

Seeking Citizen Input in the Development of a Code Of Conduct for MNO:

CREATING A SAFE AND PRODUCTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR
MNO CITIZENS AND GOVERNMENT

October 16, 2020

OVERVIEW

We have heard from many Métis Nation of Ontario (“MNO”) citizens, including elected leadership, about the need to develop and draft a Code of Conduct (the “Code”) to reflect our values and foster constructive civil and productive interactions. A Code that will provide a strong foundation for discussion, innovation, and community development necessary for MNO’s self-government efforts.

The MNO is looking to develop a Code that will help to guide the behaviour of all MNO citizens, including MNO elected leadership, in their interactions with each other in all community and public spaces when participating in the collective work of the MNO.

The Code is not intended to limit in any way the democratic right of MNO citizens to advocate for changes to the MNO or its policies or governance structures, or to disagree with one another. Rather, it will help to ensure that MNO citizens can exercise their democratic rights in a way that is productive, respectful, and positive.

The Code will work alongside other important MNO policies and processes, for example, with respect to conflicts of interest, elections, and workplace harassment. The Code envisions establishing a new independent Commissioner that will be appointed to ensure the Code is fairly and effectively applied. Eventually, the Code will become part of MNO’s key laws as we move into self-government.

This background document is intended to communicate key aspects and principles that will ground the Code and, most importantly, to solicit your views and feedback on important questions. It covers the following topics:

- Values and rules for a safe and positive environment for discussion and debate
- Dealing with disputes and Code violations
- New bodies to support the implementation of the Code
- Sanctions for breaches of the Code

As input is gathered, we will work to develop a Code for your consideration. In the interim, MNO elected leadership affirm the core values and principles set out in this document and in the MNO STATEMENT OF PRIME PURPOSE, and we will apply and draw on those values and principles in fostering respectful and productive spaces and resolving any disputes that may arise in the time before our Code is in place.

You can record your input in the form at the end of this document and return to Sarah Boelhouwer at sarahb@metisnation.org.

Once you have reviewed the background document you can also directly provide responses through the MNO website using the survey link <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/23PQXVH>. If you have questions or any issues with completing the form or survey feel free to contact Sarah at 613-798-1488 Ext. 116.

VALUES AND RULES FOR A SAFE AND POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT

The Code will be grounded in and guided by the Métis values and principles set out in the *MNO Statement of Prime Purpose*.

The main purpose of the Code is to encourage and foster constructive citizen engagement in MNO governance matters and other civic events, particularly as MNO advances toward self-government. The Code will apply to all meetings, events and discussion spaces (including social media) relating to MNO's provincial, regional, and local governance levels. This includes Annual General Assemblies, PCMNO Meetings, Regional Consultation Committee meetings, Community and Advisory Council meetings.

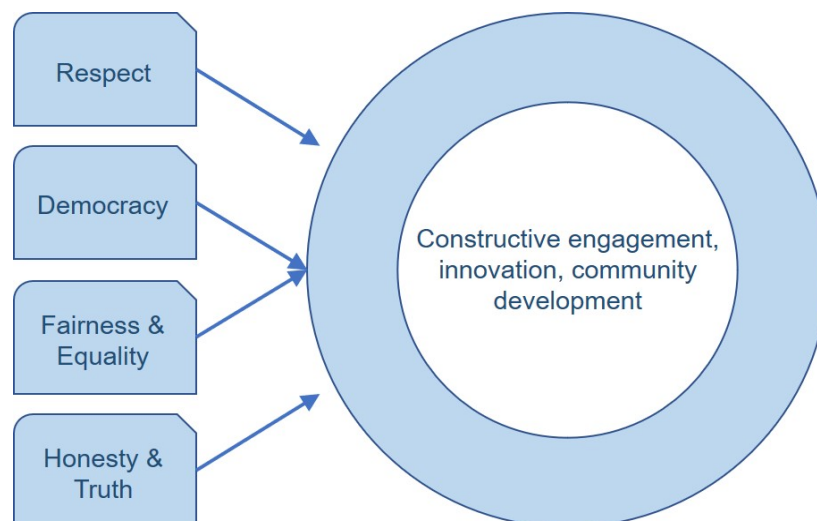
In what other settings should the Code apply?

What are problematic behaviours that you think the Code should address?

Some of the **values** grounding the Code of Conduct are:

- **Respect:** for each other, including the views and opinions of others regardless of whether they are different from yours. No name-calling, interrupting, intimidation etc.
- **Democracy:** participation by citizens in MNO's democratic processes and functions, and encouraging others to do the same.
- **Fairness and equality:** every citizen who wishes to participate must be afforded the opportunity to do so. All MNO citizens must be treated equally regardless of their religion, sex, age, mental or physical capacity, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital or family status, or other differences.
- **Honesty and truth:** citizens must always act with good intentions. No personal attacks, gossip or spreading misinformation.

By requiring citizens to conduct themselves according to these values, the Code of Conduct will foster constructive citizen engagement by creating safe spaces for discussion and the sharing of ideas. The innovation and community development that can occur within these safe spaces will be instrumental in MNO's self-government efforts.

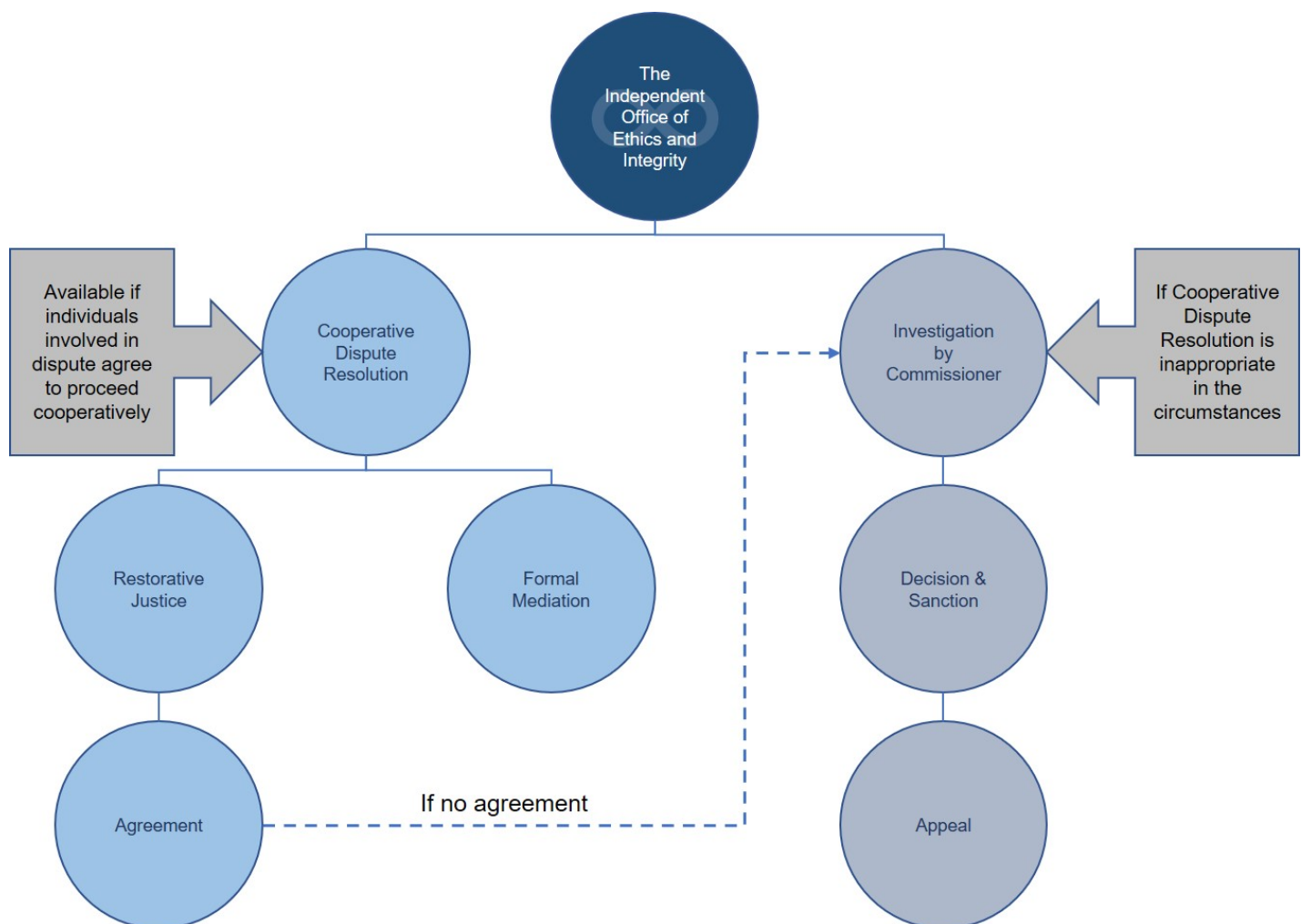


DEALING WITH DISPUTES AND CODE VIOLATIONS

The Code will help to ensure that everyone knows what standard of behaviour is expected when interacting with fellow citizens and will provide a mechanism to deal with bad behaviour and disputes. Under the Code, if you believe someone has acted in a manner contrary to the values that ground the Code, you will be encouraged to report the behaviour.

We are proposing to create an independent Commissioner with responsibility to implement the Code. Having a credible and independent way of resolving complaints and disputes is an important part of self-government.

Once an alleged violation is reported, it might proceed as follows:



NEW BODIES TO SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODE

New bodies and positions will be required to ensure that the Code is fairly and effectively implemented. They include:

The Commissioner	The Independent Office of Ethics and Integrity	The Appeals Body
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Commissioner will be independent (i.e., not part of the MNO governance framework), like the Chief Electoral Officer• They will investigate and decide on alleged breaches of the Code• They will determine appropriate sanctions for breaches• They will also deal with conflicts of interest and confidentiality (for elected officials)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This Office would provide support and capacity to the Commissioner• It will help in determining how complaints and disputes will be handled• It will support investigations, decisions and sanctioning actions• It will be funded by the MNO but will be independent to ensure impartiality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Code will provide an opportunity to appeal a decision or sanction• An appeal body will be established for this purpose to ensure everyone feels decisions are fair and just

Key questions about the new bodies include:

- What characteristics do you want to see in a Commissioner and how should they be appointed?
- Should the Commissioner deal with all disputes and sanctions, or should the most serious cases be dealt with by a Citizens Panel?
- Should appeals go to a committee of citizens, or to a body outside the MNO?

SANCTIONS FOR BREACHES OF THE CODE

The sanctions for a breach of the Code might vary based on a number of considerations (e.g., the severity of the breach, any negotiated resolutions between the citizens involved, whether the same individual has any prior breaches etc.). Sanctions may include: a written warning, public sanction, mandatory training to address behaviour, a monetary fine, removal from office for elected officials and, for the most serious breaches, a suspension of citizenship rights, like the right to participate at meetings or assemblies.

Do you think these kinds of sanctions are fair?

Should other sanctions be considered as well?

