



## **ACCOUNTABILITY**

### **FACT SHEET**

The Government of Canada has a unique relationship with the First Nations, Inuit and Métis in Canada. This unique relationship is formalized by recognition and affirmation of Aboriginal and treaty rights in section 35 of *The Constitution Act, 1982* and federal obligations to First Nations communities, as outlined in the *Indian Act*, of management of Indian reserve lands and Indian moneys.

These historical relationships find new meaning in the current environment of partnership. For the Government of Canada to achieve broader goals of improved quality of life for First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities in Canada, shared commitment and effort is key.

The Canada-Aboriginal Peoples' Roundtable Process helped to set a foundation for this joint approach. The Government of Canada and First Nations, Inuit and Métis identified areas of priority that have played a significant part in the process leading up to the November 24-25 Meeting of First Ministers and Aboriginal Leaders in Kelowna.

The Roundtable Process led to the May 31, 2005, Policy Retreat, where Policy Accords were signed between the Government of Canada and the Assembly of First Nations, the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, the Métis National Council, the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples and the Native Women's Association of Canada. These accords reflect the government's commitment to renew and strengthen its relationships with First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples in a manner that respects Aboriginal and treaty rights. They also reflect the government's commitment to strengthening the capacity of Aboriginal organizations so First Nations, Inuit and Métis organizations can contribute more effectively to the development of policies that affect them.

### **ACCOUNTABILITY FOR RESULTS**

The Sectoral Follow-up Session on Accountability for Results explored new and innovative ways to improve accountability relationships and strengthen the reporting process. Together, participants identified elements that are critical to robust reporting. These included: use of data and statistics; results-based approach; building the reporting framework on common principles and understanding; making reporting useful and reciprocal for all parties; and the need for joint processes to establish performance measures that will lead to transformative change.

To strengthen Government of Canada transparency and support improved accountability for results, the Government has committed to provide a detailed picture of federal funding for programs targeted directly to First Nations, Inuit and Métis, develop a comprehensive list of programs designed specifically for First Nations, Inuit and Métis, and establish a process for strengthened and streamlined reporting requirements.

### **ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISMS**

Accountability and clear reporting are critical elements of the relationship between First Nations leaders and members, and are often important markers of communities' successes. The terms and conditions of Government of Canada funding agreements require First Nations to submit annual consolidated audited financial statements which have been reviewed by independent auditors. In addition, schedules of federal funding are posted on the INAC website.

There are also a number of other accountability mechanisms and tools in place for both the Government of Canada and Aboriginal organizations and institutions, including: an increasing number of First Nations and Inuit communities have adopted financial management and accountability codes; reporting on plans and performance; internal audit and monitoring; external audits and reviews; evaluations; and, access to information legislation.

### **REPORTING ON RESULTS: THE ABORIGINAL HORIZONTAL FRAMEWORK**

The Aboriginal Horizontal Framework will help improve transparency and accountability for results as it is a product of 34 federal organizations coming together to capture a government-wide view of Aboriginal-direct programming and spending. The review will arrange a total of 360 federal programs and services under seven thematic headings (health; life-long learning; safe and sustainable communities; lands and resources; governance and relationships; housing; and economic opportunities) and identify strategic outcomes for each of the thematic areas. The themes were identified through the Canada-Aboriginal Peoples' Roundtable process and broadened to include the entire suite of federal programs directed towards improving the quality of life for First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

Overall, the Framework will help achieve better socio-economic outcomes by: increasing federal transparency; improving horizontal coordination and accountability across the federal government; and, building a shared knowledge of programs, expenditures and achievements among federal departments and agencies, Aboriginal communities, and other levels of government. It is an important step in the Government of Canada's commitment to measuring progress linked to expenditures for which it is accountable to both Aboriginal Peoples and non-Aboriginal Canadians.

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