

COVID Recovery

Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

May 5, 2020

Discussion:

Deputy Ministers are establishing sector tables which will include employers, the Provincial Health Office, Worksafe BC, and Labour as required. Ministry of Health will provide provincial guidelines that the sectors will use to develop “COVID safe plans”, or revisions to existing COVID plans.

The Deputy Ministers’ Council and Cabinet confirmed that each sector table is accountable for considering Indigenous perspectives and reconciliation; therefore, MIRR is not required to establish an Indigenous sector table. Ministries are to consider if and how Indigenous communities and people will participate in, benefit from, sectors re-opening or increasing activities. As required, ministries will need to consider how a sector COVID safe plan interacts with Indigenous communities’ ongoing pandemic responses, and recovery plans and actions.

MIRR’s role is to support ministries’ work as required. Similar to what is occurring for the pandemic response, MIRR’s resources will be deployed – as required and requested - to aid ministries and their sector tables to integrate and interpret Indigenous perspectives, assisting with communication, engagement, policy/mandate development, and issues management.

MIRR is able to identify and track common themes and provide guidance, strategies and approaches to aid ministries and sectors to incorporate Indigenous perspectives in to their COVID safe plans.

MIRR offers the following supports:

- **Develop guidance for the provincial consultation process.** There are several Indigenous communities that will be prepared to take steps with the Province to address the economic fallout from COVID-19. There are also several First Nations that have a high level of anxiety about COVID-19 and either their offices will remain closed or will resist recovery plans and associated consultation efforts. MIRR is examining the current policy to streamline/improve consultation processes to address the referrals backlog and for new authorizations. This effort may require temporary changes to the provincial consultation policy, case-by case tactics, and new, long term “best practices”. MIRR will work closely with the Ministry of Attorney General on this effort.

- **Support provincial efforts regarding federal infrastructure stimulus funding.** A priority focus will be on infrastructure requirements for on-reserve Housing (working with MAH) and identifying and supporting other “shovel ready” infrastructure projects in indigenous communities. MIRR is participating on an inter-ministry COVID infrastructure working group and will support MAH and MOTI providing advice, relationship connections, linkages to the Federal government and other ad hoc services.
- **As requested, support ministries sector tables for COVID safe planning.** Similar to MIRR’s role in the pandemic response:
 - Provide advice and support to each sector to gather information, coordinate activities and engagement with Indigenous communities and people;
 - Provide ad hoc support and advice to ministries.
- **As requested, support ministries’ specific post-Covid economic recovery plans and projects.** Economic ministries are identifying shovel ready and mid-term projects, which will require consideration of First Nation perspectives and opportunities for Indigenous participation. MIRR can bring local knowledge and information, negotiating capacity, and relationship building to these efforts. In addition, JEDC and MIRR have a Joint Economic Development Unit.

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