on quantitative and qualitative evidence.

13 As associational structures are elaborated along with new procurement and other guidelines, develop a dispute mechanism to resolve disputes across sectors in a timely fashion.

By mid-2010, we would expect to see that the GNPI has evolved from “task forces and a framework agreement” to a more institutionalized set of capabilities and processes, all supported by an integrated strategy for sharing knowledge, progress, and perspectives. With stronger associational structures in each sector, the GNPI coordinating structure should have increased legitimacy and capability. The initiative would not be seen as the latest enthusiasm of committed leaders from the three sectors, but rather, as an idea with “traction”, capabilities, and evidence that it is making a real difference to communities and citizens in BC. The timing might be appropriate to engage and perhaps incorporate the private sector into the GNPI structure.

The result would be that a far better appreciation of depth, reach, and diversity of relationships between the government, Aboriginal, and non profit sectors. Through meetings, summits, exchanges, and other forms of knowledge-sharing, there would be many more individuals who would have developed relationships with colleagues in the other sectors, and greater public awareness of the value of the non profit sector and how government and Aboriginal service delivery works. Perhaps more importantly, there should also have emerged a good understanding of the outcomes in different program areas and policy sectors as well as information gaps.

### *Longer Term Initiatives (3 years)*

These initiatives are dedicated to taking stock of the GNPI and the initiatives that were implemented over its first few years, to identify what has worked and what areas could be strengthened. This will involve recognizing and celebrating success, and building the capacity to more systematically research and assess the effects of the relationship as well as specific practices. In some areas, the sectors will build on accomplishments and further institutionalize practices or capabilities, and in other areas, it may be determined to undertake new initiatives based on experience and new priorities.

14. Monitor progress with the framework (Short Term Initiative #1) and consider enshrining the framework and its principles in legislation with all-party support.

15. Develop new capabilities based on need, consensus, and smart practice from within BC and other jurisdictions.

16. Build research capacity and evidence based learning on collaborative leadership and relationship building through various centres and forums sharing promising practices (community and government learning centres, universities etc.).

17. Recognize and reward successes in relationship building at the provincial and regional level, which could include leveraging current mechanisms like the Premier's Awards for Excellence or the proposed annual summit (see Medium Term Initiative #9.a).

In 2012, the GNPI would have become institutionalized to some degree but through the annual summit and coordinating capabilities, always evolving, taking up challenges and opportunities with collaborative task forces and similar mechanisms. Based on a review of what had worked best and what had not under the GNPI, as well as the evolution of practice in other jurisdictions, decisions would be made about whether to further institutionalize the framework and add specific capabilities. The intent would be to make “mid-course corrections” and, as needed, strengthen and re-focus the initiative.

The relationships will likely have been tested through shifting government and community priorities. However, at this point in development, the relationships are sustained, and continue to improve, evolve and deepen. There is an appreciative atmosphere, which recognizes the capabilities of all three parties to work through difficult and challenging issues together. . There would also be widely understood norms and expectations about what constitutes the best way to handle relationships – whether service delivery, engagement, or partnerships – between government, Aboriginal, and non profit organizations. Individuals and organizations in all three sectors would know where to turn for advice and support. Taken together, and along with the robustness of the institutional framework, this would be evidence of a culture change and success.