

SUPPORTING STRONG ANISHINABEK FIRST NATION GOVERNANCE



Annual Report 2024/2025



B'MAAKONIGAN

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Message from the CEO



LESLIE MCGREGOR

E-niigaanziikidaaged/Chief Executive Officer

Aanii kina wiiya,

As we reflect on B'Maakonigan's journey from its inception in October 2022 to the present, I am filled with pride and gratitude for the collective achievements that have shaped our path. This Annual Report highlights the milestones we've reached and reaffirms our commitment to advancing self-governance, strengthening community engagement, and honouring Anishinabek identity.

In our early stages, we laid a strong foundation by establishing our operational framework and selecting our board executive including G'Maa Scott McLeod as Chairperson, G'Maa Lloyd Myke as Vice-Chairman, and G'Maa-kwe Rhonda Williams-Lovett as Secretary-Treasurer. Their leadership was instrumental in guiding our initial priorities, including advocating for amendments to the Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement (ANGA) and negotiating fiscal agreements to support our readiness. In October 2024, we welcomed G'Maa Lloyd Myke as Chair of B'Maakonigan, and G'Maa Roque as Vice-Chair.

Over the past year, we've made significant strides in strategic planning and law development. Through a collaborative process involving our staff, consultants, and community partners, we developed our 5 Year Strategic and Action Plan; a comprehensive roadmap that reflects our shared vision and outlines clear steps to achieve our governance goals. Alongside this, we completed two foundational law templates: the E'Dbendaagijig Law and the Leadership Selection Law. These templates are essential tools that support our member First Nations in exercising their inherent right to self-govern.

Message from the CEO

To support our growing operations and strategic priorities, we expanded our team to include a Governance Development Director, Communications Manager, multiple Policy Analysts, and an Intergovernmental Relations Coordinator. These roles have strengthened our capacity to deliver meaningful support to our communities and advance the implementation of the ANGA.

We also initiated the development of a Well-Being Framework, which is an essential tool designed to help us answer a critical question: Is the Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement improving the lives of our member First Nations? This framework will guide our efforts in measuring progress, identifying areas for improvement, and ensuring that our governance initiatives truly enhance the well-being of our communities.

Our bi-monthly workshops with Governance Directors and participation in gatherings such as the Anishinabek Governance Symposium have been vital in fostering dialogue, sharing knowledge, and ensuring that community voices remain central to our work. These engagements continue to shape our approach to governance, citizenship, and cultural preservation.

Looking ahead, we remain focused on expanding our membership within the ANGA, finalizing additional law templates, implementing the strategic priorities outlined in our plan, and completing the Well-Being Framework. Our commitment to supporting First Nations on their unique paths to self-determination remains unwavering.

I extend my deepest gratitude to our communities, leaders, and partners for your trust, collaboration, and resilience. Together, we are building a future where our governance is strong, our culture is vibrant, and our people thrive.

Chi-miigwech for walking this path with us.

With respect and gratitude,

Leslie McGregor
Chief Executive Officer, B'Maakonigan



Our Mission and Values



MISSION

Aasgaawitong Anishinaabemowin Meshkoziid Anishinaabe Ogimaakandiwin, wii wasse anikiwaad miinwaa wi ni niigaaniwaad ayaanke nitaawigijig mina E'Dbendaagzijig.

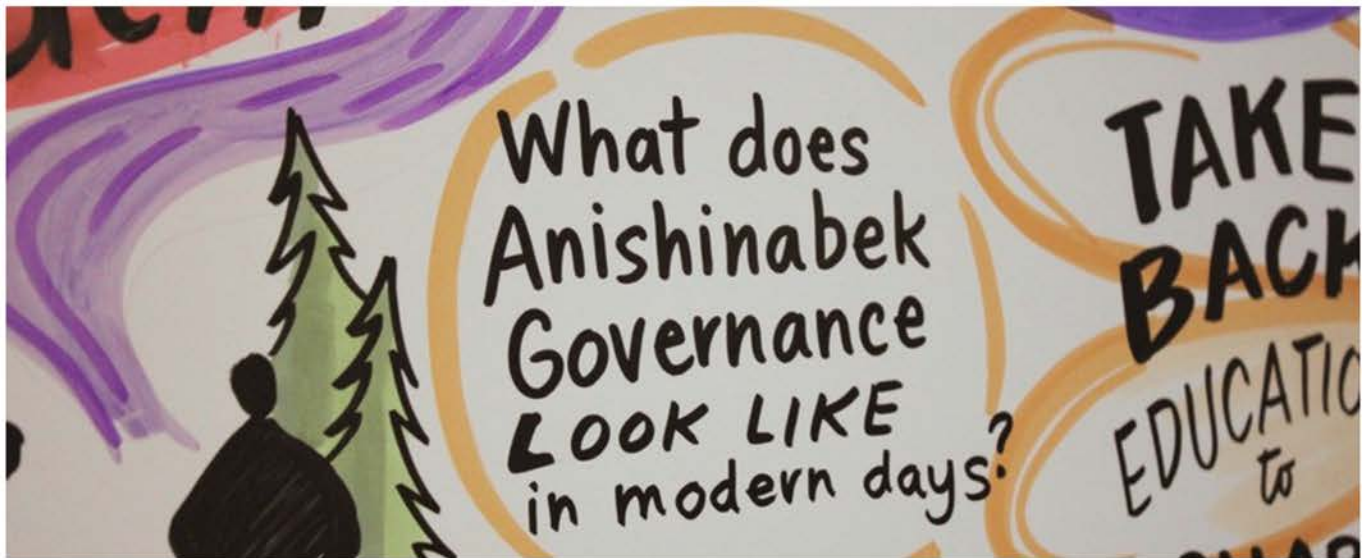
English Translation:

Supporting strong Anishinabek First Nation Governance, for a brighter future and the future generations of E'Dbendaagzijig (those who belong).

VALUES

- Preserving and protecting our identity as Anishinaabe people;
 - Implementing Anishinaabe Chi-Naaknigewin that supports Anishinaabe Aadziwin: aligning our actions with these teachings and ways of governing;
 - Balancing the needs of the present with our dreams of the future (sustainability); and,
 - Understanding colonial trauma and moving away from systems and structures that continue to inflict harm upon our communities.
-

Governance Development



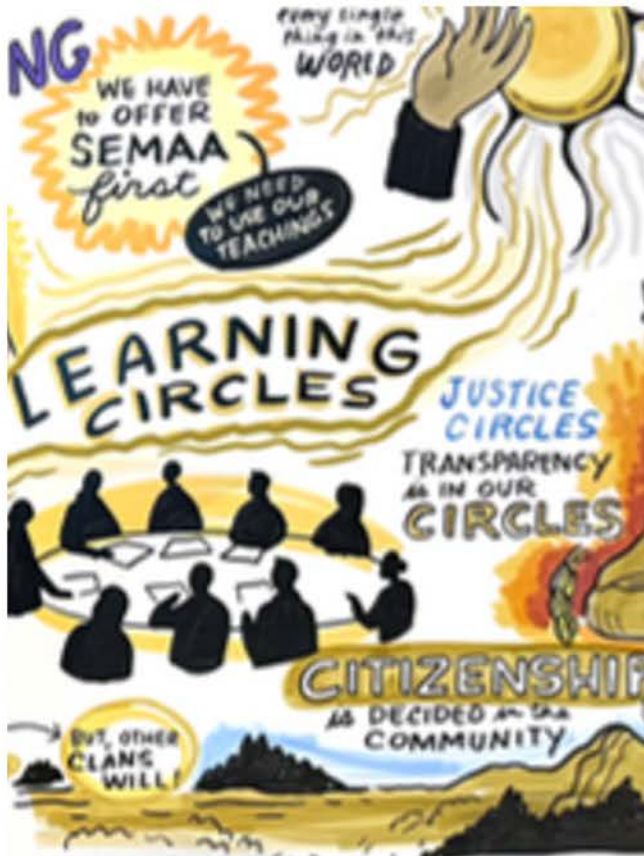
FIRST NATION ENGAGEMENT & RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

- Completed support materials for Whitefish River First Nation (WRFN) in advance of their May 24, 2025 ANGA vote, including assistance with a local information video and briefing tools.
- Began outreach to all B'Maakonigan First Nations, prioritizing trust-based relationship building through introductory calls and emails.
- Analysts were matched with specific Nations to ensure tailored, consistent support. Relationship building is underway in the following Nations:
 - **Hillary McGregor** – Whitefish River First Nation and Wahnapiitae First Nation
 - **Lily Farrell** – Nipissing First Nation and Magnetawan First Nation
 - **Janet Esquimaux** – Zhiibaahaasing First Nation and Sheshegwaning First Nation
 - **Sarah Blackwell** – Aundeck Omni Kaning First Nation and Moose Deer Point First Nation

INTERGOVERNMENTAL FORUM DEVELOPMENT

- Draft Terms of Reference for the Intergovernmental Forum were developed and reviewed with key partners, including CIRNAC and legal advisors. This work is led by Shaelyn Wabegijig, Government Relations Coordinator, who is preparing to present updates to the B'Maakonigan Board of Directors.

Governance Development



IMPLEMENTATION AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

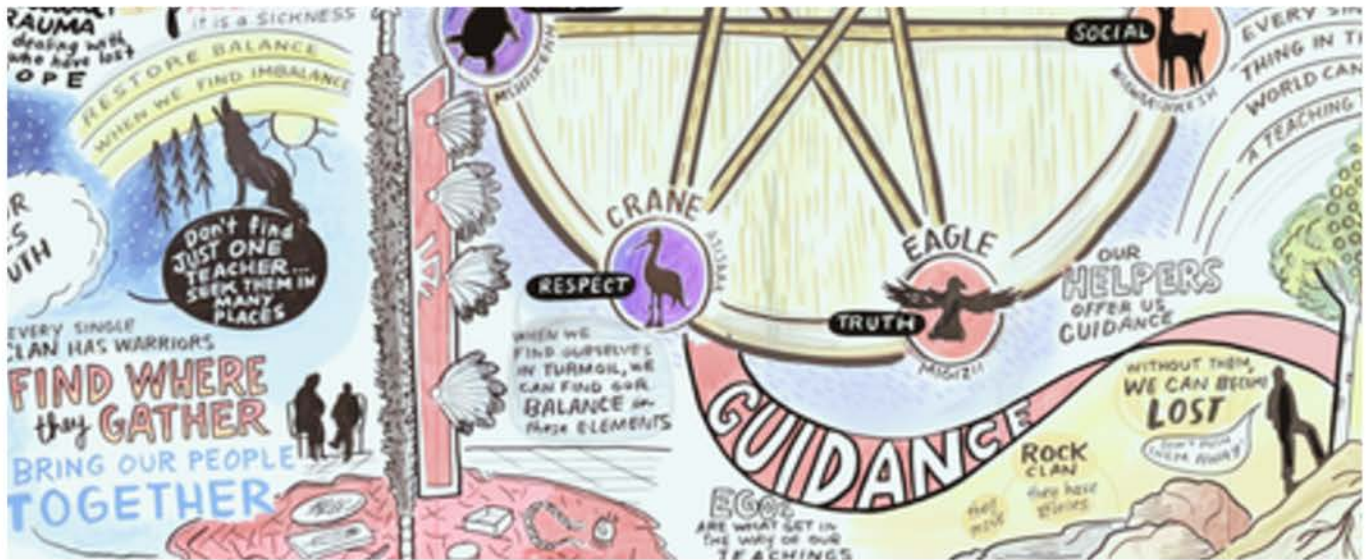
This year, the Implementation and Operations Committee (IOC) continued to play a role in advancing the Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement (ANGA). As a tri-partite body composed of representatives from Canada, the First Nations, and the Anishinabek Nation, the IOC has served as a collaborative forum for monitoring progress, resolving implementation issues informally, and strengthening the Agreement's operational integrity. Through regular meetings, the Committee has supported amendments to the Agreement, including the addition of new First Nations to ANGA. As part of the ANGA agreement, the IOC provides implementation support to help ensure that activities remain responsive, adaptive, and aligned with the priorities of Anishinabek Nation member First Nations.

E'DBENDAAGIJIG DECLARATION SUPPORT

On January 29, 2025, B'Maakonigan proudly supported the Anishinabek Nation's (AN) E'Dbendaagzijig Commissioner, Governance Commissioner, Regional Chief Smoke, and the Governance Department in hosting a Citizenship Gathering in Sault Ste. Marie. This gathering marked a powerful moment of revitalization for the E'Dbendaagzijig Declaration, reaffirming the sacred responsibilities and inherent rights of Anishinabek citizens.

Our team contributed to the planning and facilitation of the event, and logistical coordination alongside the AN's leadership. In the months that followed, we continued to provide strategic and technical support through regional virtual meetings, helping to shape and refine the E'Dbendaagzijig Declaration. These efforts reflect our deep commitment to Anishinaabe governance, citizenship, and the collective vision of self-determination.

Governance Development



GOVERNANCE SUMMIT

On February 25–27, 2025, B'Maakonigan partnered with the Anishinabek Nation's Governance Department to co-host a Governance Summit grounded in the theme "Past, Present, and Future." Held with the intention of deepening understanding across Anishinabek First Nations, the Summit provided vital information on existing Governance Agreements, such as the including the Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement and the Anishinabek Nation Education Agreement. It introduced the forthcoming Koganaawsawin (Child Well-Being Law). Through a series of sessions and discussions, participants

explored sectoral self-government as the pathway to realizing inherent rights, with objectives focused on sovereignty and the Doodem system of governance.

The Summit also highlighted the connection between governance and Mino-Bimaadiziwin (The Good Life), reinforcing how traditional teachings and community-led practices can shape modern governance models. Together, we built momentum toward unity and the next steps for implementing Anishinabek Nation laws and strengthening self-determination.

ANTICIPATED RELATIONSHIP OUTCOME FOR 2025/26

Collaborative momentum to ensure each Nation feels supported in both short-term needs (e.g., law development, engagement processes) and long-term governance planning.



Governance Development



CHALLENGES AND MITIGATION

- **Varying Capacity Across Nations:** Differences in governance and administrative capacity required flexible, Nation-specific support. The team is addressing this through needs assessments and tailored capacity-building approaches.
- **Balancing Priorities:** The wide range of governance issues posed coordination challenges. The workplan prioritization process has helped focus efforts on the most immediate needs.
- **Remote Work Dynamics:** The team has adopted regular virtual meetings, clear communication practices, and collaborative tools to maintain cohesion and prevent silos.
- **Relationship Building:** Establishing trust requires time and consistency. The team has committed to regular engagement, follow-up, and transparency with each Nation.

ANTICIPATED RELATIONSHIP OUTCOME FOR 2025/26

Consistent and trusted communication channels between analysts and their assigned Nations.



Governance Development



LOOKING AHEAD: PRIORITIES FOR 2025/26

Building on the momentum of Q4 2024–25, the Governance Development Team will shift from foundation building to deeper implementation. Priorities include:

- **Strengthening Relationships with B'Maakonigan First Nations**
 - Continue regular engagement with each Nation, with analysts acting as consistent points of contact to support Nation-specific priorities. The focus will be on building trust, supporting dialogue, and ensuring that Nation voices guide all policy development.
- **Supporting Whitefish River First Nation's Adhesion to ANGA**
 - Provide ongoing support following WRFN's ANGA vote, ensuring a smooth transition into implementation and alignment with the broader Nation process.

ANTICIPATED RELATIONSHIP OUTCOME FOR 2025/26

Nations supported in articulating and advancing their own governance priorities within the ANGA framework.



Governance Development



LOOKING AHEAD: PRIORITIES FOR 2025/26

Building on the momentum of Q4 2024–25, the Governance Development Team will shift from foundation building to deeper implementation. Priorities include:

- **Expanding ANGA Membership**
 - Work closely with prospective First Nations seeking to adhere to the ANGA by supporting them in implementing the FNAP. This will involve tailored guidance, resource development, and capacity-building to ensure that each community is equipped to move through the process at their own pace.

Expanding membership under the Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement (ANGA) remains a central part of B'Maakonigan's commitment to advancing self-determination and nationhood. In close partnership with the Anishinabek Nation Governance Department, we have presented at and participated in regional meetings and Grand Council Assemblies to promote awareness and momentum.

Alongside the AN's Governance Department, our approach begins with tailored presentations to Chiefs and Councils, equipping leadership with the knowledge and tools needed to initiate meaningful community conversations about joining ANGA. From initial engagement to formal approval, we walk together with First Nations as they explore the potential of sectoral self-government. Each step is guided by respect, transparency, and a shared vision of a strong, unified Anishinabek Nation rooted in inherent rights and collective strength.

Governance Development



LOOKING AHEAD: PRIORITIES FOR 2025/26

Building on the momentum of Q4 2024–25, the Governance Development Team will shift from foundation building to deeper implementation. Priorities include:

- **Research and Analysis Across the Four Governance Pillars**
 - Undertake in-depth research and develop recommendations in the areas of:
 - i. Leadership Selection
 - ii. Citizenship
 - iii. Culture & Language
 - iv. Operations & Management

This research will integrate traditional knowledge, comparative governance models, and best practices to support informed decision-making and strengthen Nation-based governance frameworks.

ANTICIPATED RELATIONSHIP OUTCOME FOR 2025/26

Nation-specific insights and reports to strengthen each community's ability to navigate governance issues effectively.



Governance Development



LOOKING AHEAD: PRIORITIES FOR 2025/26

Building on the momentum of Q4 2024–25, the Governance Development Team will shift from foundation building to deeper implementation. Priorities include:

- **Team Development & Capacity Building**
 - Continue to invest in professional development, mentorship, and knowledge-sharing within the Governance Development Team to deepen skills and sustain the strong collaborative foundation established in Q4.

ANTICIPATED RELATIONSHIP OUTCOME FOR 2025/26

Stronger inter-Nation connections through shared learning, dialogue, and coordinated approaches to governance challenges.

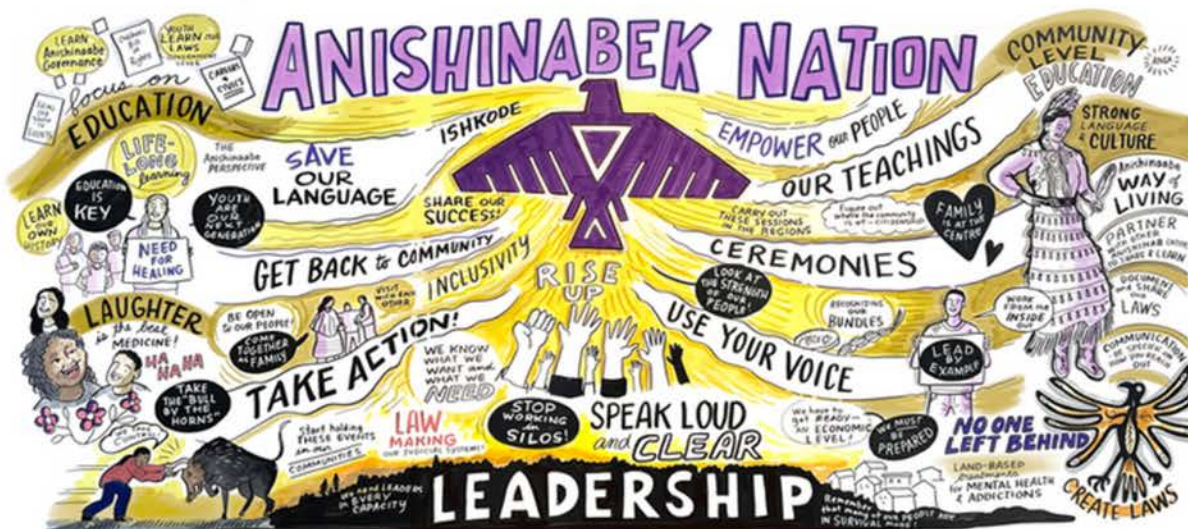


Governance Development



B'MAAKONIGAN'S GOVERNANCE DEVELOPMENT TEAM HIT THE ROAD HARD IN Q4.

The final quarter of 2024–25 was defined by team building, foundational planning, relationship building, and initial Nation engagement. With the structures now in place, the Governance Development Team is well-positioned to deliver on its 2025–26 priorities. The year ahead will see a shift toward strengthening relationships, supporting Nation-led processes, advancing research in the four governance pillars, and deepening team capacity. Together, these efforts will move B'Maakonigan and its member Nations further along the path of implementing the Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement and advancing self-determination for generations to come.



The Team

Joined 2022

Whitefish River First Nation

Leslie's deep respect for Anishinabek traditional knowledge shapes her leadership and management strategies at B'Maakonigan.



LESLIE MCGREGOR
Chief Executive Officer

E-niigaanziikidaaged

Joined 2025

Saugeen First Nation

Dwayne has worked exclusively in First Nations in senior roles in the areas of natural resources development, treaty research, governance, and administration.



DWAYNE NASHKAWA
Governance Development Director

Bmaakonigewin Miiyaajishkaajigeng
E-bminzhaa'dang

Joined 2023

Whitefish River First Nation

With a strong financial management and strategic planning foundation, Dave oversees all finance and operations, including financial planning and analysis, budgeting, and risk management.



DAVID SHAWANDA
Finance and Operations Director

Zhooniyaa miinwaa E-naanzheng
E-bminzhaa'dang

Joined 2023

Whitefish River First Nation

With her Bachelor of Business Administration, Gail supports existing staff, coordinates events, and assists with designing and setting up Human Resources (HR) processes.



GAIL JACKO
Administrative and Human Resource Finance Clerk

Nooj gegoo e-naangzhed

Joined 2024

M'Chigeeng First Nation

With over a decade of experience providing administrative assistance to executives, Tonya's dedication to our member First Nations and her colleagues enhances collaboration and ensures continued growth.



TONYA ARMSTRONG
Executive Assistant

E-bminzhaajiged e-nkiitwaad

Joined 2024

Aundeck Omni Kaning First Nation

Building on her time in the Anishinabek Nation Restoration of Jurisdiction department and UCCM, Janet brings a rich history of Community Development, Governance, and law development to her role at B'Maakonigan.



JANET ESQUIMAUX
Policy Analyst

Naaknigewinan E-ndakendang

The Team

Joined 2025

Lively, Ontario

With more than two decades of experience in marketing, communications, and public relations, Monica is a talented storyteller, able to bring light and energy to the work of the B'Maakonigan team.



MONICA DORION
Communications Manager

E-niigaanziikidaaged

Joined 2025

Temagami First Nation

With a strong educational foundation and work experience in Indigenous Governance, Shae brings a multifaceted approach to policy development and intergovernmental coordination to B'Maakonigan and its member First Nations.



SHAELYN WABEGIIG
Governance Relations Coordinator

Bmaakonigewin Mtiyaajishkaajigeng
E-bminzhaa'dang

Joined 2025

Aundeck Omni Kaning First Nation

Sarah has over thirty years' experience working with First Nations and urban Indigenous organizations with specialization in governance related to children and youth, social welfare, citizenship, and trauma-informed approaches.



SARAH BLACKWELL
Policy Analyst

Naaknigewinan E-ndakendang

Joined 2025

Nipissing First Nation

Lily's strong foundation in policy research and community engagement was gained during her time with the Assembly of First Nations and the Anishinabek Nation, working in policy development and self-governance initiatives.



LILY FARRELL
Policy Analyst

Naaknigewinan E-ndakendang

Joined 2025

Whitefish River First Nation

Hillary has worked in areas such as Indigenous sport and wellness, community development, and youth empowerment.



HILLARY MCGREGOR
Policy Analyst

Naaknigewinan E-ndakendang

A Plan For The Future

A strategic plan serves as a roadmap for an organization, guiding it towards its long-term goals. With a clear strategic plan, B'Maakonigan can make informed decisions that align with our mission and objectives. This reduces the potential for missteps and ensures all actions contribute to our overall goals.

With input from the E-Kowabijig, staff and other stakeholders, a strong strategic plan will foster collaboration and communication within B'Maakonigan. This collective effort helps build a sense of ownership and commitment to the strategic goals and objectives. Regularly assessing progress will ensure we stay on course and make adjustments as needed.



A STRATEGIC PLAN IN PROGRESS

B'Maakonigan's strategic planning journey began when the E-Kowabijig hired Leslie McGregor as Chief Executive Officer in January 2023. At the time of her hiring, a strategic plan was a top priority. Among the key deliverables requested, B'Maakonigan sought a comprehensive long-range strategic plan with an action plan that included detailed initiatives, timelines, responsibilities, and performance indicators; and presentations for key stakeholders summarizing the strategic plan and action plan.

Following the release of the Request for Proposals in September 2023, B'Maakonigan received more than a half-dozen proposals to evaluate. With assistance from the Finance and Operations Director and the Policy Analyst, the CEO provided an evaluation of all the proposals to the E-Kowabijig for final selection at the beginning of 2024.

Plotting the Course

Sisco & Associates Consulting was awarded the contract to develop B'Maakonigan's strategic plan in March 2024 and work began shortly thereafter, in May 2024. With a six-month timeline, Sisco outlined a thorough methodology that covered all stages of strategic planning, from document review to community briefings. The process included multiple stages of engagement and feedback, crucial for ensuring community buy-in and creating a well-rounded strategic plan.

A draft strategic plan was presented to B'Maakonigan's E-Kowabijig in early 2025 for feedback from various stakeholders, including staff and member First Nations' Governance Directors and Technicians. The second draft of the strategic plan was delivered in late March 2025.



MOVING FORWARD

With input from the B'Maakonigan team and E-Kowabijig, a final draft of the plan is being prepared for adoption and implementation in the last half of Fiscal 2025/26. A Strategic Plan Implementation retreat is being planned to build a 10-year calendar of activities meant to achieve the outlined goals and objectives in a measurable, timely, and effective manner.

Contact Us



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