In 1993, Métis in Ontario came together to form the Métis Nation of Ontario, a Métis-specific governance structure to advance Métis rights, Métis self-government and the quality of life of Métis children, families and communities. In the years since, the federal government, through its numerous departments and agencies, has partnered with the Métis Nation of Ontario to strengthen Métis/federal relations to address Métis rights issues as well as create programs that serve the social, economic, and political needs of Ontario Métis. The report of projects and accomplishments that follows is a direct reflection of this ongoing relationship.

TABLE OF CONTENTS:
2 ... Education and Training
4 ... Health and Wellness
5 ... Métis Rights
6 ... Finance
6 ... Housing
7 ... Lands, Resources and Consultations
8 ... MNO Housing Investments Inc.
ABORIGINAL SKILLS TRAINING STRATEGIC INVESTMENT FUND (ASTSIF)

The MNOET developed a number of projects through the ASTSIF. The fund, sponsored by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada and administered by Service Canada, was created to support short-term initiatives designed to provide job training to Aboriginal participants for the period of 2009-2010. The MNO ASTSIF projects initiated during this period include:

**Promotion and Support for Aboriginal Apprenticeships**: In partnership with Sault College, the Apprenticeship Training Centre promotes and supports Aboriginal apprenticeships in and around the Algoma District, Manitoulin Island and the City of Sault Ste Marie. To date, the Centre has over 165 registered clients pursuing wide-ranging career training.

**The Employment in Energy Project**: In partnership with Georgian College, the Employment in Energy project is underway aimed at facilitating and supporting Aboriginal participation in the growing energy industry. There has been tremendous interest in the project with over 50 applications received. The program saw an 81% graduation rate and the remainder of the students received credits that can be used towards future educational pursuits. The overall class average for all students was 78%. A survey at the completion of the in-class portion of the program revealed that 100% of survey participants would recommend the program.

**The Ready to Work Hospitality and Tourism Project**: In partnership with Ontario Tourism and Education Corporation, the Ready to Work Hospitality and Tourism project provides training to Aboriginal clients in the tourism sector in Midland, Ottawa and Sault St Marie. The program includes a 10 week training component, followed by a 4 month work placement with an employer in the industry. Graduates regularly report improvements in confidence and skills development that have resulted in success finding work within the hospitality and tourism fields.
In November 2010, the MNO became the first Aboriginal organization to be approved under the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Strategy (ASETS). Over the next five years, the MNO will receive $30.6 million for employment and training programs aiding Aboriginal clients in gaining the skills necessary to acquire meaningful employment. The MNO’s solid employment and training delivery foundation combined with an ongoing commitment to partnership and skills development led to this significant accomplishment.

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BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS & CAPACITY IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING

In 2010/11, the Office of the Federal Interlocutor (OFI) provided funding to MNOET to target three specific areas:

• MNO participation in a series of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) negotiations including a ground-breaking MOU with the Ministry of Education. This MOU ensures that Métis are represented at the table in discussions related to education in Ontario.

• Conducting Métis Boot Camps for regional and community Councils. These boot Camps ensure that Métis citizens across the province are informed and empowered with the tools to be advocates for Métis concerns, history and, culture.

• MNO participation in the Urban Aboriginal Education Pilot Project. Led by the province, this three year study looks to highlight best practices in Aboriginal education in Ontario.
HEALTH & WELLNESS

Community Action Program for Children (CAP-C): The Health and Wellness Branch is doing important work with funding provided by the Public Health Agency of Canada. The CAP-C enables communities to develop comprehensive, culturally appropriate programs to improve health and development of children (aged 0-6) and their families living in conditions of risk. This program is running full-time in Thunder Bay and Dryden and part time in Bancroft.

Family and community participation has increased significantly, particularly at the Thunder Bay site. This increase is partially due to the recent establishment of the Itty Bitty Metis Play group. The Bancroft site has found great success with its Baby and Beyond program.

Canadian Prenatal/Postnatal Nutrition Program (CPNP): The Public Health Agency of Canada funds the CPNP headquartered in MNO’s Thunder Bay office. This community-based program offers culturally relevant information and training to at-risk Aboriginal women and their babies. The general focus of this program is prenatal care, child nutrition and development of parenting support. In 2009/10 the program had 30 ongoing participants.

Métis culture remains at the fore front of each of these programs through the placement of Michif language on calendars and posters throughout the program centres.

Chronic Disease Surveillance Research Initiatives: The Public Health Agency of Canada provided funding to undertake chronic disease surveillance research initiatives in the Métis population. This initiative, titled the Chronic Disease Surveillance Project, began in March 2008 with the “scrubbing” of registry data to enable the MNO to anonymously cross reference registry data with provincial health records through the Institute of Clinical and Evaluative Sciences. With this data, the Branch will conduct data “runs” in three chronic diseases. Two have been identified – diabetes and cancer prevalence, the third will be determined based on the findings of the diabetes and cancer investigations.

This year, the Public Health Agency of Canada invited the Métis Nation of Ontario to submit a 5-year Chronic Disease Surveillance strategy. A work plan was submitted and the MNO Health and Wellness Branch was awarded funding through to 2015 to continue and expand the reach of the previous surveillance work.
Powley Implementation: Following the release of the Powley decision, the Office of the Federal Interlocutor (OFI) has worked with the Métis National Council and its Governing Members to assess and implement the decision in a cooperative and responsible manner. Since 2004, the MNO has worked with OFI and received funding as a part of the federal government’s post-Powley work. These efforts have supported garnering a better understanding of Métis rights in Ontario as well as assisting the MNO in enhancing its Registry, as an objectively verifiable means to identify Métis citizens and rights-holders in the province.

MNO Registry: For four years, the MNO has received capacity funding to strengthen its Registry of Métis citizens, as a part of OFI’s Powley implementation strategy. This funding has enabled the MNO to begin implementing strategies and processes related to the creation and management of an objectively verifiable membership system, developing approaches for implementation of responsible harvesting regimes and enhancing relations with national and regional partners. Notable among this work is the creation of a digitized Registry database that provides simpler and quicker access to applicant and citizen information, and has also allowed for the secure off-site storage of Registry files. The MNO Registry has made remarkable changes given its challenging budget, and remains focused on improving Registry efficiency, integrity and service.

Most recently, OFI’s Post Powley Program has allowed the MNO to initiate the Métis Identification and Registry Consultation process, a two year undertaking, which includes a series of community meetings aimed at gaining citizen’s insights into citizenship policies. The process will be completed in 2012.

Community-Based Research on Métis Communities: As a part of the MNO’s tripartite process with Canada and Ontario, significant work has been undertaken over the last few years to develop a partnership-based research model for the identification of historic and contemporary Métis communities in the province, which meet the requirements of the Powley decision.

Recently, the MNO, Canada and Ontario have finalized terms of reference in order to pursue this type of collaborative research in the Mattawa/Nippissing region of the province. Unlike other research projects, this initiative will allow the Métis community to actively participate and be a partner in the initiative from beginning to end. It is expected that research project will formally begin in 2011.
FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

In 2009/10, the Office of the Federal Interlocutor provided funding to allow the MNO to undertake the enormous task of modernizing and streamlining a more efficient and accountable financial system and to increase the number of finance staff to assist with the work from 5 to 8 people.

In 2007/08, the MNO reported on 55 program funding agreements. This grew to 89 in 2009/10; a 62% growth.

With the modernized financial system and the increase in staff to assist in the day to day operations, the Finance Branch can manage the workload of the MNO and report with confidence to its stakeholders.

HOUSING

Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP): Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporations funds the MNO Housing Branch in Thunder Bay to act as a delivery agent for the RRAP. This program provides low-income homeowners financial assistance to conduct home repair and rehabilitation in order to meet health and safety standards, or to add secondary suits to address overcrowding issues. The program is also meant to address emergency housing issues and accessibility improvements for people with disabilities.

Home Adaptations for Seniors Independence Program (HASI): The MNO Housing Branch also administers the HASI. This program grants forgivable loans to seniors to make adaptations within the home so that they may live independently. The demand for these programs far exceeds the available financial capacity; however, the Branch does its best to meet the ever-increasing needs.

Business Development Officer: Through funding from Indian Affairs and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) the MNO has been able to hire a Business Development Officer (BDO) to assist Métis entrepreneurs in identifying and developing business opportunities and accessing financial support services. The BDO has also worked to create and nurture relationships with industry. In March 2010, the MNO hosted a Métis Business Forum for Métis business to network and learn about existing resources available through both federal and provincial funding. As well, the MNO has worked in partnership with the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs to establish an Aboriginal Business Directory. The MNO is anxious to identify Métis businesses so that they may take advantage of the business opportunities that are becoming available through work with industry proponents.
Darlington Nuclear Project: In 2010, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency provided support for MNO involvement in the Darlington New Nuclear Joint Review Panel process. This funding provided MNO with the capacity to conduct a technical review with the assistance of a consulting firm and to provide comments and recommendations pertaining to the project to the federal Panel. The Panel’s review process is on-going, and the MNO anticipates that it will have an opportunity to present its comments at a hearing in early 2011.

Collecting Métis Traditional Knowledge: Environment Canada also provided funds to conduct a traditional knowledge workshop on Woodland Caribou and to consult on Environment Canada’s Woodland Caribou Recovery Strategy. This funding has ensured that the Métis way of life is promoted and that Métis-specific knowledge pertaining to Woodland Caribou has been respectfully collected and reported on to government.

Collection of Information on Métis Harvest in Ontario: Environment Canada awarded the MNO funding over four years to support the collection of information on the MNO harvest in Ontario. The primary activity is the design, preparation, distribution, collection and analysis of the MNO Harvester Survey. The harvest survey provides a valuable snapshot of the MNO harvest in Ontario, and has allowed for an important data sharing relationship between Environment Canada and the MNO.

Great Lakes Water Quality Review: MNO was also able to participate in the Great Lakes Water Quality Review through support from Environment Canada. An MNO representative participated on the Stakeholder Advisor Panel.

Species at Risk Program: In 2010, Environment Canada’s Species at Risk Program provided the MNO with support to conduct traditional knowledge collection and integrate species at risk into the MNO traditional knowledge database.

Aquatic Inland Habitant Program: In 2010, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Aquatic Inland Habitat Program, committed to a 3 year funding arrangement so that the MNO could conduct traditional knowledge collection, initiate community aquatic habitat programs, and develop an inland habitat management program that incorporates traditional knowledge.
This year the Tripartite Funding, which includes funding from the Office of the Federal Interlocutor (OFI) and the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs (MAA), has been directed to the establishment of the Métis Nation of Ontario’s Housing Investments Incorporation (MNOHII). OFI has additionally provided funding to develop a detailed implementation plan and marketing strategy based on the MNOHII’s five-year business plan to support the start up of the MNOHII.

The focus of the MNOHII is on four key business lines: market-housing development; commercial and community development; property management and technical services; and training and renewable energy.

The MNOHII currently delivers the Métis Building Systems Technical Advisors Internship Program (MBSTAIP). Funding for this program is provided by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada and administered by Service Canada. The program is aimed at developing a workforce of highly skilled building inspection and energy conservation advisors. Upon successful completion of the MBSTAIP, the graduates will be positioned for full-time employment with either the MNO, in related industry fields or with other provincial housing providers. The first cohort of students began training in January of 2010, with the next intake scheduled for January 2011.