

Métis Government Recognition and Self-Government Agreement

Frequently Asked Questions

On June 27th, 2019, the Métis Nation of Ontario (“MNO”) and the Government of Canada (“Canada”) signed the MNO-Canada Métis Government Recognition and Self-Government Agreement (the “Self-Government Agreement”). These Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) provide more information on the Self-Government Agreement and what happens next.

1. Why is the Self-Government Agreement significant?

As of the signing of the Self-Government Agreement, Canada—for the first time—recognized that the Métis communities represented by the MNO hold the inherent right to self-government, and that the MNO is authorized to implement that right on behalf of these communities. This kind of immediate recognition is unique among self-government agreements that Canada has negotiated with Indigenous nations. It is a momentous step forward for the MNO. The MNO has been advocating for this recognition since its creation 26 years ago, as did Métis throughout Ontario long before MNO was established.

The Self-Government Agreement also provides a clear path for the MNO to transform into a recognized public Indigenous government. After this transition, the new Métis Government will have law-making powers in the areas of citizenship, leadership selection, and internal operations. Through the Self-Government Agreement, these steps are “locked in” and cannot be swept away by changing political winds or circumstances.

This is the first time that a self-government agreement has been signed with a Métis government in Canada.

2. What are the next steps?

While the Self-Government Agreement provide for immediate federal recognition that the Métis communities represented by the MNO hold the inherent right to self-government, there are a series of requirements that must still be completed in order for the MNO to be recognized as an Indigenous government in Canadian law. These next steps include:

- Development and ratification of a constitution through a province-wide referendum;
- Negotiation of fiscal and intergovernmental implementation agreements;
- Development of a transition plan; and
- Adoption of federal implementation legislation.

The very first step in this process will be extensive consultation and engagement with citizens and communities on the Self-Government Agreement and the development of a constitution.

3. How will I be consulted and engaged on the Self-Government Agreement and the Constitution development for the future Métis Government?

The MNO is beginning to plan an extensive, province wide consultation, engagement, and education on the Self-Government Agreement and the development of a constitution for the future Métis Government. The constitution will be the foundation for the new Métis Government. In order for the future Métis Government to be authentic and accountable, its constitution must reflect the values, principles, and voices of the MNO's citizens and communities. This constitution is entirely in our hands to develop. All MNO citizens and communities throughout Ontario can be a part of this process as well there will be opportunities for future MNO citizens to be informed and provide input.

To ensure that every community and citizen has a meaningful opportunity to be heard in this process, the MNO is working with the MNO's regional and community-level leadership to ensure that the consultation process will be responsive to specific circumstances and concerns of all MNO communities and constituencies. In addition, MNO is developing materials and processes that can ensure citizens can be reached and provide input through a variety of methods. More information will be available on the consultation and engagement process in the coming months.

Not only will the MNO be consulting with communities and citizens, the Electors will have the opportunity to vote on the Self-Government Agreement and the constitution in a ratification process. Electors are MNO citizens whose files meet the MNO's current requirements for citizenship as set out in the MNO Bylaws and MNO Registry Policy.

4. Does this Self-Government Agreement deal with other Métis rights or claims?

The Self-Government Agreement is about recognition of the inherent right of self-government of the Métis communities that the MNO represents and providing a path forward to become a recognized Métis Government on that basis.

The Self-Government Agreement does not extinguish, limit, or modify any Métis rights whatsoever. Nor does it settle any Métis claims, or limit the ability to settle those claims in the future.

5. The Self-Government Agreement recognizes Métis law-making power over citizenship, leadership selection, and internal governance. What about other areas like health, culture, and child and family services?

The Self-Government Agreement recognizes the future Métis Government's law-making power related to certain "core" areas: citizenship, leadership selection, and internal governance. The Self-Government Agreement also provides for further negotiations that could enable the Métis Government to assume jurisdiction over a long list of matters affecting our citizens and communities, including rights, land, and social welfare. It will be for the Métis Government to decide what areas to pursue and when.

6. What about section 35 Métis rights-holders in areas like the Greater Toronto Area or other parts of southern Ontario – are they included in the Self-Government Agreement and how will they participate or benefit?

All MNO citizens can participate in the consultations on the Métis Government constitution, and all Electors—including those who live in southern Ontario—will be able to vote in the ratification process for the constitution and the Self-Government Agreement.

The MNO has committed that Métis Government Citizens living outside of the traditional territories of regional rights-bearing Métis communities will be able to meaningfully participate within the new Métis Government and be represented within it, as well as to access programs and services, and participate in and celebrate their Métis culture. The constitution-building process will also address how Citizens living in southern Ontario be able to participate within decisions related to their rights and claims, which are located within their traditional territories in other parts of the province.

7. Who will be the Citizens of the future Métis Government?

The Self-Government Agreement provides that all Electors will become automatic Citizens of the new Métis Government on the Self-Government Implementation Date. This is because Electors are citizens of the MNO who have been verified as meeting all of the MNO's current citizenship criteria. MNO citizens who are not Electors due to missing or incomplete documentation, will have to apply through the Métis Government's new registration process and meet those requirements in order to obtain citizenship in the Métis Government.

8. What happens to the MNO Harvesting Policy and my Harvesting Card as a result of the Self-Government Agreement?

Nothing happens to the MNO Harvesting Policy as a result of the Self-Government Agreement. The MNO negotiates with the provincial government on harvesting issues. The Framework Agreement on Métis Harvesting that the MNO has in place with Ontario is not affected by the Self-Government Agreement.

9. Has Canada signed similar Self-Government Agreements with other groups? Who?

Canada has signed agreements similar to the Self-Government Agreement with the Métis Nation – Saskatchewan and the Métis Nation of Alberta. The MNO is the only representative of Métis in Ontario with which Canada has signed a Self-Government Agreement.