



# Civil Society Input to a Renewed Food Policy for Canada

## **Brief** Strengthening Indigenous Food Systems

### What is said in the [Food Policy for Canada](#)

**“Priority outcome: Strong Indigenous food systems:** To be co-developed in partnership with Indigenous communities and organizations.

*The Food Policy for Canada will help advance the Government of Canada’s commitment to Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, build new relationships based on respect and partnership, and support strong and prosperous First Nations, Inuit and Métis food systems – as defined by communities themselves.”*

**“Action area (2019-2024): Support food security in Northern and Indigenous communities.** Actions will advance efforts towards Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples by strengthening First Nations, Inuit, and Métis food systems, recognizing the importance of food to Indigenous culture and well-being, and, in so doing, supporting Indigenous food self-determination.”

**“Principles: Reconciliation.** First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities in Canada have distinct food systems that have been nurtured and developed over many generations. Reconciliation begins by acknowledging how historic Government policies have disrupted these food systems, and ensuring that decision-making going forward:

- *Adopts a distinctions-based approach to ensure that the unique rights, interests and circumstances of the First Nations, the Metis Nation and Inuit are acknowledged, affirmed, and implemented.*
- *Supports Indigenous food self-determination, meaning the ability of Indigenous peoples to define their own food systems.*
- *Takes a holistic approach that acknowledges that food is more than a product. For Indigenous peoples, it is the medicine that ensures their wellbeing; it is a way of sustaining culture and community; and, it is a way of reconnecting to the land.*
- *Looks (seven) generations ahead to assess the impact of current actions on future generations, and support intergenerational knowledge transfer.*
- *Promotes traditional two-eyed seeing to ensure that Indigenous knowledge and practices are considered alongside other forms of knowledge and evidence.”*

### Federal budget lines directly associated with the Food Policy (2019-2024)

What was included in [Federal budget, March 2019](#) (page 163)

“Northern Isolated Community Initiatives Fund: \$15 million to support community-led projects like greenhouses, community freezers, and skills training to strengthen Indigenous food systems, and combat significant challenges in accessing healthy food in Canada’s North.”

**Other federal funding, not directly associated with the Food Policy, includes** food programming managed through [Nutrition North](#): Nutrition North Canada subsidy; Harvesters Support Grant; Community Food Programs Fund; Nutrition Education Initiatives: Nutrition North Food Security Research Grant.

## Federal government policy progress since 2019

The [record](#) of the November 2022 Council meeting, attended by Minister Bibeau, indicates that:

- Members suggested that the Agriculture Labour Strategy (AgLS) should consider key considerations for reconciliation, including the colonial role that industry has historically played.
- The Minister reiterated the need to increase Indigenous representation in the Council.
- Members noted the importance of contextualizing food loss and waste reduction within the broader scope of circular food systems. One member emphasized the importance of regional/local hubs of activity, which could also support Indigenous food systems.
- It was suggested that Indigenous perspectives should be considered in the development of the AgLS and other initiatives related to the Food Policy for Canada.
- Members noted that the Council could engage more on issues related to northern and Indigenous food security.

## FSC and/or food movement recommendations and analysis

“Support Indigenous food sovereignty where First Nations, Metis and Inuit determine their own place-based food systems, advancing policies that will best support resilient futures.” ([Growing Resilience and Equity](#), 2020)

**Policy priorities outlined in Eat Think Vote policy backgrounder, [Support Indigenous Food Sovereignty](#) (2021):**

- *Commit to Reconciliation As Relationship, and the 10 principles for Canada’s political and legal systems, educational and religious institutions, corporate sector, and civil society to function in ways that are consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which Canada has endorsed;*
- *Honour both the spirit and the letter of the law of Canadian Constitutional commitments to Indigenous peoples' rights and responsibilities;*
- *Respect treaties (historic and modern) and other land rights, ensure Indigenous control over land and waterways;*
- *Self-determination for Indigenous peoples and communities, and distinct approaches for First Nations, Inuit, Métis, as well as urban, remote, northern and rural realities;*
- *Provide direct support to Indigenous-led and Indigenous-serving groups that are focused on Indigenous food systems, for instance through the Local Food Infrastructure Program*
- *Support communities to design new models, and support and reinvigorate Indigenous food ways like community kitchens, gardening programs, greenhouses, other community-led infrastructure, hunter support programs and goose camps;*
- *Support Indigenous-led cooperative and other non-profit motivated grocery stores and other traditional/country food and supplies;*

- *Initiate Nutrition North Canada (NNC) Reform, including increase in the land- based harvest supports to a minimum 25% of total NNC expenditures.*



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