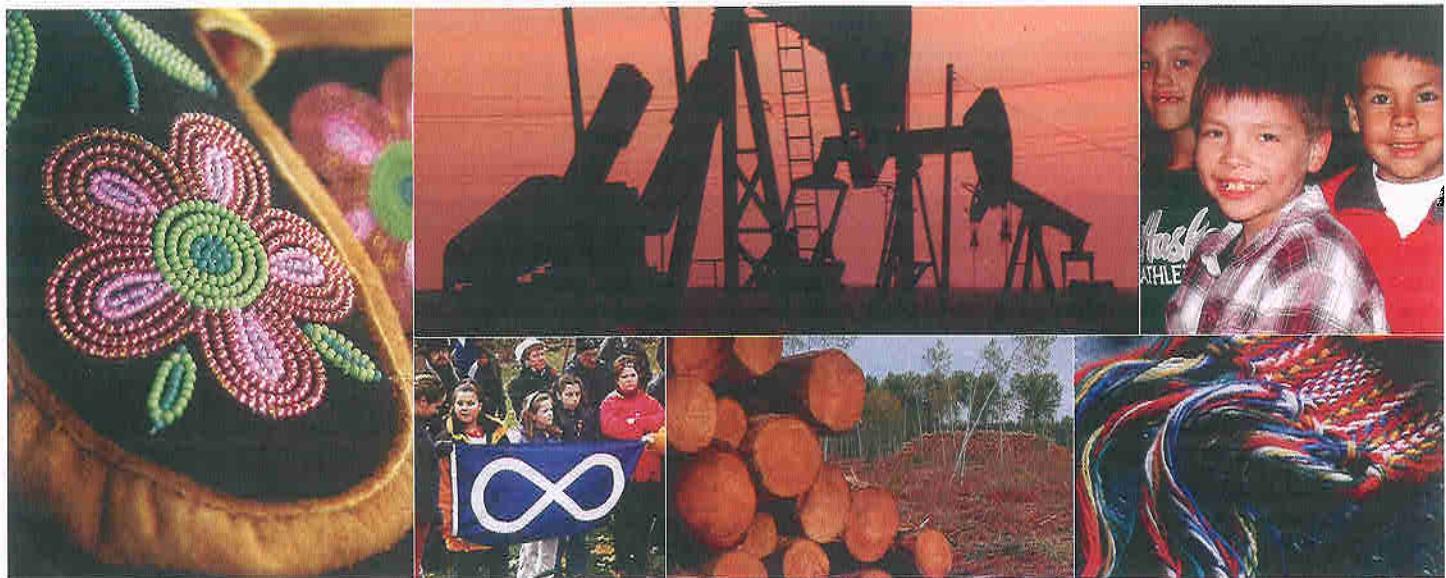


A GUIDE FOR MÉTIS ON CONSULTATION AND ACCOMMODATION



MÉTIS NATIONAL COUNCIL
FALL 2007

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WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

The Métis National Council (“MNC”) has developed this Guide for Métis on Consultation and Accommodation (“Guide”), in collaboration with the Métis Nation’s regional governments of the Métis Nation of Ontario, Manitoba Métis Federation, Métis Nation–Saskatchewan, Métis Nation of Alberta and Métis Nation British Columbia. The Guide provides helpful information to Métis on understanding consultation and accommodation, getting engaged in consultation and accommodation processes, ensuring effective Métis participation in these processes, and achieving positive results for Métis through these processes.

Since November 2004, when the Supreme Court of Canada handed down its ruling on consultation in the landmark cases of *Haida Nation v. British Columbia (Minister of Forests)* (“Haida”) and *Taku River Tlingit First Nation v. British Columbia (Project Assessment Director)* (“Taku”), governments throughout Canada have been attempting to consult with Aboriginal peoples when the Crown is considering actions and projects that may negatively affect asserted or proven Aboriginal rights.

While the idea that government has to work with Aboriginal people before they allocate resources or take actions that might negatively affect Aboriginal rights is now a generally accepted reality, the means of consulting and accommodating properly is a learning process for Aboriginal peoples, government and industry. Governments are just beginning to consult based on the principles set out in *Haida* and *Taku*, but whether they are engaging Métis in their consultation processes, consulting the appropriate Métis representatives, asking the right questions, implementing the results properly or funding the process adequately, are all issues that continue to arise throughout the Métis Nation.

Many of the Métis Nation’s regional governments are in the process of developing Métis-specific consultation models that will ensure effective Métis consultation and accommodation at local, regional and provincial levels. Through these models, government and industry will know how to effectively engage and consult with the Métis Nation. While developmental work on these Métis consultation models is ongoing, the Métis Nation has developed this Guide to assist Métis in better understanding how to get involved in consultation and accommodation processes and achieve results.

It must be stressed that this Guide is not legal advice. It has been developed to provide general information on consultation and accommodation in the Métis context. Before engaging in any substantive consultation processes, it is strongly advised that legal advice is obtained.



WHAT IS THE DUTY TO CONSULT AND ACCOMMODATE?

The ‘duty to consult and accommodate’ is a constitutional duty that flows from the special, trust-like, non-adversarial relationship that exists between the Crown and Aboriginal peoples. The Crown’s obligation to fulfill this duty is grounded in the honour of the Crown and the protection of Aboriginal rights in Canada’s Constitution.

The duty rests with the Crown and the Crown alone. It cannot be delegated to industry or the proponents of projects. Governments can set terms and conditions that industry or proponents have to meet in order to assist in ensuring the duty to consult and accommodate is fulfilled, but the ultimate responsibility to ensure the duty is fulfilled lies with the Crown. Government cannot deflect the duty or try to ‘pass the buck’. This does not mean you should not engage with industry or proponents directly, it only means that government must be engaged and vigilant in ensuring it is meeting its constitutional obligations to Aboriginal peoples.

The duty obligates governments to engage Aboriginal peoples before they undertake actions that could affect Aboriginal rights. This duty applies to asserted rights (rights not yet proven in court or recognized through negotiations with government) or proven rights (rights that have been recognized through negotiations with government or by a court of law). It is triggered when the government has real or constructive knowledge that Aboriginal rights exist and that their contemplated actions or the actions of industry may adversely affect those rights.

The content of the duty may differ from situation to situation, but the ultimate goal of the duty is to minimize the negative implications of the contemplated activity or project on the rights, lifestyle and way of life of affected Aboriginal peoples. In some cases, this may mean modification of the plans for the proposed activity, ongoing Aboriginal involvement and participation in the proposed activity (i.e. ongoing input and monitoring in project design and implementation, financial partnership in the proposed activity or project, etc.), compensation for loss of an Aboriginal peoples’ traditional way of life or stopping the project altogether (if there is no way to minimize the negative effects).

There is not one model or a simple formula that can be used to determine what the content of the duty requires in every situation. It must be assessed based on the facts and implications of each situation. However, at the very least, it demands that government engage Aboriginal people in a consultation and accommodation process to learn about the facts and potential implications of the proposed activity or project, as well as see if mutually agreeable solutions can be found to move forward in cooperation.

WHAT IS CONSULTATION AND ACCOMMODATION?

When the duty to consult and accommodate is triggered (as discussed on previous page), it requires governments to participate in a consultation and accommodation process with Métis. The next question is what does this process look like and how does it need to operate in order to be successful?

In order to design effective processes, Métis representatives need to have a solid understanding of what the terms ‘consultation’ and ‘accommodation’ mean. These terms are often used in the dialogue between Métis, governments and industry, but many do not fully understand or appreciate what they really mean or require on the parts of all parties.

Consultation is a process of give and take and a process that takes time. Think of consultation as an ongoing dialogue. A good consultation process results in informed decision-making in a manner that furthers everyone’s interests.

Consultation requirements often arise in the context of natural resources use and development. For example, if an oil company wishes to develop a new well it has an obligation to consult with all the Aboriginal peoples who live in and use the affected area. This includes the Métis and the government has an obligation to ensure this consultation happens. As well, if a provincial government wishes to amend its harvesting regulations or re-issue forestry licenses, it has an obligation to consult the Métis whose rights are affected by those contemplated actions.

An accommodation flows from consultation. Accommodations are meant to achieve a balancing of Aboriginal rights and interests with those of government and non-Aboriginal interests. In *Haida*, the Supreme Court described an accommodation as “seeking compromise in an attempt to harmonize conflicting interests and move further down the path of reconciliation.”

An accommodation may take many forms. It could be a modification to the project in order to minimize the harm to Métis harvesting areas. It could be a signed protocol or agreement to outline how the Métis will be consulted throughout the project’s development and implementation. It could be compensation for the loss of traditional practices or becoming an equity partner in the contemplated project. It could also be a combination of initiatives that minimize the negative effects of the proposed action or project on the Métis people.

WHAT DOES AN EFFECTIVE CONSULTATION AND ACCOMMODATION PROCESS LOOK LIKE?

It is important to understand effective consultation and accommodation as a process. An effective process cannot be rushed. The parties to the process must be partners and work at the same pace in order to ensure the process is successful.

Just because industry has spent 5 years developing a project and it thoroughly understands what it wants to do, it cannot expect Métis to respond to its project in just 60 days after it provides the Métis with information on the project. Moreover, Métis should be cautious about jumping to negotiating accommodations when they do not have a solid understanding of what effect the proposed project will have on Métis rights, lifestyle and way of life. An effective consultation and accommodation has five steps:

1. **NOTICE** – Government must give notice that it is considering a development project. The notice must go to all of the Aboriginal peoples, including the Métis, who live in and use the affected area.
2. **FUNDING** – Government or the developer of the project must fully fund Métis participation in any consultation process.
3. **INFORMATION EXCHANGE** – Government and the developer of the project must fully inform the Métis about the proposed development. The Métis must fully inform the government and developer of the project about the land and resource use of the Métis people in the project area.
4. **UNDERSTANDING THE PROJECT'S EFFECTS ON MÉTIS** – Government, the developer of the project and the Métis must work together to understand how the proposed project might affect Métis rights, culture, way of life and economy.
5. **ACCOMMODATION** – Government, the developer of the project and Métis must work together to ensure that the project, as it proceeds, accommodates Métis rights, culture, way of life and economy.

Government has the lawful responsibility to ensure that a proposed project does not proceed without proper consultation and accommodation of Aboriginal rights. It should be noted that the government does not have to do all of the consultation and accommodation itself, but it has the obligation to ensure that it is done and done properly.

The government must ensure that the general public and Aboriginal peoples are told that a development project is being planned. In order to discharge its duty to give the public notice, government typically puts an announcement in the newspapers or a poster in the Post Office. Notice is also given by letter to the municipality and what are usually called “stakeholders”. A public notice does not satisfy the government’s obligation to notify Aboriginal peoples.

Separate notice must go to First Nation and Métis representatives, which is usually done by letter. The Métis notice letter should go to the local, regional and/or provincial representatives of Métis governments (*i.e.* Locals, elected regional Métis leaders, the Head Office for a regional Métis government, etc.). However, to date this has not been the practice. Sometimes, under the guise of notifying the Métis, a letter is sent to a Métis trapper who has a trapline in the project area. Sometimes a letter is sent to the municipality. Often, there is no notice letter to the Métis at all.

Sending notice to the local municipality, to an individual trapper or to a First Nation does not satisfy the government’s obligation to notify Métis about a proposed project that may affect their Aboriginal rights.

What do we do if there is no notice to the Métis?

Take action immediately. If it comes to your attention that government is considering a project in your area and the Métis have not been provided notice, Métis representatives must immediately take action.

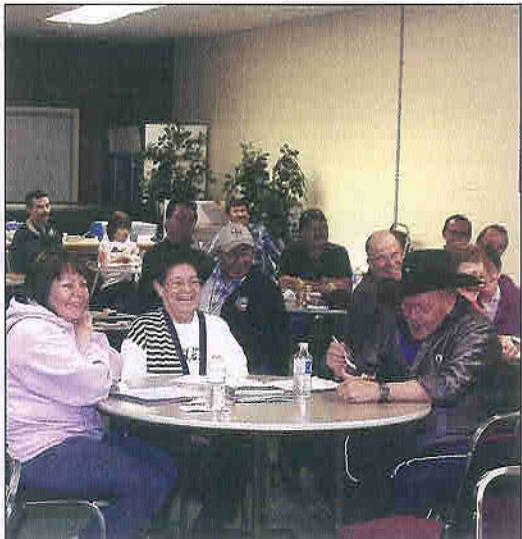
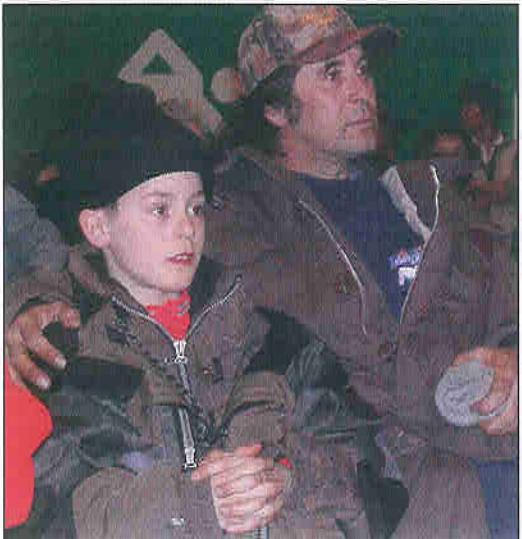
1. Send a Letter – A first step is to send a letter to the development company, your local MLA or MP and the Minister responsible for the project. Keep a copy for your files. In the letter include the following information:

- a) that Métis live in and use the area where the project is being considered;
- b) that Métis have traditional harvesting practices in the affected area;
- c) that Métis have established rights in the area in a court of law (if applicable), that Métis rights in the area have been recognized by government (if applicable) or that Métis are in litigation to prove rights in the area (if applicable);
- d) that Métis have deep concerns that the proposed project could negatively affect Métis harvesting, traditional economies, lifestyle and way of life;
- e) that government has an ongoing obligation to provide notice about this project to Métis representatives and that to date this has not been done;
- f) that Métis representatives must be officially notified about any consultation process, environmental assessment or review processes;
- g) provide the name and contact information of the appropriate Métis representatives to contact;
- h) carbon copy the leadership of your regional Métis government.

2. Call a Local Meeting – Bring your Métis Local or Community Council together to discuss the proposed development. Invite all of your local members to attend. Also, ask provincial and regional Métis representatives to attend. At the meeting, tell the people as much as you know about the proposed project. Select a representative who will be responsible to follow up on the project as it proceeds. Ask your regional or provincial Métis leadership to designate a Métis contact person within your Métis government at the provincial level to act as a liaison with you and to lobby government and the developer to ensure Métis are engaged and consulted.

3. Meet with the Developer – Tell the developer about the Métis who live in and use the project area. Also tell them about the Métis Nation's governance structures and institutions. Ask for all information to be provided to your Métis representative about the project. Ask to be included in any consultation or environmental review/assessment processes. Ask that a Métis-specific consultation process be jointly developed in order to ensure Métis are engaged. Demand that the Métis (not just as part of the First Nation or the municipality) be kept fully informed about the project.

4. Meet your Elected Government Representatives – Tell him/her that the Métis have not been notified about the proposed project. Remind your MP or MLA that government has a legal responsibility to notify Métis about projects that may affect Métis rights, including, Métis harvesting rights. Demand that the MP or MLA use his/her influence to ensure that Métis will be included in any consultation or environmental review/assessment processes. Demand that the Métis (not just as part of the First Nation or the municipality) be kept fully informed about the project.



Participating in a consultation and accommodation process costs money. Depending on the size and scope of the proposed project, the process usually takes years and requires adequate funds for Métis representatives, scientific experts and lawyers to analyze the project and its results, to travel, to attend dozens of meetings, and do research and mapping on Métis land and resource use.

It is imperative that government or the developer fully fund Métis participation in any consultation process. Therefore, one of the first objectives of the Métis, once informed about a proposed project, is to seek funding for participation in the process.

Most developers understand that they must engage in a consultation process with Aboriginal peoples. The developer is the first and most obvious source of consultation funds.

- 1. Send a Letter to the Developer** – In the letter you should state that the Métis who live in and use the project area wish to participate in any consultation or environmental assessment or review process and that you will require adequate funds for your meaningful participation. Tell the developer that you will require funds to retain experts for research and expenses to prepare for and attend hearings. Also, state you would like to ensure that a collaborative Métis-specific relationship and process will be developed.
- 2. Send a Letter to the Minister Responsible** – In the letter you should state that the Métis intend to participate fully in any consultation or environmental assessment or review process and will require funds to retain experts for research and expenses to prepare for and attend hearings. Remind the Minister that government has a lawful obligation to ensure that Métis, as a collective, are able to meaningfully participate in these processes and that without adequate funds, meaningful participation is not possible.
- 3. Develop A Budget** – Work with your regional Métis government to develop an appropriate and reasonable budget that details what you think the community requires in order to effectively engage in the consultation process. There are examples of other Métis consultation processes that have taken place across the country, so it is important to work with your regional Métis government in order to look at other processes and models that the Métis Nation has undertaken, in order to be realistic about what type of resources you require. ☺



INFORMATION EXCHANGE

The exchange of information is usually the longest part of the consultation process. It has two separate and distinct obligations: (1) responsibilities of the developer and government, and (2) responsibilities of the Métis.

Responsibilities of the Developer and the Government

The government and the developer must fully inform the Métis about the proposed development. This is an obligation the developer usually takes on by preparing a report that sets out the full details of the proposed project. If this consultation is part of an environmental assessment or review, the report is called an *Environmental Impact Statement*. It is very large – often including several volumes. It is also very technical. It contains details about tests done on water, air, wildlife, fish and land. It provides the scientific analysis of the data obtained from these tests. For the average person – the *Environmental Impact Statement* or reports prepared by the developer are impossible to read or understand. It must be evaluated by a professional who has training and expertise in the area.

How do you retain this needed professional? This is what part of the funding is for from Step Two. You need to get one or more experts to review the *Environmental Impact Statement* or information provided to you and get them to prepare a report on the impacts of the project on water, air, land, fish and *wildlife*. You will also need an expert to provide a report on the social and economic impacts of the project. These professionals work for you, not the developer or government. Their job is to go through the information and give the Métis an analysis on what the project has the potential of doing to Métis lifestyle and economies. Essentially, they need to translate the information from the developer into language that the average person can understand and appreciate, as well as identify potential implications the project may have on the land, water and the Métis who use the area.

Obligations of the Métis

The second stage of the information exchange is the responsibility of the Métis. The Métis must fully inform the government and the developer about the land and resource use of the Métis people in the project area. This will usually require (1) a research report, and (2) land use maps.

- 1. Research Report on Métis of the Area** – You will need to get an expert to prepare a report. The report should be an academic style of report with proper references and citations included. On completion it must be given to the developer and government. It should contain the following:



- a) *A history of the Métis who live in the area*—The report must detail how and when the Métis arrived in the general area, provide the history of their lifestyle and economy and indicate the families who have made this area their home. The report must show that the Métis are a separate group from First Nations.
- b) *Métis historic land and resource use in the area*—This must include research with respect to Métis reliance on hunting, fishing, gathering and trapping. If it is possible to distinguish Métis land and resource use from First Nation land and resource use, do so.
- c) *Continuity*—The report must show that the Métis did not just live in the area historically. It must show that they have continued to live in the area to the present day.
- d) *Modern-day Métis community*—The report should show land and resource use of the modern community. It should set out their distinct Métis economy, the families, their social and political system and culture. This should be based on information gathered from interviews with the Métis living in the area.

2. **Land Use Maps** – These maps are prepared from interviews with the Métis in the area. During the interviews, experts will help Métis to put onto maps, the places where they and their families hunt, fish, gather and trap. It will also include burial sites, trails, campsites, birthplaces, residences, etc. Each individual, with guidance from an expert, will complete his or her own map. The maps will then be put together and the composite map will show the Métis land and resource use of the area. These maps will be helpful to show whether Métis land and resource use does in fact occur in the project area. The maps will also show in a very graphic way how the project may affect that land and resource use.

On completion, the research report and the composite map should be provided, with a written explanation, to the developer and government.

In addition, within the *Environmental Impact Statement* or documents prepared by the developer, the developer will usually provide information about its efforts to consult with the Aboriginal peoples in the area. To date, developers have put most of their focus on consulting with First Nations with respect to the effects of the project. This is often a very detailed list, as the developer will keep track of every letter sent, the date mailed, every meeting and every phone call. If the developer has met with an individual First Nation trapper, that will be listed as consultation. If a workshop with Elders has been held, that too will be listed as consultation. Often consultation with First Nations or the municipality will be considered by the developer and government to be consultation with Métis. This is unacceptable. In your written response to the government and developer, these deficiencies should be pointed out. ☺

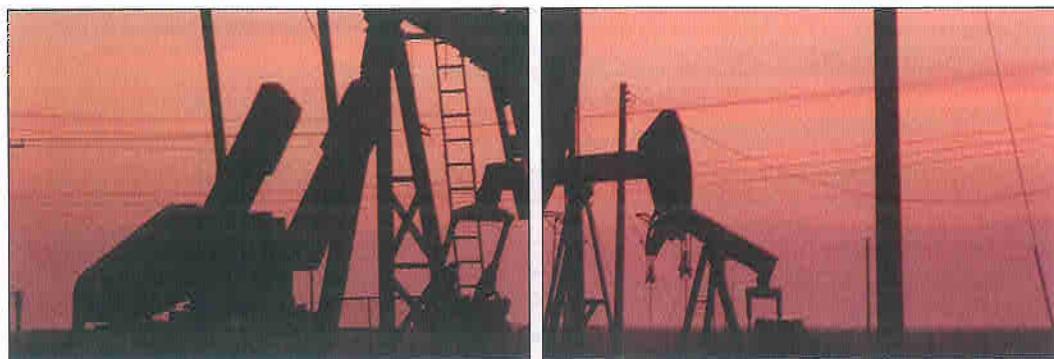
UNDERSTANDING PROJECT'S EFFECTS ON MÉTIS

At this stage, the Métis must apply their own research report and land use maps to the expert report they commissioned on the *Environmental Impact Statement* or documents provided by the developer. By putting these reports and maps together, the Métis should be able to see where and how the project will affect Métis land and resource use.

The Métis then must decide whether the impact is serious or not. This decision is crucial. The question to ask and answer, based on the evidence, is this – “will the project significantly affect Métis traditional uses or access to lands and resources”? If the honest answer is that the impact is minimal or that there is no impact, then the consultation process has been effectively completed. The obligation on government and the developer will simply be to keep the Métis informed as the project proceeds and to re-engage in consultation if there are modifications or changes to the project.

If the evidence shows that the project will significantly affect Métis traditional land use, then government and the developer have an obligation to mitigate that damage. The question to ask is this – “can steps be taken to lessen the impact”? As a part of this step, you should undertake the following:

- 1. Prepare a Métis Analysis Report & Recommendations** – This analysis report will require your experts. The report should set out in detail the impacts expected and the magnitude of each impact. The report should also include suggestions, if any, on how to lessen the impact. Finally, the analysis report should state your final opinion on whether the project should go ahead or not. If the Métis are prepared to approve the project — “are there conditions on that approval”? Conditions might include a recommendation that the project be approved subject to specific mitigation measures or an impact and benefits agreement (*i.e.* an accommodation).
- 2. Share the Analysis Report and Recommendations with the Developer and Government** – The report should be shared and will then go on the record and allow the developer and government to compare it to their own analysis.



After the Analysis Report and Recommendations (Step 4) have been exchanged with government and the developer, all three parties must meet to work out any necessary accommodations.

History shows that most projects are ultimately approved. It is very rare that any project is entirely stopped. However, projects can be changed to lessen the impacts. Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that many measures can be taken that will still permit the project to go ahead, but will significantly lessen impacts. For example, roads can be re-aligned, bridges can be re-designed, hydro lines can be re-routed, and specific measures can be taken to protect wildlife and fish. As well, agreements to ensure continued Métis access to areas can be negotiated. You must work with your experts to understand how the specific project you are dealing with can be changed in order to accommodate Métis rights.

There are also other types of accommodations that can be negotiated in order to ensure that your community is minimally impacted and/or compensated for potential losses or damages. Examples of accommodations include:

- Negotiating a protocol to guide the relationship and ongoing consultation/development process, along with capacity (financial) resources to support this protocol;
- Identifying future joint research to be conducted with respect to monitoring the effects of the development on your community (paid for by the developer or government);
- Including a Métis community representative on an advisory group, community or panel overseeing the development;
- Negotiating an impacts and benefits agreement, which could include a series of accommodation-related commitments on the part of the developer or government;
- Negotiating a financial interest in the development (*e.g.*, an equity or partnership stake);
- Negotiating financial compensation (*e.g.*, lump sum payment or ongoing payments) for the community or directly affected individuals/families;
- Negotiating an accommodation where your community's rights are minimally affected (*e.g.*, re-routing roads, relocating bridges, etc.).



What type of accommodation is right for Métis?

Your Research Report and Land Use Maps (Step 3) as well as your Analysis Report and Recommendations (Step 4) should inform and guide the type of accommodation that is requested and negotiated. Equally important, throughout Steps 1 to 4 you should have been bringing all of the information and research back to your community members in order to keep them informed and involved. It is essential that the community is behind and supportive of what is being done. This can only be achieved by regularly reporting back and ensuring there is transparency in the consultation and accommodation process. You need to listen to what your community's priorities are and make sure the accommodation reflects those priorities. Ultimately, any accommodation needs to be based on what your research and evidence supports as well as what the community wants. It is also important to keep in mind that in some situations, the developer and/or government may request that all or parts of the negotiated accommodation be put to a community vote for approval.

It is also recommended that if you have not already retained a lawyer, you should at this stage of the process. Your lawyer will be able to assist you in engaging and explaining the process to your community, as well as developing your proposed accommodation. Further, they can provide you with suggestions and guidance on how to put your best case forward to the government and developer. In addition, you should also contact or engage your regional Métis government for information on other accommodations Métis have secured throughout the Métis Nation Homeland. This information may give you ideas on innovative types of accommodations, as well as provide you with reasonable expectations about the types and levels of accommodation funding and/or compensation that can be achieved. Moreover, since consultation and accommodation are relatively new to the Métis, it may be helpful for you to establish contact with other Métis representatives who have gone through the same thing, for support, advice and best practices.

What is considered a success in the accommodation stage?

The ultimate goal of accommodation is to ensure that Aboriginal people are not damaged by development projects. Damage can occur on many levels. Damage can occur because of the physical effects of the project on fish, wildlife, water, air or the land. This, in turn, can damage the Métis economy, which is dependant on a healthy environment. Damage can occur on a social level. This can be caused by the effects of a sudden increase in workers coming into the community for the construction period. It can be caused by the loss of economic opportunity if trapping and fishing are affected. New linear corridors such as roads or hydro lines can redirect wildlife away from areas traditionally used. Also, the footprint of the project itself removes land and resources from access by the Métis.



Accommodation for that damage can come in many forms. Métis will need to make specific and detailed accommodation demands. Vague and unrealistic demands for accommodation are unlikely to be persuasive. There are many possible ways to accommodate Métis. For example, if there will be damage to the social cohesion of the community, you may wish to ask for money that goes to bolstering existing cultural events or settings. If there is a danger that there will be many non-Aboriginal people coming to the community and the language will be lost, you may want money for language preservation initiatives. If there is a concern that fish or wildlife will be affected, you may wish to ask for jobs associated with monitoring or that Métis traditional knowledge will be incorporated into sustainability initiatives. If the road or hydro line is going to go through a major harvesting area, you may want to ask that it be re-routed. A percentage of royalties from the project, one-time financial compensation payments, guaranteed Métis jobs in the project, long term contracts or part Métis ownership in the project are other ways of mitigating the social and economic damages that the project may cause.

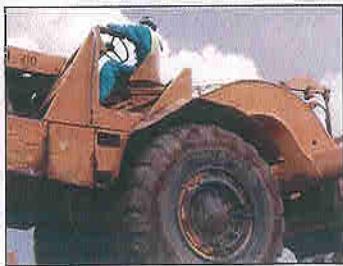
If you go into the discussions with a creative attitude, your facts and data lined up, and a good idea of what you are trying to protect and what you want, you are more likely to achieve success. At the end of the day, real success is arriving at a workable solution, for all parties, that protects and preserves Métis rights, culture, lifestyle and way of life for generations to come.

What can you do if developers or government resist making accommodations?

Unfortunately, experience shows us that it is at the accommodation stage where a process usually breaks down. To date, we have seen that developers and government have been willing to fund the research and information exchange process. For example, they don't mind having Elder workshops or giving helicopter rides over the proposed site or going to meetings to hear trappers speak. However, changing their projects' plans in order to accommodate Aboriginal peoples' land and resource use is often resisted. If your proposed accommodations are resisted, the following are some things you should consider doing:

1. **Create a Written Record** – Send a letter to the government and the developer objecting to the fact that they are not appropriately accommodating your Métis rights. Tell them that you will object to any approval of the project if it is given before Métis rights are properly accommodated.
2. **Write to Provincial Government Representatives** – Métis are voters and taxpayers. Send letters to MLAs objecting to the fact that the developer and the government are not properly protecting Métis rights.
3. **Send Letters to Other Parties Involved** – Often there are other boards, agencies, bodies or jurisdictions involved in these projects (e.g., National Energy Board, other provincial governments, U.S. states, etc.). You should send letters setting out your concerns to all of these parties too.

4. **Take Action at the Federal Level** – Most projects of any size require approval by the federal and provincial governments. If the provincial government is taking the lead in the consultation process and is resisting accommodation, send a letter to the federal Minister responsible. Set out in detail your participation in the process and your concerns. Tell the Minister that your concerns are based on what the expert research has revealed. Demand that the Minister act on your behalf to protect your rights. Demand that no project approval be given until Métis rights are accommodated.
5. **Engage Possible Partners and Allies** – Often there are other groups (e.g., municipalities, environmental groups) that may be objecting to these developments for entirely different reasons. Establishing strategic and limited alliances with these groups may be helpful in ensuring the Métis voice is heard by governments and project proponents.
6. **Environmental Hearings** – If there is a possibility of appearing before an environmental assessment or review panel, make sure you appear. Apply for intervener or participant status and funding. Appear at the hearing. Give evidence (e.g., your expert report on the *Environmental Impact Statement*, your expert research report on Métis history, your land use map, etc.) and reiterate your demand that the project not be approved until Métis rights are accommodated.
7. **Contact the Media** – The media are becoming increasingly aware that consultation and accommodation of Aboriginal interests are essential for a project to proceed without delays and legal challenges. Issuing a press release or contacting a journalist directly may be helpful in getting Métis concerns on the radar. Be sure to outline how your attempts to get the government and proponents to address Métis concerns have been ignored to date. Try to avoid statements that you want the project stopped completely. Emphasize that you want to ensure that Métis rights and concerns are addressed. ☺



ABOUT THE MÉTIS NATION

The Métis People

Prior to Canada's crystallization as a nation in west central North America, the Métis people emerged out of the relations of Indian women and European men. While the initial offspring of these Indian and European unions were individuals who possessed mixed ancestry, the gradual establishment of distinct Métis settlements, outside of Indian and European cultures and settlements, as well as, the subsequent intermarriages between Métis women and Métis men, resulted in the genesis of a new Aboriginal people - the Métis people. Distinct Métis settlements emerged, as an out-growth of the fur trade, along the freighting waterways of Ontario, surrounding the Great Lakes, throughout the Northwest and as far north as the McKenzie river. The Métis people and these settlements were connected through the highly mobile fur trade network, seasonal rounds, extensive kinship connections and a collective identity (*i.e.* common culture, language, way of life, etc.).

The Métis Nation

The Métis people constitute a distinct Aboriginal nation largely based in western Canada. The Métis Nation grounds its assertion of Aboriginal nationhood on well-recognized international standards. It has a shared history, a common culture (song, dance, dress, national symbols, etc.), unique language (Michif with various regional dialects), extensive kinship connections from Ontario westward, a distinct way of life, a traditional territory and a collective consciousness.

Métis Governments from Ontario Westward

The Métis Nation is represented through province-wide governance structures from Ontario westward; namely, the Métis Nation of Ontario, the Manitoba Métis Federation, the Métis Nation - Saskatchewan, the Métis Nation of Alberta and Métis Nation British Columbia. These Métis governance structures are the contemporary expression of the centuries-old struggle of the Métis Nation to be self-determining within the Canadian federation.

The Métis National Council

The Métis National Council (MNC) was established in March 1983 and has represented the Métis Nation nationally and internationally since that time. The MNC is formed by the Métis Nation's governments from Ontario westward coming together to collectively mandate a national governance structure. The MNC's main goal is to secure a healthy space for the Métis Nation's on-going existence within the Canadian federation, as well as, to move forward on implementing the Métis Nation's inherent right of self-government at a local, regional and national level.

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