

**Memorandum of Collaboration (MOC)**  
**Intergovernmental Strategic Aboriginal Alignment (ISAA)**  
**“An Evaluation of the Intergovernmental Strategic**  
**Aboriginal Alignment Initiative 2010-2015”**  
**Executive Summary**

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**Background:**

In July 2010, the Governments of Canada, Manitoba and Winnipeg signed a Memorandum of Collaboration (MOC) to work together on actions and mechanisms to improve the socio-economic outcomes of Aboriginal people in Winnipeg and the capacity of Aboriginal organizations. Through collaboration, parties sought to align activities, resources and efforts to achieve the best possible outcomes.

The three levels of government identified four strategic priorities to focus intergovernmental efforts over the five year duration of the MOC. The priority areas were:

- ❖ Education, Training and Lifelong Learning;
- ❖ Employment and Economic Development;
- ❖ Building Capacity, Community Supports and Personal Engagement; and
- ❖ Supporting Community Wellness and Safety.

The MOC included nine principles to guide how the three levels of government would work together:

- Respect the mandates, scope of responsibilities, unique roles and contribution of each government;
- Seek to align their respective activities, resources and efforts to achieve the best possible outcomes;
- Focus on activities and mechanisms that contribute to agreed-upon outcomes;
- Support processes that develop sustainable solutions;
- Focus on capacity-building activities to enable key sectors of the Aboriginal community in Winnipeg to take on more responsibility for service delivery;
- Build on approaches that have been successful to date;
- Involve key sectors of the Aboriginal community, Aboriginal organizations and other representatives of the Aboriginal community in the review and implementation of activities contemplated by the Memorandum;
- Involve representatives of the private and general community sectors in the activities contemplated by the Memorandum;
- Use the MOC as a vehicle for innovation in program development and implementation.

The activities of the Parties under the MOC were overseen by an intergovernmental Steering Committee consisting of senior officials from each level of government, and their role was to plan, coordinate, monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the MOC. The initial members of the Committee were the Assistant Deputy Minister, Office of the Federal Interlocutor, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (Alternate: Regional Director, OFI), the Deputy Minister, Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Alternate Deputy Minister, Local Government), and the Chief Administrative Officer (Alternate, Manager of Aboriginal Initiatives). The Steering Committee established an Intergovernmental Strategic Aboriginal Alignment (ISAA) Working Group that played a central role in governance and implementation of the agreement, as well as establishing Working Groups for three of the four priority areas.

Even with the long history of intergovernmental cooperation in Winnipeg, the members of the ISAA MOC were aware that their approach was unprecedented. Rather than focus on the alignment of a targeted funding pool, their responsibility was to align the parties' existing activities and resources. This broader focus would require collaborative efforts in new ways.

### **Evaluation:**

The City of Winnipeg hired Here to There Consulting Inc. in January 2015 to lead the MOC Evaluation process on behalf of the ISAA Working Group which includes Winnipeg, Manitoba and Canada. The evaluator assessed the effectiveness of process, value of outcomes and included recommendations regarding the pursuit of a potential successor agreement.

The participants of the evaluation were stakeholders involved in the design and implementation of the MOC initiative, such as ISAA priority area working groups, staff representatives from each level of government involved in ISAA activities, Senior Officials from the ISAA Steering Committee, Aboriginal community organizations with involvement in ISAA activities, community members impacted by ISAA activities and any other partners involved in collaborative initiatives profiled under the ISAA.

A final report was produced which included topics on project outcomes, effectiveness of the ISAA process and activities to date and recommendations regarding the establishment of a potential successor agreement.

### **Report Findings:**

#### ***What you wanted to know:***

1. What happened in the development & implementation of the ISAA?
2. To what extent did the partners to the MOC "live out" its principles?
3. What are the ISAA's major results?
4. What lessons learned from this initiative should be used to inform future collaborative work in Winnipeg?

***What we did:***

1. Reviewed select resources on horizontal management, community change initiatives and public sector innovation;
2. Reviewed the major ISAA agreements, planning documents and reports;
3. Administered an on-line survey to get the feedback of MOC participants on their experience with implementing MOC principles and the most significant changes they felt emerged from the MOC;
4. Conducted one-on-one interviews with 14 persons involved in the MOC as Coordinators, Working Group members or Steering Committee members;
5. Facilitated an evaluation workshop with 32 MOC participants on April 9, 2015 to test and upgrade the preliminary findings of the evaluation.

***What we found: Key learnings***

1. There are multiple options for intergovernmental alignment: alignment is only a means to an end, and deep alignment is difficult to achieve;
2. There were four significant creative tensions in the ISAA MOC: the Inside-Outside tension, the Product-Process tension, the Short-Term/Long-Term tension, and the Accountability/Learning tension;
3. The volume, pace and quality of ISAA work was limited by side-of-the-desk participation, membership turnover, and insufficient resources for coordination support.

***What we conclude:***

1. The case for intergovernmental collaboration is strong;
2. MOC participants had mixed success in applying the MOC principles;
3. MOC participants made modest progress in their short to long term goals;
4. MOC participants struggled with an adaptive approach to collaboration;
5. A core group of MOC participants were resilient throughout the ISAA initiative;
6. There is an ISAA legacy upon which to build;
7. MOC participants have lessons to inform the next cycle of collaboration.

***What we recommend:***

1. Assess government readiness for another cycle of intergovernmental collaboration;
2. Sign a formal agreement;
3. Make community engagement a central part of the process;
4. Develop a tighter framework for collaboration;
5. Broaden the focus to include policy collaboration;
6. Consider a shared funding pool;
7. Employ real-time evaluation;
8. Create a capacity-building program;
9. Invest sufficient human and financial resources in the work, particularly dedicated coordination staff.

**Results:**

1. MOC participants made progress on developing strategic and aligned initiatives;
2. The initiatives vary in the intensity of collaboration amongst MOC partners and the amount of influence exercised by the MOC participants;
3. MOC participants' report that the most significant changes to emerge from the ISAA had to do with connection to the community, government alignment, and focus on tangible issues and measureable results;
4. The ISAA initiatives are insufficient in number and scale to improve social and economic conditions for Aboriginal people and organizations across Winnipeg.

**Next Steps:**

The ISAA Working Group has drafted a Statement of Work to outline activities which will be carried out by the ISAA Working Group from July 2015 to June 2016 and will focus on the following major goals:

- a. To incorporate results of the ISAA evaluation and lessons learned throughout past collaborative work under the MOC into a next iteration or potential successor agreement;
- b. To identify key areas of focus for the next iteration of collaborative work;
- c. To make recommendations about the content and structure of a potential successor agreement to Senior Officials;
- d. To work towards a formal collaborative agreement.