

# INDIGENOUS DESIGN GUIDELINES for GCworkplace



Public Services and Procurement Canada

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Government  
of Canada

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# 1 Context

## 1.1 How To Use This Document

This document was initiated by Public Service Procurement Canada (PSPC), Real Property Services (RPS), Accommodation Management and Workplace Solutions (AMWS) and has been developed as a companion document to the Government of Canada *Workplace Fit-Up Standards and GCworkplace Design Guide*. AMWS is responsible for providing strategic direction and advice supporting the modernization of the federal workplace. GCworkplace is the Government of Canada’s vision for the workplace which guides decision making for modernization projects offered to federal institutions. It is based on seven core principles: flexible, healthy, efficient, inclusive, collaborative, digital, and green workplaces. To achieve these principles, GCworkplace focusses on five key design principles: user-centric design, equal access, design for activities, zone by function, and plan for flexibility. These guidelines should be read in conjunction with *the Government of Canada Workplace Fit-Up Standards and GCworkplace Design Guide* as well as all relevant national and regional building codes and standards. If at any time there are inconsistencies or perceived conflicts between the *GCworkplace Indigenous Design Guidelines* and the *GCworkplace Design Guide* or other GCworkplace documents, please contact the AMWS mailbox at: [TPSGC.SIMilieudeTravailGC-RPSGCWorkplace.PWGSC@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca](mailto:TPSGC.SIMilieudeTravailGC-RPSGCWorkplace.PWGSC@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca) for assistance.

This initial document was prepared in April 2021 by *Innovation 7*, a First Nations owned and operated Indigenous services consulting business and was contracted by AMWS through Brookfield Global Integrated Solutions (BGIS). Subsequently, the document has been reviewed by numerous stakeholders resulting in this *GCworkplace Indigenous Design Guidelines, Version 2.2*. This review process was overseen by the Environmental and Social Sustainability Team, Workplace Service Strategy Group, AMWS, PSPC, incorporating feedback received from PSPC’s Indigenous Circle of Employees (ICE) Network, members of the Real Property Indigenous Action Plan Coordinators Network and the Indigenous Relations and Social Science Policy, Science and Parliamentary Infrastructure Branch - Laboratories Canada. It has also been shared with Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), including Project Leader, National Accommodations and Les Terraces de la Chaudière Phase 1 project team as well as the Knowledge Circle for Indigenous Inclusion (KCII), Workplace Wellbeing and Regional Engagement group. These guidelines are an “evergreening” document; they are intended to start conversations and will continue to be updated and improved as needed.

The *GCworkplace Indigenous Design Guidelines* provide high level direction to project teams with strategies to honour First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities in Canada by incorporating culturally appropriate design elements and promoting Indigenous economic opportunities on GCworkplace projects. It is important at the beginning of a project or initiative to engage with the local Indigenous community in order to form partnerships, build relationships, as well as demonstrate respect for Indigenous Peoples and their lands. Engaging an Elder or Elders at the beginning of a project(s) is a highly recommended strategy to facilitate

collaboration with the Indigenous communities to be recognized. Implementing these guidelines should be viewed as one method to facilitate Indigenous engagement and could serve as a catalyst for other types of activities or ideas to promote reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. It is hoped that strong ongoing relationships will be developed during the engagement process between Indigenous partners and the project team/client and that these relationships will carry on after the project is complete. Some examples of how this might be achieved include: providing access to GCworkplace office space and shared resources and/or gathering spaces; opportunities to host/own a space (lodge); or organizing regular programming (e.g. lunch and learns) or showcasing local Indigenous art. Actions such as these would encourage mutually beneficial relationships as well as animate and give meaning to the Indigenous elements that have been incorporated into the space. **GCworkplace Additional**

### Resources

- [Government of Canada workplace Fit-up Standards PDF](#)
- [GCworkplace Design Guide](#)

## 1.2 Intent and Goals

In recent years, there has been an unprecedented commitment by the Government of Canada to acknowledge the importance of reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.

In support of this commitment, using the *GCworkplace Indigenous Design Guidelines* as a framework, **all GCworkplaces should seek to contribute toward the following goals:**

- 1) Allowing for Indigenous Peoples in Canada to see themselves and their cultures reflected in Government of Canada workplaces;
- 2) Providing opportunities for non-Indigenous employees and visitors to be exposed to and learn about Indigenous cultures and ways of knowing;
- 3) Improving the health and wellness of all by embracing a holistic sustainable design approach that celebrates interconnectedness;
- 4) Providing opportunities for Indigenous businesses and the Indigenous workforce to participate in and inform the performance of federal procurements by providing services, goods and materials either as prime contractor, sub-contractor, employees or trainees in relation to fit-up projects; and
- 5) Providing opportunities for the Government of Canada to show leadership toward reconciliation.

It is up to each project team to dedicate time **at the predesign stage** of a project to discuss and document their intentions in this regard, assign roles and responsibilities and to follow through with Indigenization commitments that are made for the project. These commitments should be prioritized and guided by the Government of Canada's specific commitments to "move faster on the path of reconciliation with First Nations, Inuit and Metis Peoples" and to "work in partnership with Indigenous Peoples to advance their rights." <sup>1</sup> The time for light engagement with Indigenous communities is past and the moment for true relationship building is now.

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<sup>1</sup> [PSPC Mandate Letter from the Prime Minister, December 16, 2021](#)

The [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#) (UNDRIPA) is about the respect and recognition of the human rights of Indigenous peoples and should be referenced for direction and inspiration. “The Declaration affirms Indigenous peoples’ right to revitalize, develop and transmit their languages, histories and oral traditions to future generations.”<sup>2</sup>

As well, all project team members should commit to familiarizing themselves with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s (TRC) list of 94 [TRC Calls to Action](#).<sup>3</sup> These *Calls to Action* are crucial to the reconciliation process and it is the responsibility of all Canadians to understand and advance these important actions. Section 2.0 *Guiding Principles* of this document identifies the specific *Calls to Action* that are being considered in these guidelines although that **does not limit the inclusion of others** on any particular project.

It is of primary importance to listen to Indigenous voices at the outset before any design decisions are made as these discussions will establish the overarching principles and aspirations that will form the basis of a project. Our relationships with Indigenous Peoples need to continue to evolve through listening, collaboration, learning different processes, fostering relationships and finding common ground.

Allow Indigenous People to direct and guide the conversations and let go of colonial ideas of what engagement should look like. It is very important to *act* on what is heard from Indigenous participants and this may mean making changes to the “way things are normally done.” We ask that you embrace a different approach with the mindset of co-design between Indigenous communities and the project team, bringing an open mind and a willingness to learn to aid in the reconciliation process with Indigenous Peoples of Canada.

In the context of office planning, this means looking beyond the typical information gathering around work functions and broadly considering the impact of space planning through a cultural and spiritual lens. Storytelling is an ancient and rich way of communicating in Indigenous cultures which should inform the process and outcomes and not be rushed. As described by Wanda Della Costa in the *Handbook of Contemporary Indigenous Architecture*, “Indigenous people offer a unique way of looking at the world, their particular lens carries within it embedded meanings related to spatial organization, collective coexistence, experiential learning, spiritual values and ideological ethics of stewardship.”<sup>4</sup>

Each project is unique and it is up to each project team to determine the goals of their project and to integrate Indigenous engagement and design elements. There is no such thing as an “Indigenous aesthetic” and this process is about much more than applying surface treatments or adding Indigenous art, although these could be part of the design solution. Rather, it is about establishing meaningful relationships and a customised narrative to guide the project. The

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<sup>2</sup> Justice Canada, Twitter feed, Feb.25, 2022.

<sup>3</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC), “Calls to Action” (PDF), 2015, [NCTR Reports](#) [Accessed 30 11 2021]

<sup>4</sup> W. Dalla Costa, “*Metrics and Margins: Envisioning Frameworks in Indigenous Architecture in Canada*”, *The Handbook of Contemporary Indigenous Architecture*, Elizabeth Grant, Kelly Greenop, Albert L. Refiti, Daniel J. Glenn, editors. (Springer 2018)

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inclusion of Indigenous elements should be a primary interior design consideration, woven seamlessly into the overall design solution and not an afterthought to simply “check a box”.

This process requires the project team to commit to educating themselves to respectfully represent Indigenous cultures and values in the context of the workplace. The interconnectedness of all things is an important Indigenous value and this should be reflected through an integrated and thoughtful design and approach. Emphasizing the connection to nature and green spaces, both indoor and outdoor, and devising methods to incorporate original Indigenous art and design would all contribute toward this goal.

It is strongly encouraged to seek advice and engage Indigenous architects, designers, art specialists and/or other related Indigenous professionals as well as researching local Indigenous artists and their specializations for inclusion in the design. Of equal importance is ensuring that Indigenous contractors, sub-contractors and other Indigenous businesses are given opportunities to participate. At present, the Government of Canada has a goal for **at least 5%** of federal contracts to be awarded to businesses managed and led by Indigenous Peoples. See *Section 4 Procurement* of this document for more information. In particular, evaluating and identifying upfront the types of skills and specializations of local Indigenous businesses and artists should inform the design process in order to support and advance the community.

Supporting mental health and wellness should be of primary importance for all projects. A 2021 report on Indigenous mental wellness and major project development noted that there are distinct differences between Indigenous and Western views around mental health:

“While Western approaches are embedded in the “medical” tradition of defining health as an absence of sickness, Indigenous frameworks tend to approach mental health from a wellness lens. This means that mental wellness is not only the absence of illness and infirmity, but also characterized by positive relationships with community, culture, and the broader environment. Holism is stressed, as is balance between a person’s mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual dimensions.”<sup>5</sup>

An important first step in the process is committing to self-directed learning. Become curious about the history of Indigenous Peoples in Canada and how their lives were and continue to be affected by colonization and racism. In addition to the *UNDRIPA* and the *TRC Calls to Action* already mentioned, please refer to *7.0 Additional Resources* for other suggested learning resources about Indigenous Peoples in Canada, both past and present.

Following are core elements to be included in all projects. Project teams are encouraged to go above and beyond these elements to suit their particular project.

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<sup>5</sup> Firelight Research Inc., “Indigenous Mental Wellness and Major Project Development, Final Report, May 7, 2021” (PDF), <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/iaac-acei/documents/research/indigenous-mental-wellness-and-ia-en.pdf>, [Accessed 25 11 2021]

**CORE ELEMENTS:**

1. **Incorporate a permanent Indigenous Territorial Acknowledgement:** This could take different forms, depending on the direction given by the local Indigenous community in collaboration with the project team. See further description under *Section 3 Land/Territory Acknowledgement*.
2. **Sustainability and Interconnectedness:** Commit to making the project an example of responsible environmental sustainability and set sustainability goals at the outset. As the Indigenous worldview believes that human beings are an integral part of nature and that we must live in harmony with all living things, there is a natural synergy with sustainability principles. Include unique sustainability and wellness goals *influenced by an Indigenous perspective and the interconnectedness of all of things*. Use green building and wellness rating system tools (such as [LEED \(Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design\)](#), [Green Globes](#), [Fitwel](#), [WELL/International Well Building Institute](#), [Living Building Challenge](#)) to their full potential. For PSPC projects, please refer to the [PSPC Real Property Sustainability Handbook](#) which outlines sustainability and wellness commitments for all types of projects, including PSPC mandatory rating system level requirements. Sustainability includes both environmental and social aspects so diversity and inclusion as well as and health and wellness must be given equal consideration along with environmental goals.
3. **Incorporate natural elements:** Maximize natural daylight and views, use natural materials and colours, and focus on “bringing the outside in.” Emphasize organic shapes and de-emphasize box-like rectilinear planning, include biodiverse indoor/outdoor gardens and green roofs with Indigenous healing/medicinal plants, create habitat for birds/insects, use water elements and prioritize sustainable water management practices and renewable energy sources. Incorporating elements of [biophilia](#) is another related way to express the strong Indigenous relationship with the earth. Creating environments with more natural elements and a connection to the outside have been scientifically proven to have physical and mental health benefits, in addition to bringing beauty to spaces. See *7.2 Native Plants* for additional information on Indigenous flora.
4. **Designate areas for specific attention:** While it is the intention that Indigenous design elements will continue in some form throughout the entire workspace, emphasize and pay special attention to entrances, public areas, common gathering areas or meeting spaces, where Indigenous elements would be visible for the majority of the users of the space. Ideally this would include more prominent or larger scale pieces of different types; three-dimensional artwork or artifacts as well as two-dimensional work, either original, reproduction or digital pieces. (Any digital or other reproductions are to be authorized by the artist or artist’s representative). Commissioning artwork in specific areas for interior materials or architectural elements, murals or other items is highly recommended.
5. **Principle of reciprocity:** For every project, make a commitment to contribute in a tangible way toward environmental sustainability outside of the bounds of the project, to help offset the project’s impact on the environment. (i.e. supporting/investing in local Indigenous companies/business and/or artists, planting trees, supporting [The Mother Tree Project](#) or other local environmental projects or groups, etc.)



### 1.3 Background

It is suggested that the *GCworkplace Indigenous Design Guidelines* be read prior to the application of the *GCworkplace Design Guidelines*, as these guidelines provide context and overarching principles that will influence the design process. These guidelines are intended to ensure that Indigenous representation is reflected in the design and implementation of GCworkplace projects. There are a vast range of Indigenous cultures found throughout the country and this diversity will influence the decisions made to appropriately represent any given group. On each project, engagement with local Indigenous communities will be key to success.

Indigenous Peoples may experience built space differently than non-Indigenous people as for many, their experience with European based colonial architecture has been alienating and even traumatizing (i.e. residential “schools”, government supplied housing). This is important to consider when designing office space and to be mindful of the negative impacts the imposition of European cultural norms and the corresponding approaches to built space have had, and continue to have, on Indigenous culture.

“(Government) housing programs (were) imposed on First Nations and Inuit communities” where “a standard compartmentalized interior quickly become the norm, dissolving the capacity for the (Metis) home to preserve its role as an inherently social space for communal living. This approach ignored” the communal domestic social arrangement (the igloo, the teepee, the pit house, the long house ,etc.) which affected social interaction and customs.”<sup>6</sup>

As social and cultural norms and their corresponding spatial layouts influence not only our homes but all of our built space, it is important to consider our assumptions in these areas when we think about designing office space. “In contrast with colonial emphases on physically divided spaces, Indigenous social and spatial organization are often influenced by elements such as kinship and sociocultural needs, culturally specific behaviors and lifestyle. Similar kinds of spatial relationships can be seen cross culturally from one Indigenous group to another.”<sup>7</sup>

Although GCworkplace promotes egalitarian space usage and minimizes compartmentalized space in comparison to previous office design strategies, it is important to be aware of the colonial tendency to favor spaces physically separated by function, instead of promoting multi-use, flexible space. Become more curious about the things we take for granted in built environments and invite Indigenous employees and communities to participate directly in the process. Listen to their experience and perspectives and make changes to help create more inclusive, rich and diverse workplaces.

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<sup>6</sup> & <sup>7</sup> David Fortin, Jason Surkan, Danielle Kastelein, “*Métis Domestic Thresholds and the Politics of Imposed Privacy*”, *Our Voices: Indigeneity and Architecture*, Rebecca Kindle, luugigyoo Patrick Stewart and Kevin O’Brien, editors. (ORO Editions 2018)

## 2 Guiding Principles

These guidelines will be implemented nationally and it is important that Indigenous Peoples are included and engaged at the beginning and throughout the entirety of the process.

### 2.1 Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was established as a response to the Indian Residential and Day “School” Legacy. It aims to work toward a stronger and healthier future for Indigenous Peoples in Canada by contributing to truth, healing, and reconciliation. To do this, the TRC has made a list of 94 [TRC Calls to Action](#). These guidelines specifically consider the following *Calls to Action*<sup>8</sup>:

#### 2.1.1 Language and culture

**Action 13.** We call upon the federal government to acknowledge that Aboriginal rights include Aboriginal language rights.

**Action 14.** We call upon the federal government to enact an *Aboriginal Languages Act*<sup>9</sup> that incorporates the following principles:

- 1.1. Aboriginal languages are a fundamental and valued element of Canadian culture and society, and there is an urgency to preserve them.
- 1.2. Aboriginal language rights are reinforced by the Treaties.
- 1.3. The federal government has a responsibility to provide sufficient funds for Aboriginal-language revitalization and preservation.
- 1.4. The preservation, revitalization, and strengthening of Aboriginal languages and cultures are best managed by Aboriginal people and communities.
- 1.5. Funding for Aboriginal language initiatives must reflect the diversity of Aboriginal languages.

**Action 15.** We call upon the federal government to appoint, in consultation with Aboriginal groups, an Aboriginal Languages Commissioner. The commissioner should help promote Aboriginal languages and report on the adequacy of federal funding of Aboriginal-language initiatives.

#### 2.1.2 Professional Development and Training for Public Servants

**Action 57.** We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential “schools”, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal– Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.

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<sup>8</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC), “Calls to Action” (PDF), 2015, <https://nctr.ca/records/reports/#trc-reports>, [Accessed 25 11 2021]

<sup>9</sup> The *Aboriginal Languages Act* has since been enacted and is entitled “*The Indigenous Languages Act*”

### 2.1.3 Commemoration

**Action 83.** We call upon the Canada Council for the Arts to establish, as a funding priority, a strategy for Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists to undertake collaborative projects and produce works that contribute to the reconciliation process.

### 2.1.4 Business and Reconciliation

**Action 92.** We call upon the corporate sector in Canada to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples<sup>10</sup> as a reconciliation framework and to apply its principles, norms, and standards to corporate policy and core operational activities involving Indigenous peoples and their lands and resources. This would include, but not be done limited to, the following:

iii. Provide education for management and staff on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential “schools”, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.

## 2.2 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act

The [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) is about the respect and recognition of the human rights of Indigenous peoples.

On June 21st, 2021, [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act \(UNDRIPA\)](#) received Royal Assent and came into force in Canada. This Act provides a roadmap for the Government of Canada and Indigenous peoples to work together to implement the Declaration based on lasting reconciliation, healing, and cooperative relations.

In support of the spirit of the Declaration, the *GCworkplace Indigenous Design Guidelines* seek to advance the principles embodied in this framework, working in collaboration with Indigenous Peoples to advance their right to self-determination and to build a better future.

## 2.3 First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Cultures

Canada recognizes three broad groups of Indigenous Peoples: First Nations, Inuit and Métis. First Nations is a term which describes Indigenous Peoples in Canada who are not ethnically Inuit or Métis. To better understand these terms, a good analogy would be to equate Indigenous with Canada and First Nations, Inuit and Metis with provinces and territories.

First Nations peoples are the most populous Indigenous group in Canada. They were the first to experience prolonged contact with immigrant settlers. The majority of Canada's Inuit population live in 51 communities spread across the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (Northwest Territories), Nunavut, Nunavik (Northern Quebec), and Nunatsiavut (Northern Labrador). Métis people are an Indigenous people who are the second most populous Indigenous group in

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<sup>10</sup> On June 21st, 2021, [the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#) received Royal Assent and came into force.

Canada – Métis means ‘mixed blood’, and refers to a recognized person who is a mix of Indigenous and typically French background.

Cultures among and within the three groups are vast, rich, diverse and complex. For any given project, it is important that project teams engage all resources available (see *Section 2.2 Engagement with Local Indigenous Groups and Representative Agencies* for additional information) to perform their due diligence/independent research to make sure all Indigenous groups (First Nations, Inuit and Métis) are fairly and properly represented.

It is important that these distinctions between Indigenous groups are well understood so that specific cultures are represented appropriately within design elements. As part of gaining this understanding, the Indigenous tradition land/territory on which the project is located or the Indigenous communities closest to the project need to be engaged to ensure the cultural appropriateness of the Indigenous content.

### 2.4 Geographical Considerations

Individuals making up First Nation, Inuit and Métis groups as well as their established communities are distributed across the country, however some are more prevalent in certain areas than others. Generally, eastern and pacific Canada are occupied by a large population of First Nations Peoples, the prairies and central Canada have a large population of Métis Peoples, as well as First Nations, and northern Canada is populated largely by Inuit and north/east Innu Peoples. That being said, it is important to note that the distribution of Indigenous Peoples across Canada is complex and First Nations, Inuit, and Métis populations are not limited to any given area. These geographic considerations and associated cultural practices should influence design characteristics of an interior space or building in a given area. Also keep in mind that people belonging to First Nations, Inuit and Métis groups are living not just in their established communities but in cities and towns all across Canada and deserve to see themselves represented wherever they live.

Indigenous lands and traditional territories can change over time as asserted land rights become formalized through modern treaties and other settlement agreements between Indigenous communities and federal and provincial governments. [Maps and resources](#) exist which depict various asserted land rights. Often, various sources must be consulted and cross-referenced to determine actual Indigenous land rights in order to guide which communities should be engaged. Additionally, it will be important to confirm conclusions from research with Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) and local Indigenous communities and groups, as they will have the most up-to-date information on land claims, treaties and settlement agreements. The Government of Canada maintains databases and interactive maps that can act as good starting points for this research and include:

#### **Aboriginal Treaty Rights Information System (ATRIS)**

ATRIS is a Web-based information system intended to map out the location of Aboriginal communities and display information pertaining to their potential or established Aboriginal or treaty rights.

### Native Land Digital

Native Land Digital<sup>11</sup> strives to create and foster conversations about the history of colonialism, Indigenous ways of knowing, and settler-Indigenous relations, through educational resources such as our map and Territory Acknowledgement Guide. We strive to go beyond old ways of talking about Indigenous people and to develop a platform where Indigenous communities can represent themselves and their histories on their own terms. In doing so, Native Land Digital creates spaces where non-Indigenous people can be invited and challenged to learn more about the lands they inhabit, the history of those lands, and how to actively be part of a better future going forward together.

## 2.5 Broad and Specific Context

When discussing the potential transformative impacts of architecture in the *Handbook for Contemporary Indigenous Architecture*, Wanda Della Costa writes “Architectural-economic strategies could include: designing with local construction expertise in mind, specifying materials that contribute to local businesses, or hiring local personnel. Architectural-political strategies include any means to promote self-determination such as employing traditional building techniques or creating a local advisory board to guide a project.”<sup>12</sup> These strategies could apply equally well to interior design based projects and serve as an illustration of the wide reaching transformative effects a built environment project can have.

Federal buildings and institutions must strive to be representative of Canada and all its Indigenous Peoples. As such, except for situations where Aboriginal rights would require Canada to focus on a specific People, group or community (e.g. as an accommodation to a legal duty to consult), design elements should broadly consider First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples, as well as the specific groups and communities within each.

GCworkplace may incorporate design elements that are inclusive of all three of Canada’s Indigenous cultures while also being mindful of regional differences between and within cultures. Some departments will want to reflect a more national perspective and encompass elements from all three Indigenous cultures, while others will serve a more regional clientele and may want to emphasize local Indigenous culture. Be mindful that within First Nation, Inuit, and Métis communities, there are culturally distinct and unique groups. Each of them has different histories, languages, traditions, and cultural practices. Cultural elements of these unique groups should be included in the design. This might occur when a building is in proximity to a particular First Nation, Inuit or Métis community or settlement or is located on Government of Canada recognized Indigenous traditional territory. It is important to note that while Canada is vast, Indigenous traditional territory, treaty, or reserve land encompasses nearly its entire area. As a result, it is safe to assume that all buildings incorporating

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<sup>11</sup> This is a non-governmental resource and as such any information should be verified with other corroborating sources.

<sup>12</sup> W. Dalla Costa, “Metrics and Margins: Envisioning Frameworks in Indigenous Architecture in Canada, *The Handbook of Contemporary Indigenous Architecture*”, Elizabeth Grant, Kelly Greenop, Albert L. Refiti, Daniel J. Glenn, editors. (Springer 2018)

GCworkplace will be located on, or in proximity to, Indigenous land or traditional territory. Heritage buildings can present unique challenges. In general, their historical attributes can restrict alterations and often elements of historical significance must be preserved. When striving to indigenize a space, these challenges can become more complex when the buildings themselves and the colonial regulatory framework that protects them may be offensive and even emotionally triggering to Indigenous people. These situations require careful collaboration with Indigenous Peoples at the outset to determine whether or not the use of a particular building is appropriate in a given context.

### 2.6 Engagement with Local Indigenous Groups and Representative Agencies

In order to assist in establishing meaningful long-term relationships with Indigenous communities, it is very important to recognize the importance and need for the process of engagement and/or consultation. Consultation is enshrined in the Constitution and will be legally required in some instances and is a different process from engagement. [\*Impact Assessment Act, S.C. 2019, c. 28, s. 1, Assented to 2019-06-21\*](#)<sup>13</sup>

#### 2.6.1 The importance of process

The dominant culture tends to value results and often views a process as a way to achieve the desired outcome, rather than valuing the process itself. In order to be more mindful of the importance of the process, pay careful attention to who is asked (i.e. identifying who speaks on behalf of a particular Indigenous community), the content of the questions and how the questions are framed and posed. It is critical to make the community engagement accessible and sincere, ask meaningful questions, make a commitment to act on what is shared and communicate resulting project directives. According to Indigenous scholar, professor Harini Matunga, “process will reveal all the biological, cultural, social, and economic and cultural factors which have the potential to impact the spatial environment<sup>14</sup>.” There must be a willingness by the project team to continuously circle back to check in and correct mistakes, in order to develop a reciprocal and egalitarian relationship rather than just gathering information and moving on.

#### 2.6.2 Engagement

As noted above, collaborating and engaging with local Indigenous groups and representative organizations/agencies is key. A logical and effective strategy to pursue is to work with Indigenous communities in a holistic way. Gathering together to discuss a group of projects, rather than engaging over numerous small projects that have similar objectives, would be more

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<sup>13</sup> "*Impact Assessment Act, S.C. 2019, c. 28, s. 1, Assented to 2019-06-21*", <https://laws.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/I-2.75/FullText.html>, [Accessed 25 11 2021].

<sup>14</sup> W. Dalla Costa, *Metrics and Margins: Envisioning Frameworks in Indigenous architecture in Canada*, The Handbook of Contemporary Indigenous Architecture; Elizabeth Grant, Kelly Greenop, Albert L. Refiti, Daniel J. Glenn, editors, (Springer 2018).

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effective in many cases. This would also reduce the burden on Indigenous communities of repeated requests and avoid burnout, which is becoming a reality.

To facilitate proper and respectful engagement **for PSPC projects**, it is important that project teams contact the PSPC Regional Coordinator of Indigenous Relations and/or the PSPC Reconciliation and Indigenous Engagement Directorate of the Policy, Planning and Communications Branch in the National Capital Region. The Indigenous Circle of Employees (ICE) at PSPC should also be engaged for a valuable Indigenous employee perspective or for other clients, their internal Indigenous employee groups.

PSPC's Real Property Services has an Interjurisdictional Engagement Unit under the Client Relations and Demand Management (CRDM) Sector to assist other RPS sectors with advice and guidance in the coordination of engagement activities. This team manages a national network for coordinators working toward reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, facilitating sharing of best practices and lessons learned related to Indigenous engagement and participation.

As PSPC space is often occupied by other client departments, ensure that there is coordination between the client departments Indigenous relations/engagement teams, their Indigenous employee networks and PSPC to streamline efforts and ensure common goals. For **non-PSPC owned or leased projects**, Indigenous relations teams within that department will be critical to help guide the engagement process. This will ensure proper protocols are followed and there is a single point of contact between PSPC and/or the client department and the Indigenous groups.

In some cases, engagement or consultation with the local Indigenous community(is) may have already begun on other aspects of the project prior to the fit-up, so always research what has been done to date to avoid duplication of efforts. Elders, as designated by their communities, are to be invited to engagement sessions. If an Indigenous community or Tribal Council is to be directly contacted for any reason, initial correspondence should be directed to their consultation coordinator.

### 3 Land /Territory Acknowledgement

#### 3.1 Oral land acknowledgement

“Territorial acknowledgement is rooted in an ancient Indigenous diplomatic custom. When an Indigenous person came to be on the territory of another Nation, even if only passing through, they would announce their presence by saying something like, *“I acknowledge that I am on the traditional territory of X Nation.”* It was a way of saying: *“I acknowledge that you are the Nation responsible for preserving this territory and I come in peace.”*<sup>15</sup> Refer to [A guide to recognizing and acknowledging Indigenous traditional land and territory \(spac-pspc.gc.ca\)](https://www.spac-pspc.gc.ca) or Canada School of Public Service (CSPS), [Territorial acknowledgement - CSPS \(cspc-efpc.gc.ca\)](https://www.cspc-efpc.gc.ca) for more information on how to develop an Indigenous Land Acknowledgement.

[Land acknowledgements](#) are formal statements meant to be developed with specific intent and tailored to suit the situation, place and/or people at hand. They are a way of recognizing and respecting Indigenous Peoples as traditional knowledge keepers, protectors and stewards of the land where a speaker or participant is located or an event/meeting is being held. Acknowledgements recognize the relationship that exists between Indigenous Peoples and their traditional territories and can be a step toward reconciliation and relationship-building. They should not be copied and pasted but should be meaningful commitments tied to concrete actions. It is important to state what action is being taken towards reconciliation and relationship building (e.g. Indigenous design elements have been incorporated to celebrate and honour Indigenous culture and values, Indigenous businesses have supplied goods or services, etc.). They should follow the basic format of: *We are on the traditional land/territory of the \_\_\_\_\_ and following are the actions that we are committed to (list actions)\_\_\_\_\_.*

Owing to the vast diversity of Indigenous cultures provincially and nationally, each land acknowledgement must reflect the group or groups whose traditional territory the building is located on. Initiating a meaningful relationship with the people you are going to be acknowledging is paramount; land acknowledgements should be well researched, taking the time to identify the specific names of groups who should be recognized.

Additionally, there are nuances to language that may be required if recognizing First Nations, Inuit or Métis lands. “The wording of the territorial acknowledgement changes depending on whether there exists a modern territorial agreement or treaty (traditional/ancestral territory) or not (unceded traditional land/territory) between the Nation and Canada.”<sup>16</sup>

Spoken land acknowledgements are the traditional method of recognition and they are normally given at the opening of an event or meeting but could also be incorporated into day-to-day activities at the workplace.

<sup>15</sup> Excerpt from Canada School of Public Service website on territorial acknowledgement, Territorial acknowledgement - CSPS (cspc-efpc.gc.ca) [Accessed 25 11 2021].

<sup>16</sup> CSPS, "Territorial Acknowledgement", <https://www.cspc-efpc.gc.ca/tools/jobajds/terr-acknowledgement-eng.aspx>, [Accessed 25 11 2021].



### 3.2 Permanent Land Acknowledgement

To demonstrate respect and commit to action, it is recommended to have a permanent land acknowledgement, using the same principles as described for a verbal acknowledgement. They may also serve as educational tools regarding the history of the land and Indigenous culture in accordance with TRC *Calls to Action* 57 and 92.

Please note there is a difference between oral land acknowledgements for meetings, activities and/or event participants and a permanent land acknowledgement that is developed as a visual depiction (written text and/or images) and placed on the interior or exterior of a building. An oral land acknowledgement is meant to be customized with intent to and for the participants in attendance or the situation at hand. A permanent land acknowledgement is created to recognize the land & honour the Indigenous people of the land on which the building is located.

This type of land acknowledgement could consist of a plaque or other medium containing language and/or images that align with the purpose of the land acknowledgement and makes clear reference to the relevant group or groups. A permanent acknowledgement should be in a prominent location, large enough to be easily seen and be considered as part of the overall design. It could be a free-standing piece or on a wall, could include graphic depiction such as a map, symbols, or other creative depictions. Curvilinear forms or irregular natural materials such as stone, etc. could be appropriate choices to incorporate or use as backgrounds.

If a building is in an area where one predominant traditional language is used, then that language should be used in any written land acknowledgement. The order of languages on a land acknowledgement should read 1) mother tongue of the Indigenous community where the project is located 2) colonial languages in appropriate order for the location. It will be necessary to involve local community(ies) to co-create the content when written language is being used to ensure proper context, terminology & spelling. In order to show respect and emphasize the importance of the acknowledgement, an unveiling ceremony should be held with the Indigenous partners.

### 3.3 Additional Considerations

It should also be decided how land acknowledgements will be incorporated during the course of the project and after a space is occupied. Any press releases or written announcements pertaining to the space should also include a specifically developed land acknowledgment, recognizing the territory on which it is situated. Additionally, if any ground-breaking ceremonies or other events are planned for a particular space, building or structure, an oral land acknowledgement should be given, ideally by an Indigenous Elder, as part of the opening remarks for the ceremony or event. The exact wording should be left up to the local Elder(s). Please note there is specific direction to be followed when working with Elders, so ensure you have taken the proper steps to facilitate a respectful interaction. Connect with your internal and/or local Indigenous groups/Networks/Regional contacts for further information or direction relating to Elder training/background confirmation, procurement/honoraria payment requirements and protocols.

As mentioned above under *Section 3.1 Oral land acknowledgements*, land acknowledgements should also be considered as part of day-to-day activities at the workplace once it is occupied.

## 4 Procurement

In consideration of the *TRC Calls to Action* and the fact that, at present, **the Government of Canada has a goal for at least 5% of federal contracts to be awarded to businesses managed and led by Indigenous Peoples**, it is important to ensure that when contemplating Indigenous design elements, Indigenous Peoples are involved in pre-planning, design and implementation. Whenever possible, Indigenous businesses and people should be hired to provide services, (including professional, project management, and construction), goods and materials directly or indirectly related to the project.

Hiring Indigenous consultants and businesses and engaging local artists and designers can enable the inclusion of relevant and culturally appropriate Indigenous design elements. Every effort should be made to engage an Indigenous design consultant (although this is not always possible as there are, at present, roughly 20 Indigenous architects in Canada: statistics not available on other Indigenous design professionals). An alternative is requiring consultants to carry a knowledgeable and experienced Indigenous advisor as a member of their design or advisory team, especially when an Indigenous design consultant is not available. The advisor should have knowledge of Indigenous cultural topics and experience in Indigenous engagement protocols and activities. It would also be beneficial for the Indigenous advisor to have experience in design or other functions relevant to office space fit-up projects. Including an Indigenous organization to design and lead the engagement process will help ensure the right people are at the table, creating a climate for true engagement as well as supporting Indigenous businesses.

The Government of Canada employs procurement strategies to help ensure a meaningful level of Indigenous inclusion on projects. There is no known database that provides complete information for Indigenous businesses in Canada. The [Procurement Strategy for Indigenous Business](#) (PSIB) formerly the [Procurement Strategy for Aboriginal Business](#) (PSAB) helps strengthen strategic partnerships between Indigenous business owners, industry sectors and the Government of Canada. The PSIB office at ISC is good starting point for identifying Indigenous businesses, but this will not produce an exhaustive list. There is an [Indigenous Business Directory](#) that lists businesses who qualify under PSIB which has a requirement that businesses be at least 51% Indigenous owned. Another useful PSPC resource outlines [information for federal procurement officers](#) related to Indigenous procurement. Also, the [Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business](#) is another good source of information on Indigenous businesses.

To identify other Indigenous businesses and gain a better understanding of local business capacity, it may be necessary to engage with local Indigenous communities, groups and organizations directly. This information, along with analysis of the nature of the requirement, can help to inform any chosen procurement strategy or establish realistic and meaningful evaluation criteria.

As furniture is generally a large component of fit-up projects, clients are strongly advised to use the PSIB set-aside to support Indigenous businesses and as a way to support the 5% *minimum*

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government target. Please note that this has been mostly voluntary in the past but there are recent new mandatory requirements to be considered.

As updates are being finalized at the time of writing, please contact ISC for guidance on how to implement the PSIB changes at [IndigenousProcurement@canada.ca](mailto:IndigenousProcurement@canada.ca) or 1-800-400-7677.

The Strategic Policy Sector's Indigenous Procurement Policy Division (IPPD) is also available to provide assistance, including standard language to be included in procurements subject to PSIB, and can be reached at: [TPSGC.PAApprovisionAutochtone-APIIndigenousProc.PWGSC@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca](mailto:TPSGC.PAApprovisionAutochtone-APIIndigenousProc.PWGSC@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca).

Additionally, PSPC has internal capacity and experience in preparing procurement strategies that incorporate considerations for Indigenous inclusion and benefits, such as through the use of IBD (Indigenous Business Directory).

For large fit-up projects, it may be beneficial to ask general contractors, (non-Indigenous or Indigenous), to prepare an IPP (Indigenous Participation Plan) as part of their bid submission packages. This has become a common procurement strategy used by PSPC and other departments to help ensure meaningful Indigenous participation and content in projects, providing subcontracting opportunities for Indigenous businesses and employment for Indigenous Peoples. When an IPP is used, the Contracting Officials (Contract/Technical/Project Authorities) use their knowledge of the requirement and Indigenous capacity to develop Bid Evaluation Criteria, and allocate bid evaluation points, to incentivize bidders to find opportunities for greater Indigenous participation in the procurement. Bidders are thus incentivized to submit an IPP as part of their bid submission, usually outlining a number of regular key elements (depending on the individual procurement), generally related to:

1. Clear statements related to specific Indigenous participation commitments, and a description of the overall plan on how they will be delivered.
2. Indigenous Employment – a description of recruitment, hiring and retention strategies and processes, as well as staff management and other HR functions.
3. Indigenous Training, Skills Development – The programs and strategies that will be implemented to increase capacity, skills and experience among Indigenous people.
4. Indigenous Sub-Contracting Plan – The approach to involving Indigenous businesses as sub-contractors in a project, including the use of partnerships and joint-ventures.

The bids (including their IPPs) are evaluated, scored, and then a contract is awarded. The commitments included in the successful bidder's IPP become contract deliverables, the delivery details were to be detailed in the bidder's IPP. This delivery plan, combined with contractual reporting and monitoring provisions, provide the basis for evaluating and confirming IPP commitment delivery throughout the contract. Before implementing this approach, Contracting Officials need to be prepared to build more time into the procurement, and dedicate time for Indigenous engagement, Indigenous market research, and be willing to closely administer the delivery of these IPP commitments throughout the life of the contract.

It should be remembered that, in the PSPC IPP, all Indigenous participation or opportunities for which bid evaluation points are awarded must be related to the contract work. However, in a

PSIB procurement, indirect benefits can be included in the procurement via a mechanism similar to that of an IPP. For additional guidance on indirect benefits, we suggest contacting the PSIB team at ISC.

Information provided here is current at the time of writing but as procurement strategies and requirements change frequently, please confirm all information is current before proceeding.

## 5 Indigenous Design in GCworkplace

GCworkplace supports a flexible environment that enables employees to feel empowered to choose where and how to work based on day-to-day activities, functional requirements, and personal needs and preferences. The result is a workplace consisting of a variety of enclosed, semi-enclosed, and open spaces. These are designed to support both individual and collaborative work, for short-term and/or sustained periods of time.

As GCworkplace provides flexibility and numerous options for types and sizes of workspaces, it is possible to incorporate Indigenous elements and design a creative Indigenized workplace within this framework. As mentioned at the outset, if at any time there are inconsistencies or perceived conflicts between the *GCworkplace Indigenous Design Guidelines* and the *GCworkplace Design Guide* or other GCworkplace documents or tools, please contact the AMWS mailbox at: [TPSGC.SIMilieudeTravailGC-RPSGCWorkplace.PWGSC@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca](mailto:TPSGC.SIMilieudeTravailGC-RPSGCWorkplace.PWGSC@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca) for assistance.

### 5.1 Recommended Design Elements

#### 5.1.1 Sustainability and Wellness

There are values and principles within First Nations, Inuit and Métis cultures that can be used as guidance in design to create more balanced and holistic workplaces. Indigenous Peoples are closely connected to the lands, waters, and the entire natural environment and see all humans and other living things as an integral part of the web of life. By using planning principles and making design decisions that celebrate and respect this connection, we can create work environments that are more humane and welcoming for all. Enhancing wellness is embedded in Indigenous teachings and the built environment must support this value. Human health and wellbeing (physical, mental and emotional) are scientifically proven to be positively impacted by a strong connection to nature. Therefore, it is important to design spaces that prioritize the inclusion of natural elements and biophilic principles, seen through an Indigenous lens, to support wellbeing for all employees.

Interconnectedness and the importance of kinship and community are also fundamental Indigenous values, therefore recognizing the significant role physical space plays in supporting culture is key. It is interesting to note that a focus on community is in perfect alignment with the workplace of the future, with the need to create dynamic meeting places that promote human connection, interaction and idea exchange. Focus on creating spaces conducive to gathering, both informally and formally, as well as other ways to bring people together in both built and virtual space.

### 5.1.2 Design Approach

[Organic architecture](#) concepts align very closely with Indigenous teachings and the strong connection between the land and people. Using nature as a source of inspiration will produce spaces that are beautiful, healthy and that users respond to in a positive way. Douglas Cardinal uses the principles of classic organic architecture when designing his buildings, which he suggests we interpret as Indigenous architecture in Canada.<sup>17</sup>

Although this document addresses the design of interior spaces and not buildings, the principles of organic architecture are nevertheless applicable and are worth considering in this context. Architect and planner David Pearson proposed a list of rules that are known as the Gaia Charter for organic architecture and design: "Let the design be inspired by nature and be sustainable, healthy, conserving, and diverse; unfold, like an organism, from the seed within; exist in the "continuous present" and "begin again and again"; follow the flows and be flexible and adaptable; satisfy social, physical, and spiritual needs; "grow out of the site" and be unique; celebrate the spirit of youth, play, and surprise; express the rhythm of music and the power of dance."<sup>18</sup>

Another aspect to consider is a the matriarchal nature of many Indigenous cultures and importance of women's wisdom and influence as life givers and nurturers. As women have traditionally held positions of authority (e.g. as Elders, bearers of life) and influence in Indigenous societies, part of recognizing Indigenous culture in the workplace would place an emphasis on women and the Indigenous female perspective.

### 5.1.3 Overall Space Design and Interior Finish Materials

Generally, the circle has significance within Indigenous cultures as it is seen as a symbol of equality among participants, strength, unity, balance and timelessness as well as a representation of the natural and spiritual world. As well, the circle can direct the ceremonial approach to speaking order and how you participate in a conversation. The related spiral form, which embodies movement and flow, is also common in nature and could be used. Think of these forms as inspiration, (or other forms if that come out of engagement with Indigenous participants), consider the full 3 dimensions of the space and seek to reimagine the traditional office environment. Contemplate different ways of designing office space, perhaps by incorporating non-rectilinear organic forms, spiral forms or circular shapes rather than relying on the traditional orthogonal approach of most offices' interiors.

Maximizing natural light, views and a connection to the outdoor environment (i.e. bringing the outside-in and the inside-out) should be a guiding principle. [Biophilic design](#) should be used to

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<sup>17</sup>PODCAST: 2021, *How Indigenous architects are resisting colonial legacies and reshaping spaces*, Unreserved, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, with Douglas Cardinal and other Indigenous architects.

<https://lnns.co/L0qM4zjiY7H>, [Accessed 25 11 2021].

<sup>18</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organic\\_architecture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organic_architecture), This page was last edited on 27 October 2021, at 07:24 (UTC), [Accessed 25 11 2021].

increase connection to the natural environment and support human health. Greenery of native species should be incorporated, such as in outdoor and indoor gardens and green spaces. Natural outdoor gardens that create habitat for wildlife/insects are encouraged. Additionally, living walls which incorporate local or culturally significant plants and tactile elements that can be touched and smelled as well as seen should also be considered. Creating healing gardens, either indoor or outdoor, provide an excellent opportunity to engage local Indigenous communities in the selection of plant varieties. Sacred plants of particular relevance to some Indigenous people (excluding Inuit) in Canada include: sage, sweetgrass, tobacco and cedar. Artistic depictions of these plants could also be included in the overall design of a space. For a fuller perspective on the varied and beautiful native plant species used by Indigenous Peoples, see *Section 7.2. Additional Resources, Native Plants* at the end of this document.

Indigenous cultures live in balance with nature. As balance and avoiding waste are basic tenants of sustainable design, use interior materials judiciously and don't unnecessarily cover surfaces that could be left exposed (i.e. finished concrete surfaces). Natural materials such as stone, wood and bio-based textiles should be included as much as possible. The Government of Canada is leading by example in its commitments to reduce waste and has adopted the [Ocean Plastics Charter](#), a global framework to manage plastic sustainably and all projects should reflect this commitment. Avoid plastic and fake "natural appearing" materials ( i.e. plastic laminate material or LVT flooring that imitates wood grain or stone). Linoleum is preferred in place of vinyl flooring and can also be used as either a countertop or worksurface material. Where plastics and other man-made materials must be used, choose the most sustainable products that have 3rd party environmental and/or health certifications. The [Centre for Environmental Health](#) is a recommended and reliable resource for healthy material selection information, providing tools and product lists for specifiers. Other certification labels and tools such as [Green Screen](#) , [Cradle to Cradle](#) , [Green Guard](#) and [Declare](#), among others, are all useful tools to assist in the selection of products that are healthy and sustainable.

Visually open spaces may include prominent displays of artwork or culturally relevant objects/artifacts, flags, statues and/or displays. These could include large scale murals, sculpture, textiles and other two- or three-dimensional work, as well as smaller pieces and interpretive displays. In smaller spaces, more subtle design features employing colour, shapes, textures and Indigenous art may be more appropriate. In addition, First Nations, Inuit and Métis have official flags or logos which represent their various distinct communities within these groups which may be displayed for communities whose traditional territory is included in the site.

Do not to copy or mimic so-called "Indigenous" imagery or objects without the direct input of Indigenous art specialists. Be mindful of who is authorizing the Indigenous content as what looks "Indigenous" to a Western eye may be completely inappropriate and offensive to an Indigenous person. It is critical to involve Indigenous design consultants, art advisors, artists and craftspeople when deciding on products to ensure they are made by Indigenous people and/or are authorized authentic representations of Canadian Indigenous works. Interior items that could display Indigenous imagery include textiles, floor coverings or other accent pieces as well

as architectural elements such as space dividers, displays, murals or other floor, wall or ceiling treatments.

### 5.1.4 Use of Technology

Technology is vitally important to the effective functioning of our modern workplaces. Therefore, any spaces designed from an Indigenous perspective must embrace the possibilities technology offers to improve interconnectedness and a sense of community.

Planning for the latest technology and seamless connectivity so that everyone can be included in meetings without being physically present is vitally important. As the need to connect with our colleagues and clients from across the country and around the world to share information increases, the focus on connecting virtually will only become greater. What remote participants might see as a backdrop, representing the Government of Canada, when they connect digitally should be considered and how this window on our world will appear. Having Indigenous artwork and other cultural representations clearly visible in our meeting spaces would reflect the importance we place on Indigenous Peoples and their cultures.

Although meeting spaces are an obvious place to use technology, leveraging the use of technology to digitally display culturally relevant symbols, artwork, imagery and written information throughout the workplace is encouraged. As changes occur over time, this is an excellent way to ensure flexibility to update information and/or highlight the multitude of different Indigenous cultures in Canada. This also allows for flexibility to honour many different Indigenous cultures in the same spaces without having permanent displays. Display surfaces could include floors, walls, ceilings or kiosks within the spaces. Neutral backgrounds and colours should be planned for these areas for ease of display. See *Section 5.1.6 Art* for possible sources of authentic and authorized digital imagery and new media.

### 5.1.5 Furniture

Select furniture that has been designed and manufactured with sustainability criteria in mind. Sustainability criteria are performance criteria that affect how sustainable a product is over its lifecycle, including extraction, use, and end-of-life. Furniture products specified should be evaluated for their high performance in the following categories, (which were established in a recent *Feasibility Analysis for the Development and Evaluation of Performance Criteria for More Sustainable Use and Reduction of Plastics in PSPC Furniture and Fit-Up Materials* prepared for PSPC by Hay Design Inc. and Morrison Hershfield, (November 2020)): durability, minimal plastic content, no toxic ingredients, minimal life cycle impacts, ease of recyclability and high recycled content, ease of reparability and reuse and minimal or reusable packaging.

Wherever possible, commercial furniture products should meet [LEVEL](#), a BIFMA (Business and Institutional Furniture Manufacturers Association) furniture sustainability certification that had a range from Level 1-3, 3 being the most rigorous. This certification is currently included in the PSPC procurement tools for furniture. The project team should seek to attain the highest rating level possible for products to be used on their project, as well as incorporating the other sustainability criteria already listed above. Where purchases of custom made furniture or items

from smaller manufacturers or individuals are being considered, sustainability should still be a high priority but BIFMA LEVELs would be not applicable.

As connection to the natural world, wellness and healing are core to Indigenous culture, furniture products that are made from or include non-man-made materials (wood, stone) and bio-based upholstery ( i.e. wool, hemp, linen, cotton, furs, skins, etc.) are preferred. Indigenous artists and craftspeople should be engaged wherever possible to provide custom furniture such as meeting or side tables, display cabinets, seating and textiles for gathering spaces or other areas. See section 5.1.6 *Art* for more information.

Collaborative zones and other spaces should be equipped with flexible furniture that can be easily reconfigured. This includes being able to arrange tables, seating, deskings or other furniture in shapes and configurations appropriate for the situation. Consider having different types of furniture that encourage different positions from sitting in chairs. Being able to be close to the ground with cushions for sitting or other accommodations for sitting or even lying down should be encouraged. Flexible and multi use-furniture is an important tool that can affect the way people use a space and how they interact. Carefully considered choices that are outside of the traditional office furniture norms could create a more welcoming atmosphere for all, as well as promoting idea exchange and healthy body movement.

As already suggested for other areas, select furniture for meeting spaces that promotes different ways of interacting to promote a sense of community, interconnectedness and open communication. Larger meeting spaces should be flexible with mobile furniture that can be easily stacked or stored, as needed. Particularly in cases where there will be Indigenous ceremonies, have meeting spaces without tables as physical barriers so that practices such as using a talking stick can happen more easily. Also, requirements for side tables for medicines, blankets or other ceremonial needs should be accommodated. Another design approach for meeting spaces is to use chairs with tablet arms which eliminates the need for a central table. These kinds of approaches should still be adopted even if there is no plan to use the space for formal Indigenous ceremonies. Co-design with Indigenous partners will be key to guiding these decisions. See *Section 5.2 Spiritual Spaces* for more information on ceremonial spaces.

### 5.1.6 Art

Art provides Indigenous Peoples with a vehicle for cultural and personal expression and a method of remaining connected to and sharing their heritage. (See 7.1 *Indigenous Artists in Canada* for suggested resources) Before immigrants arrived with the Roman alpha/numeric system, Indigenous Peoples predominantly communicated and made agreements orally or through art, belts and symbols. Despite past efforts to assimilate and/or erase Indigenous Peoples and their cultures from the land now known as Canada, sociocultural practices survived. Today the assertion of culture through such practices is an important factor in the wellness, health and healing of Indigenous Peoples. There is no distinction between “art” and “craft” in Indigenous cultures as most items were embellished and all methods of creative expression are valued. In fact, the concept of painting on canvas is a recent introduction to Indigenous art practice.



Indigenous art should be a priority for inclusion on projects and supports *TRC Call to Action 83*. As artwork is not normally considered as part of project funding, be sure to establish a plan for funding artwork purchase, rental or commissioning as an integral part of any project.

Early engagement is the key, particularly with Indigenous art specialists and experts as well as the community at large. Indigenous arts organizations, Indigenous managed artist's organizations and Indigenous friendship and community centres are all good sources of information on Indigenous art and artists. Involving the Indigenous Circle of Employees at PSPC (and/or Indigenous employee networks at other departments) is another excellent way to connect with local Indigenous artists, as network members often have strong community connections.

It is important to be very mindful when considering Indigenous imagery for inclusion in projects. The dominant cultures idea of indigeneity is full of harmful stereotypes and inaccuracies that have been perpetuated through mainstream culture. As a result, it is imperative that any such representations are fully developed and discussed in conjunction with Indigenous art specialists before inclusion. (See 7.1 *Indigenous Artists in Canada*) Indigenous art can be purchased or rented. The [Canada Council Art Bank](#) (CCAB) operates an art rental service with an extensive collection that exists for the primary purpose of installing art in government and private sector office spaces. This is one of the best and most flexible options, tailor-made for providing original artwork for office spaces. They have a wide-ranging art collection to choose from to suit varied spaces and needs. "With more than 17,000 artworks by over 3,000 artists, the Art Bank has the largest collection of contemporary Canadian art anywhere. It houses paintings, sculptures, drawings, photographs and prints by emerging and established artists, including a significant number of Indigenous artworks. The entire collection can now be explored on our website." (text from the CCAB website) At present, the CCAB has a limited number of Indigenous art pieces available to circulate (approximately 1000) and the demand is high so other options may need to be explored to satisfy all project needs.

The [Indigenous Art Centre](#) maintained by CIRNAC is home to the Indigenous Art Collection, the largest and one of the most important collections of Indigenous art in Canada. In 2018, the Centre published a book "The Indigenous Art Collection: Selected Works 1967-2017, to celebrate the collection's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This book "highlights the richness and the importance of Indigenous cultures and heritage as an essential part of Canadian culture." This beautiful publication is available through the [National Gallery of Canada Boutique](#) at a very reasonable cost. It provides a wonderful introduction to the depth and breadth of Indigenous works being produced in Canada so is well worth the investment.

Art may be rented or purchased from a number of sources, other than the Canada Council Art Bank mentioned above (rental only). A list of national and regional art rental and purchase programs is attached as **Appendix A** for reference. Many artists have websites or easy to find contact information and can be sourced by conducting an internet search for galleries or artists names. Prints or reproductions can also be obtained from many commercial galleries, artist

cooperatives, or art gallery/museum gift shops. It is very important that artists statements, in the artist's own words, are included with any artwork to provide proper context and enable understanding of the work.

Locating and purchasing work from independent Indigenous artists who are already doing the type of work envisioned (i.e. furniture, sculpture, etc.) is also a viable possibility. Alternatively, if more customized pieces are to be incorporated in the space, an art commissioning process could be appropriate to secure original work from Indigenous artists. Additional support from government procurement specialists and Indigenous art specialists would be required for this type of process.

Project teams should defer to Indigenous art specialists/design consultants and the local community when choosing content to ensure the context and meaning are understood and appropriate. It is incumbent on the project team to tailor the content for their particular project in partnership with the local Indigenous community, Indigenous consultants and Indigenous employee groups.

Some artists will be working with traditional materials and methods while others will be experimenting with contemporary mediums of expression, or a combination of the two. As a result, restrictions or expectations should never be placed on Indigenous artists to conform to any preconceived ideas. Young Indigenous artists (and not so young artists) are interpreting their experiences and the vibrancy of their culture in new and innovative ways and this should be embraced and supported.

### 5.1.7 Colour, Pattern and Materials

Interior design should be representative of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis cultures and could include their Peoples' colours, art, symbols, artifacts and objects (i.e. tools). The design should be representative of Indigenous history and/or culture– with a particular focus on highlighting the Indigenous culture(s) on or within proximity of the project. See section 5.1.6 *Art* as the principles discussed apply to this section as well. Incorporating these elements provides an opportunity for all employees to experience Indigenous cultures in the workplace and also facilitates the education and awareness for those who may be less familiar with Indigenous history and culture, in accordance with *TRC Calls to Action number 57 and 92*. Of equal importance, it allows for Indigenous Peoples to see themselves reflected in Government of Canada's public service and GCworkplaces.

Generally, natural materials and colours are preferred and should be used as much as possible to establish the connection with nature, although natural color schemes do not need to be subdued or neutral. Often, natural colours are thought of as "earth tones" and conjure up browns and beiges while in reality, nature provides an amazing spectrum of vibrant colors. Think of the stunning variety of greens of forest mosses and plants, the surprising colour combinations of flowers in spring, berries in the summer or the intense reds, yellows and oranges of trees in the fall. Let the richness of our natural surroundings inspire your palette and don't be limited to neutral colours.

It is equally important to consider the symbolic importance of colours in Indigenous cultures. Use and interpretation of colours can vary widely, such as in representing the 4 cardinal directions, and different communities can attribute their own significance to particular colours; do the research, consult with the Indigenous communities and don't make assumptions. When working with spaces where several different groups will be represented, neutral colours can be useful as a background so that colours, flags or symbols of particular groups can be easily displayed, either physically or digitally. Also, consider flexible mounting systems for flags or other cultural symbols so they can be easily changed.

See **Appendix B: Art and Colour** for more detailed descriptions/suggestions for each Indigenous group.

### 5.1.8 Signage and Language

General signage for federal buildings must conform with the [Federal Identity Program Manual - Canada.ca](https://www150.gc.ca/identity-program-manual). Supplemental signage, which is not required to follow these standards, may be added to the project.

When choosing names for buildings, meeting rooms or designing additional wayfinding for a project, ancestral location names or other ideas that have meaning for the Indigenous community should be given priority. It is important for Indigenous Peoples to see themselves reflected in the naming of Government of Canada buildings and spaces as it acknowledges and shows respect for Indigenous people. This naming process should be discussed as a part of the engagement process with the community to establish respectful and appropriate name selection. When there is signage to identify any given building or area, the Indigenous language of the Host Nation should be placed first and should be in equal font size to the colonial languages. This is in support of *TRC Calls to Action 13, 14 and 15*.

Welcome signage in Indigenous and non-Indigenous languages should also be considered and could take many creative forms. Again, the Indigenous language of the Host Nation should be placed first and should be in equal font size to the colonial languages.

## 5.2 Spiritual Spaces

Ceremonies are integral to Indigenous cultures and are performed as ways to honour and reinforce the connection to nature. Indigenous Peoples have and continue to suffer from intergenerational trauma created by colonialism. Providing spaces for traditional rituals and practices are one way to facilitate healing and acknowledge the harm that has been inflicted. The types of ceremonies performed could include smudging, qulliq lighting, celebration, healing, music, drumming, dancing, meetings and other types of gatherings. If it is decided that a space to perform spiritual ceremonies will be included in your project, it is strongly recommended that you refer to a **Spiritual Spaces Report by Douglas Cardinal Architects**

(commissioned by PSPC Atlantic Region and ISC and issued August 2021)<sup>19</sup> which specifically addresses spiritual considerations in buildings and is an excellent reference document for smudging, qulliq lighting, and other ceremonies. It was created specifically for Atlantic Region but the principles could apply elsewhere in Canada. Please contact [TPSGC.SIMilieudeTravailGC-RPSGCWorkplace.PWGSC@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca](mailto:TPSGC.SIMilieudeTravailGC-RPSGCWorkplace.PWGSC@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca) to request the document.

How and when to accommodate Indigenous spiritual spaces in Government of Canada buildings and offices is an evolving subject. For PSPC projects, PSPC 's Regional Coordinator of Indigenous Relations and/or the PSPC Reconciliation and Indigenous Engagement Directorate in the National Capital Region should be contacted for the most recent information and guidance regarding PSPC buildings.

When designing spiritual spaces, it is very important to take into account the individual differences among Indigenous cultures and engage with the Host Nation to ensure they have access to the spaces and the right elements are included. There will be particular cultural practices and technical requirements that are very important to honour and resolve properly in the built space. Also, the language of the Host Nations should be respected and used first in any ceremonies and as well as in written signage or documentation.

### 5.2.1 Smudging

Smudging deserves special mention as fire and smoke inside a building need to be accommodated. The First Nations traditional practice of smudging is a ceremony to purify the spirit and heal the mind and body and it can also be used to cleanse and purify special items (e.g. drum) or the environment, such as a meeting room. Smudge is typically always done before morning prayer (that way the room and participants are cleansed, and positive spirits/healing attracted for when prayer is said by an Elder or Knowledge Keeper) and also at other times. It involves the burning of sacred or special (medicinal) plants such as, but not limited to, sweet grass, tobacco, cedar and sage usually in a small bowl or abalone shell. "The smoke is to attract positive energy and to clear away negative energy or thoughts, the conditions under which we all wish to start meetings or events<sup>20</sup>." The ceremony is carried out by igniting the plants and then wafting the smoke.

First you gather the smoke and wash your hands/arms and even at times hair by dangling it in/over the smudge bowl, and other things that are key to you (e.g. glasses), then a typical smudge routine is:

- over your head to cleanse and be mindful to think good/good of others,
- over your eyes to see good things/good in others,
- over your mouth to speak truth and good of others,
- over your ears to hear truths and good things,
- over your heart so it is open to giving and receiving good/positive energies,

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<sup>19</sup> The "Spiritual Spaces Report" by Douglas Cardinal Architects, *commissioned by PSPC Atlantic Region and ISC and issued August 2021*

<sup>20</sup> Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, "About Us", <http://www.abo-peoples.org/en/about-us/>, [Accessed 25 11 2021]. *commissioned by PSPC Atlantic Region and ISC and issued August 2021*

- gather smoke with your hands and pull it down towards the ground
- over your torso to cover your womb area.
- then the smudger smudges your back, back of arms, down your legs & under your feet.
- Most First Nations communities practice smudging as a spiritual practice while Inuit cultures generally do not so it is important to be aware of cultural differences.<sup>21</sup>

The **Spiritual Spaces Report by Douglas Cardinal Architects** mentioned above has specific information regarding smudging and is highly recommended. A space for smudging may be included in a project at the request of the client, or at the recommendation of a local First Nations community, consultant, or architect and requires special considerations for the accommodation of separate smoke ventilation systems. The inclusion of such space is to be considered on a case-by-case basis and may not be appropriate for all projects.

### 5.2.2 Qulliq Lighting

The Inuit have a spiritual tradition distinct from smudging which is described below. Depending on the context and location of the project, there may be a requirement to accommodate Qulliq lighting in a spiritual space.

“The Qulliq (Inuit Lamp) is incorporated into the Truth-Gathering Process. It symbolizes Inuit women’s strength, care, and love. The Qulliq represent the light and warmth provided at the hearth. The lamp is made for a woman as a gift from her husband. Then, as the owner, she becomes the flame keeper.

Made of soapstone, the lamp is shaped in a half-moon to hold oil for burning. The oil is poured in, and then a mix of Suputi (Arctic Cotton) and Maniq (Moss) is delicately place along the groove. This wick then absorbs the oil and can be lit. Once lit, the wick burns slowly. The flame keeper tends to the lamp occasionally with a hook-shaped tool known as the taqquti.

Inuit women have used the lamp to create warmth and energy by always tending to its light. The lamp serves the family as women have sewed warm clothes for their families next to the light, cooked by it, dried wet clothes, melted ice, and boiled water.

We will light the qulliq at each Community Hearing throughout our truth-gathering process and at other times deemed appropriate for Inuit participants. We hope it will shine light into survivors and families journeys forward.”<sup>22</sup>

## 5.3 Base Building or Exterior Spaces

Although GCworkplace does not technically include base building or exterior spaces, it is important to consider that, in some cases, these types of areas may be better able to incorporate design features that are not appropriate or possible for all GCworkplaces. Indigenous cultures have a long history of building practices and Indigenous building typologies

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<sup>21</sup> Smudging as described by Chantal Daoust, co-chair, Indigenous Circle of Employees (ICE), Public Services and Procurement Canada, November 2021

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/protocols-symbols-and-ceremonies/>

that can be drawn upon for interpretation in a modern architectural context. It is not the intent of this document to discuss architecture or landscape architecture other than to raise awareness that the entirety of the project should be viewed through an Indigenous lens. The overall intent and principles previously discussed in this document regarding GCworkplace would also apply to base building and/or exterior spaces. In particular, sustainable approaches and technologies, such as restorative design, net zero design, renewable energy, rainwater retention and reuse and other emerging sustainability strategies should be a focus. For PSPC projects, refer to the [PSPC Real Property Sustainability Handbook](#) for current requirements and guidance. In new or existing buildings, typical areas to highlight Indigenous culture may include entrances, lobbies, foyers, courtyards, and circulation areas such as elevators, stairwells and corridors, washrooms, or other common spaces. Generally, larger scale interventions would be appropriate to welcome and educate people as they enter the building as well as provide the opportunity for interior and exterior water features and/or natural green spaces/roofs with Indigenous medicinal and sacred plants.

### Recommended Design Elements

These could include elements relevant to First Nation, Inuit and Métis culture with consideration for the differences between each. Please refer to Section *5.1 Recommended Design Elements* of this document as the same principles would apply.

See **Appendix C: Base Building and/or Exterior Spaces** for a more detailed description of suggested design elements for each Indigenous group.

## 6 Additional Considerations

Additional considerations may arise when a project for a building or space is to be occupied by an organization with a clear mandate related to Indigenous Peoples or communities, such as Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), and Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC), Canadian Heritage, Parks Canada or others. In such cases, the involved client department's Real Property and Accommodation Management specialists must be contacted for specific guidance. In general, reflecting Indigenous culture and traditions through design elements will be of primary importance and there may be additional specialized requirements to consider. It is the intention that many of the Indigenous design approaches and elements previously stated will be applicable and can be built upon for the design of these types of projects, based on consultations with the client and their Indigenous partners.

## 7 Additional Resources

Throughout the pre-planning, design, and implementation of a project incorporating Indigenous design elements, it is recommended to engage with the local Indigenous communities, as well as Indigenous groups, organizations and Indigenous employee networks within departments as early as possible in the process. This will ensure that appropriate Indigenous guidance is obtained and that a cooperative and respectful relationship is established from the outset.

**Essential reading:**

- [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action](#)[United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act \(UNDRIPA\)](#)
- [Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls](#)
- [Indigenous Languages Act](#)
- [Many Voices, One Mind](#)

**Additional Resources:**

There are many excellent general learning resources available.

- [National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation's, Reconciliation Through Education](#)
- [Stolen Lives: The Indigenous Peoples of Canada and the Indian Residential "Schools" / Historical Background](#)
- [Indigenous Circle of Employees Network at PSPC](#)
- [Delivering on Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action \(rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca\)](#)
- [Celebrating Indigenous Peoples in Canada: Learning and activity guide \(rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca\)](#)
- [Indigenous peoples and cultures - Canada.ca](#)

**Courses Available:**

A suggested starting point would be the University of Alberta's online course, entitled:

- [Indigenous Canada-University of Alberta-online course](#)

A series of Indigenous courses are available through the Canada School of Public Service

- [Indigenous Learning Series - Canada School of Public Service \(csps-efpc.gc.ca\)](#)

**Indigenous Design Books:**

The following are some suggestions for design and art focused learning materials:

- [The Handbook of Contemporary Indigenous Architecture](#)
- [Our Voices: Indigeneity and Architecture](#)
- [Indigenous Art Collection: Selected Works 1967-2017](#)

**Online design related resources:**

- [Learning from Indigenous Consultants](#)
- [Indigenous Architecture in Canada: A Step Towards Reconciliation - National Trust for Canada](#)
- [From the Archives: Indigenous Architectures - The Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada](#)
- [Indigenous Task Force | Royal Architectural Institute of Canada](#)
- [Hidden Canada: Indigenous Design and Sustainability in the First Peoples House | Department of Art History University of Toronto](#)
- [How this Indigenous architect designs buildings with Indigenous history and spirituality in mind | CBC Radio](#)
- [Indigenous designs take centre stage - The Globe and Mail](#)

## 7.1 Indigenous Art in Canada

The following are national organizations could aid in identifying Canadian Indigenous artists for the purpose of commissioning artists or obtaining Indigenous artwork for GCworkplace. This list of resources is a starting point only as there are many Indigenous owned galleries and independent artists who could contribute to a project. It is recommended that project teams also always investigate the possibilities within the active Indigenous arts scene in their area.

### 7.1.1 Canada Council Art Bank

The Canada Council for the Arts operates an [art bank](#) with a goal of enabling public access to contemporary artwork through its corporate art rental, loans to museums, and outreach programs. It possesses over 13,000 artworks by over 3000 artists, a significant number of which are Indigenous.

They have a program specifically designed for recommending and lending art to public and private institutions, with curators on staff. Another advantage of using the art bank is it allows the selections to change over time, creating a dynamic environment and increasing exposure to different mediums and modes of expression.

### 7.1.2 The Indigenous Art Centre

The [Indigenous Art Centre](#) maintained by CIRNAC is home to the Indigenous Art Collection, the largest & one of the most important collections of Indigenous art in Canada. This is an excellent resource that contains more than 4300 Indigenous artworks. The website for the Indigenous Art Centre features extensive lists made up of the First Nations, Inuit & Métis artists featured in the collection as well as their cultural affiliations.

- [First Nation and Métis Artists](#)
- [Inuit Artists](#)

### 7.1.3 Inuit Art Foundation

The [Inuit Art Foundation \(IAF\)](#) is dedicated to supporting Inuit artists working in all media and geographic areas. It seeks to empower and support self-expression and self-determination, while increasing public awareness of and access to Inuit art. It is widely considered one of the most significant voices for Inuit art in the world. The Inuit Art Foundation lists profiles for several Inuit artists of various mediums.

#### **Other Inuit Art Resources:**

- [Aboriginart Inuit.net online gallery](#)
- [Inuit Art Zone](#)
- [Inuit Sculptures & Art Masterpieces Gallery](#)
- [Inuit Gallery of Vancouver](#)
- [WAG-Qaumajuq](#)
- [Nanooq Inuit Art Online Gallery](#)
- [Gallery Phillip, Toronto Art dealer & Gevik Gallery](#)
- [Feheley Fine Arts, exclusively Inuit Art](#)
- [Brousseau Inuit Art Gallery](#)



#### 7.1.4 Indigenous Curatorial Collective

The [Indigenous Curatorial Collective \(ICCA\)](#) is an Indigenous run and led non-profit organization that aims to support and connect fellow Indigenous curators, artists, writers, academics, and professionals through various methods of gathering. The ICCA engages in critical discourses, increases professional opportunities for our members, develops programming, and most importantly works to build reciprocal relationships with Indigenous curators, artists, communities and the institutions we engage with.

#### 7.1.5 Canadian Artists' Representation /Le Front des artistes canadiens

The [Canadian Artists Representation \(CARFAC\)](#) is incorporated federally as a non-profit corporation that is the national voice of Canada's professional visual artists. As a non-profit association and a National Art Service Organization, their mandate is to promote the visual arts in Canada, to promote a socio-economic climate conducive to the production of visual arts in Canada, and to conduct research and engage in public education for these purposes.

#### 7.1.6 Indigenous Arts Collective of Canada

The [Indigenous Arts Collective of Canada \(IACC\)](#) was founded to preserve and revitalize endangered Indigenous art forms and to enrich lives through the Indigenous arts and culture. The collective provides a database of First Nation, Inuit and Métis artists across Canada who create works using a wide variety of mediums.

#### 7.1.7 Centre for Contemporary Canadian Art Canadian Art Database

The [Centre for Contemporary Canadian Art \(CCCA\) at Concordia University](#) operates with the objective of broadening public awareness of contemporary Canadian art in Canada and abroad. It documents the careers of some of Canada's leading professional artists, designers, art writers, and curators as well as significant art institutions and organizations. The database provides a list of First Nations artists hailing from across the country.

#### 7.1.8 Canadian Museum of History

The [Canadian Museum of History](#) possesses Indigenous art/artifacts that could provide ideas and inspiration.

## 7.2 Native Plants

Following are some resources to assist with native inspired indoor and outdoor plantings. Also included are resources on Indigenous Peoples traditional uses of plants.

- [Our Top Five Native Canadian Plant Picks to Celebrate 150 Years](#)
- [North America Native Plant Societies \(NANPS\)](#)
- [Traditional Plant Foods of Canadian Indigenous Peoples](#)
- [Ontario Wildflowers - List of Native Species](#)
- [Canadian Wildlife Federation: Native Plant Encyclopedia](#)
- [Canadian Wildlife Federation: Feature Flora Fact Sheets](#)
- [Canadian Wildlife Federation: Recreating Natural Habitats](#)
- [Canadian Wildlife Federation: Wildflower Meadows and](#)
- [First Nations Traditional Plants and Uses](#)
- [20 Awesome Medicinal Plants Native to Canada - Slice](#)
- [Medical Herbs \(growerdirect.com\)](#)
- [Indigenous Peoples' Medicine in Canada | The Canadian Encyclopedia](#)
- [Home - CanPlant \(can-plant.ca\)](#)
- [Canadian Museum of Civilization - The Canada Garden](#)
- [Ontario Trees and Shrubs - List of Native Species](#)
- [Trees of Canada – Tree Canada](#)
- [Woodland Plants for Landscaping \(PDF\)](#)
- [Healthy Landscapes Plant List and Native and Drought Tolerant-Native Plants \(PDF\)](#)
- [Shoreline using Native Plants \(PDF\)](#)

## 7.3 Advocacy Groups

In addition to collaboration with Indigenous communities, the below resources operate at a national level and may aid in obtaining advice or guidance regarding Indigenous inclusion within the implementation of the guidelines. They aim to enhance, promote, and foster the social, economic, political, and cultural well-being of Indigenous women within their communities and in Canadian society.”<sup>23</sup>

### 7.3.1 NWAC Social and Cultural Innovation Centre

The [Native Women's Association of Canada](#) is opening a [Social and Cultural Innovation Centre](#) in winter/spring 2022. It is a beautiful example of an Indigenized interior built environment that includes areas for client programming and as well as rental of various spaces. According to Lynne Groulx, the Chief Executive Officer “the centre we will offer year-round programming, supports and education for grassroots Indigenous women, girls and gender diverse people, as well as the local community. These essential supports will facilitate resiliency for future generations and build the strong relationships necessary for reconciliation.”<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Native Women's Association of Canada, "About", <https://www.nwac.ca/about/>.

<sup>24</sup> [Native Women's Association of Canada](#), <https://www.nwac.ca/>," [Social and Cultural Innovation Centre](#)" PDF

### 7.3.2 Assembly of First Nations

Assembly of First Nations (AFN) “is a national advocacy organization representing First Nation citizens in Canada, including over 900,000 people living in First Nation communities and in cities and towns across the country.” “AFN facilitates and coordinates national and regional discussions and dialogue, advocacy efforts and campaigns, legal and policy analysis, and communicates with governments including facilitating relationships between First Nations, the Crown, public and private sectors, and the public.”<sup>25</sup>

### 7.3.3 The National Association of Friendship Centres

The National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC) can help connect project leads/teams to various people, businesses/artisans and resources within the area of the project.

#### Other National Indigenous Organizations

- Indigenous Business Directory (IBD)
- Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB)
- First Nations Information Governance Centre (FNIGC)
- Indspire
- Reconciliation Canada
- Procurement Strategy for Indigenous Business(PSIB)
- The Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB)
- The Canadian Aboriginal and Minority Supplier Council (CAMSC)
- Indigenous business at Export Development Canada (EDC)

#### Other Resources

- Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC)
- Indigenous Skills & Employment Training Program (ISET)

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<sup>25</sup> Assembly of First Nations “About”, <https://www.afn.ca/about-afn/>.

## 8 Appendix A – Art Rentals and Purchase

Supporting Indigenous artists is one important way to advance reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. Following are some suggestions for galleries and other visual arts organizations that will rent or often sell their work (Canada Council Art bank has rentals only.) As this is not a comprehensive list, it is recommended that you use this as a starting point to further research Indigenous art and artists working in your area.

### National

#### Ottawa, ON

- [Canada Council Art Bank](#)

### Regional

#### Halifax, NS

- [Teichert Gallery | Art Gallery of Nova Scotia](#)
- [14 Bells Fine Art Gallery](#)

#### Moncton, NB

- [Apple Art Gallery](#)

#### Quebec City, QC

- [Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec](#)

#### Montreal, QC

- [Contemporary Arts Gallery](#)
- [Pointe-Claire Art](#)
- [L'Artothèque](#)
- [Le Golden Crab](#)
- [Partial Gallery](#)
- [Arte: Cavallo](#)

#### Ottawa, ON

- [Canada Council Art Bank](#)
- [Art Lending of Ottawa](#)
- [Ottawa Art Gallery](#)

#### Toronto, ON

- [AGO](#)
- [Peter Trianto Art Gallery](#)
- [Wall Fiction](#)
- [Liss Gallery](#)
- [Workman Arts](#)

## GCWORKPLACE INDIGENOUS DESIGN GUIDELINES

- [Dreamcatchers Art](#)
- [Loch Gallery](#)

### **London, ON**

- [Shop Museum London](#)

### **Barrie, ON**

- [MacLaren Art Centre](#)

### **Winnipeg, MB**

- [Loch Gallery](#)

### **Regina, SK**

- [Saskatchewan Arts](#)
- [Regina Public Library](#)

### **Prince Albert, SK**

- [Mann Art Gallery](#)

### **Edmonton, AB**

- [Art Gallery of Alberta](#)

### **Calgary, AB**

- [Loch Gallery](#)
- [Gibson Fine Art](#)

### **St. Albert, AB**

- [Art Gallery of St. Albert](#)

### **Vancouver, BC**

- [Vancouver Art Gallery](#)
- [North Van Arts](#)

### **Richmond, BC**

- [Capulet Art Gallery](#)

### **Victoria, BC**

- [Art Gallery of Greater Victoria](#)

## 9 Appendix B - Colour and Artwork

### Colour and Artwork

*The following descriptions are included as an example only and are not meant to be comprehensive or appropriate for all situations:*

#### First Nations Considerations

Colour schemes for interiors may incorporate the colours included within First Nations medicine wheels or other culturally relevant symbols. For example, the 4 quadrants of the Anishinaabe medicine wheel represent the 4 directions that Indigenous people have always inhabited: red/south, black/west, white/north, and yellow/east. (Pantone colour codes that best align with the properties of each colour are 185 C, Black 6 C, 7436 C, and 395 C, respectively.) While East/yellow, the direction of the rising sun, and North/white are quite consistent among First Nations, the direction of the South and the West vary considerably. Green, blue, black, and red can also be the direction of the South. Black and red are the most common variations for the West and the color black can be representative of death and/or war.

However, project teams must engage with the First Nations communities involved with their project before using this type of symbolism as the medicine wheel is not universally used and the 4 colours can mean different things to each Nation.

First Nations artwork in GCworkplace spaces may include paintings, drawings, weaving, sculpture, wood carvings, fur or leatherwork, metalwork, beadwork, quilling or ribbon work of varying sizes, depending on the availability of space. If space allows and as appropriate, large scale works such as murals, sculpture, paintings or totems should be considered, if culturally appropriate. Artwork could include historic elements as per the advice received during Indigenous engagements/consultations, to aid in education about Indigenous history. Within the National Capital Region, for example, this may include a mural depicting a historic timeline of the land and waterways in and around Ottawa. Additionally, artistic depictions of animals relevant to a particular First Nations group could be incorporated into the GCworkplace design, for example, those representing the seven Anishinaabe clans – bear, loon, crane, deer, fish, marten, and bird. Wall displays of photos could be created depicting the historical progression of the land where the project is situated from pre-colonialism through to modern day. In areas limited in space, historic elements may be as simple as a small plaque explaining the meaning or history behind a work of art. Artwork could include a historic element when possible, in support of TRC *Calls to Action* 57 and 92 and the traditional language(s) of the First Nations community(ies) could be highlighted in support of TRC Call to Action 13, 14 and 15.

### Inuit Considerations

Colours that have significance for Inuit are sometimes described as white, blue, and green (sky, the ocean, and the earth). Inuit art traditionally consisted largely of seal fur items as well as carvings, often made from stone, ivory, bone, or the antler of caribou. Beginning as a way of distinguishing their tools, carvings became a means for Inuit peoples to earn money in times of challenging socioeconomics and are a symbol of Inuit culture today. Carvings, prints and drawings, hides and seal fur or many other mediums may be used as art forms to include in GCworkplace. Inuit considerations may include a display of traditional tools used for hunting or displays of objects used in ceremony such as the qilaut, a shallow, one-sided drum made from caribou skin or walrus stomach or bladder. Artwork could include a historic element when possible, in support of TRC *Calls to Action* 57 and 92 and the traditional language(s) of the Inuit community(ies) could be highlighted in support of TRC Call to Action 13, 14 and 15.

These links provide a good overview of Inuit Art as a starting point:

- [Inuit Art Society – Celebrating the arts of the Arctic](#)
- [Katilvik - Inuit and Indigenous Art Community](#)

### Métis Considerations

Schemes for interiors could incorporate the colours and distinct patterns found on the Métis sash, a garment originally used as a practical item of clothing which has become an important symbol of Métis culture: red, blue, green, white, yellow, and black, each symbolizing a different aspect of Métis culture and history. Pantone colour codes that best align with the properties of each colour are 185 C, 2726 C, 2400 C, 7436 C, 295 C, and Black 6C, respectively. The Métis flag, depicting the Métis infinity symbol in white and set against either a red or blue background, could also be used as a basis for inspiration.

Although Metis artwork today is wide ranging, Métis were often called the “[Flower Beadwork People](#)” owing to their traditional intricate floral beadwork which was often set against a dark background and inspired by French design, as well as by other Indigenous groups. Artwork could include a historic element when possible, in support of TRC *Calls to Action* 57 and 92 and the traditional language of Michif could be highlighted in support of TRC Call to Action 13, 14 and 15. Métis considerations may include, for example, a timeline or mural depicting the historic Métis buffalo hunts, significant events resulting in the travel of hundreds of Métis people.

## 10 Appendix C - Base Building and/or Exterior Spaces

### Base Building and/or Exterior Spaces

*The following descriptions are included as an example only and are not meant to be comprehensive or appropriate for all situations:*

- **First Nations Considerations**

Whenever possible, entranceways should face east towards the rising sun, reflective of the typical entranceways to First Nations tipis, long houses, and wigwams. Materials representative of First Nations culture, such as cedar, birch or other traditionally used woods may also be incorporated within the architecture of the space. Green spaces may contain water features and sacred/medicinal/indigenous plants used by First Nations and Métis such as sage, sweetgrass, cedar, juniper, dogwood species, trillium species, coneflower, common yarrow, heart-leaved aster, lodgepole pine, clubmoss/lycopodium clavatum, bearberry (uva ursi or arctostaphylos uva-ursi), black cherry/ prunus serotina. Rhododendron shrub, e.g. Labrador tea, could be a focus in any botanical displays or garden areas.

- **Inuit Considerations**

Materials representing Inuit culture such as ivory, antler, hide, fur and/or bone, commonly used as a carving medium and sourced from animals such as whale, seals or caribou, may be incorporated within the space. Building forms may also take inspiration from the shapes of structures such as the Inuksuk, a stone structure traditionally used for navigation, and the Igloo or snow house, historically used for housing during travel.

- **Métis Considerations**

To many Métis people, the Métis infinity symbol represents the joining/mixing of two cultures (First Nations and French) and the eternal existence of a people. It could be used within the physical design of a space. Materials representing Métis culture such as birch or cedar beams or handrails may also be incorporated within the architecture of the space. Green spaces may contain water features, and sacred First Nations and Métis plants (see list 7.1 *Native Plants*) should remain a focus in any botanical displays or garden areas.



## 11 Glossary

Name	Acronym
Assembly of First Nations	AFN
Accommodation Management and Workplace Solutions	AMWS
Aboriginal Treaty Rights Information System	ATRIS
Business and Institutional Furniture Manufacturers Association	BIFMA
The Canadian Aboriginal and Minority Supplier Council	CAMSC
Congress of Aboriginal Peoples	CAP
Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business	CCAB
Canada Council Art Bank	CCAB
Centre for Contemporary Canadian Art	CCCA
Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada	CIRNAC
Client Relations and Demand Management	CRDM
Canada School of Public Service	CSPS
Employment and Social Development Canada	ESDC
First Nations Information Governance Centre	FNIGC
Indigenous Arts Collective of Canada	IACC
Inuit Art Foundation	IAF
Indigenous Business Directory	IBD
Indigenous Circle of Employees	ICE
Indigenous Procurement Policy Division	IPPD
Indigenous Services Canada	ISC
Indigenous Skills and Employment Training program	ISET
Inuit Tapariit Kanatami	ITK
Knowledge Circle for Indigenous Inclusion	KCII
Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design	LEED
National Association of Native Friendship Centres	NAFC
Native Council of Canada	NCC
NunatuKavut Community Council	NCC
Native Women's Association of Canada	NWAC
Former Procurement Strategy for Aboriginal Business	PSAB now PSIB
Procurement Strategy for Indigenous Business	PSIB
Public Service Procurement Canada	PSPC
Truth and Reconciliation Commission	TRC
International Well Building Institute- rating tool	WELL