



Civil Society Input to a Renewed Food Policy for Canada

Discussion results **Strengthening Indigenous Food Systems**

On May 9th, 2023, Food Secure Canada (FSC) held an open consultation on the future of food policy in Canada. [Watch the plenary recording and explore results from all discussion groups here.](#)

To provide context for the discussion group on *Strengthening Indigenous Food Systems (2019 - 2023)*, FSC prepared a [backgrounder](#) summarizing current federal Food Policy language, instruments, and financing.

Recommendations to Government for 2023 Food Policy for Canada

Governance and voice
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Decolonize thinking about food policy to make room for Indigenous food systems.● Foster cross-cultural capacity to understand Indigenous food systems.● Invest in processes and training to enhance policymakers' understanding of how Indigenous food systems are different and how their needs are not met by existing blanket policy frameworks.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Create safe and robust ethical spaces where Indigenous voices can be heard, emphasizing the principles of two-eyed seeing and equal respect for diverse knowledge systems. Ensure that these spaces are free from any fear of negative repercussions, including potential impacts on funding.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Ensure adequate voice for Indigenous Peoples within processes where they self-determine their own food futures. Work to avoid the replication of historical trauma.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Realign and reevaluate who is at the table, how decisions are made, and alignment of food policy with local and community partners. Determine measurable indicators of progress on national, provincial and local levels.

Funding

- Acknowledging the severe neglect experienced by Indigenous Peoples, recognize the need for increased investment in funding.
- Address the existing funding gap, considering that a significant portion of available funding is geared to the far North, exemplified by initiatives like the Northern Isolated Communities Initiative Fund. These funds don't even meet the needs of the North, and they exclude the needs of Indigenous Peoples living outside of these territories.
- Prioritize flexible funding that supports not only infrastructure development, but also sustained community capacity, including staff to manage the infrastructure.
- Recognize that food sovereignty and food security work goes hand in hand with language. Consider language revitalization as an integral aspect of food policy for Indigenous Peoples, or important aspects of food security and food sovereignty will be lost.

Challenging colonial food systems and practices

- Recognize that intense factory farming of animals undermines Indigenous food sovereignty because this capitalist, colonial practice uses large amounts of land on monocropping for animal feed and destroys biodiversity.
- Acknowledge that land and biodiversity are both central to restoring Indigenous food systems.
- Recognize that factory farming and meat consumption can be robustly challenged without critiquing meat consumption by Indigenous Peoples. It is important to acknowledge the radical distinction between the traditional and respectful harvesting of animals practiced by Indigenous Peoples and the methods employed in factory farming.
- Violent resource extraction and transportation, including of oil and gas, continues to occur. This is a direct threat to Indigenous food sovereignty, losing food lands and waterways, and contributing to climate change. Environmental destruction needs to be included at the heart of this conversation about food policy, and Indigenous Peoples have been and must continue to be at the forefront.
- Decolonize how people view agriculture. Bring Indigenous voices into schools to educate children.

- Recognize and support transitions to traditional food ways and the cultivation of native plants. Doing so will facilitate land regeneration, restoring forests to their natural habitats, and halt logging in old growth forests.

Best Practices/Successful Community Models to Scale or Replicate

- [One with Nature](#): *A Renewed Approach to Land and Freshwater Conservation in Canada: A Report of Canada's Federal, Provincial and Territorial Departments Responsible for Parks, Protected Areas, Conservation, Wildlife and Biodiversity.*
 - See page 14 for a description of Ethical Space and how this process and report was prepared respecting it, including through creating space for ceremony and Indigenous decision-making protocols in key meetings and milestones.
- Mapping of Indigenous food sovereignty initiatives is ongoing, and was actually stimulated by responses to the Covid pandemic. Many organizations are doing great work, two specific examples were mentioned, the [Ginawaydaganuc Project](#) and [Canadian Feed the Children](#).



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