

PRINCIPLE #23: **THE MÉTIS NATION OF ONTARIO/ FUTURE MÉTIS GOVERNMENT** FAQs



Principle #23(a): The Métis Nation of Ontario/ Future Métis Government

In addition, the Constitution will provide for, among other things:

- (a) the various self-government structures of the future Métis Government, including those at the local, regional, and provincial levels representing the Métis Communities in Ontario and citizens who live outside of the traditional territory of the Métis Communities in Ontario;
- (b) the various roles and responsibilities of elected officials of the future Métis Government and its self-government structures, including those at the local, regional, and provincial levels representing the Métis Communities in Ontario, and citizens who live outside of the traditional territory of the Métis Communities in Ontario; ...

BACKGROUND / CONTEXT FOR THIS PRINCIPLE

Métis have a long history of organizing and coming together locally, regionally, provincially, and nationally to advance common interests and goals, such as recognition and respect of Métis rights and self-government. From their earliest days, Métis communities and citizens have come together, including to petition for their lands in Northwestern Ontario, Sault Ste. Marie, Penetanguishene, or Moose Factory, through to building the MNO as a province-wide Métis government.

Through the hard work of Métis communities and MNO citizens, the MNO was established with governance structures at the provincial (e.g., Provisional Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario or “PCMNO”), regional (Regional Councilors), and local levels (MNO Chartered Community Councils) to represent MNO citizens wherever they live in Ontario.

These MNO governance structures all consist of Métis leaders that are democratically elected by the constituency of MNO citizens they represent. This includes:

- PCMNO, where the MNO President, Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary-Treasurer are elected through a province-wide vote every four years;
- Regional Councilors for each of MNO’s 9 administrative regions that are elected through a vote of all citizens in their region every four years; and
- MNO Chartered Community Councils, where the President, Chair, Secretary-Treasurer, and other Councilor positions are elected through a vote of all citizens in the geographic boundaries of each Council.

Métis Nation
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—SELF-GOVERNMENT—

As the MNO looks to develop a Constitution that will set out how the Métis in Ontario – including their various governance structures – work together, it is an opportunity to bring forward the parts of MNO’s governance that are based on strong Métis traditions (e.g., organizing locally, regionally, and nationally), while also re-envisioning these for the future. Importantly, the only thing that the MNO committed to about the Constitution is that it would include governance structures at the local, regional, and provincial levels.

Some other Indigenous governments with modern-day treaties or self-government agreements have also built constitutions that include multiple governance structures. Often this is because, similar to the MNO, these other Indigenous governments have multiple distinct rights-holding communities coming together to form a common, central, or “federation-style” government. For example:

- the Tlicho Government was formed by four distinct First Nation bands coming together.
- the Stolo Nation also has six distinct Stolo First Nation communities as a part of their government.

These other Indigenous governments often have specific governance structures representing each of the distinct communities that are a part of their common government. They each have different ways of including citizens who live outside of the traditional territory of those communities in their government structures and operations.

As the MNO moves forward to develop an MNO Constitution, it will be important to continue to ensure that the distinct self-government rights of the Métis communities in Ontario are respected, and that all MNO citizens are included and represented by the Métis Government and its self-government structures, regardless of where they live.

EXAMPLES FROM OTHER INDIGENOUS GOVERNMENTS

The [Tlicho Constitution](#)¹ recognizes that the “Tlicho Nation is composed of four communities – Behchokö (Rae-Edzo), Whati (Lac La Martre), Gamètì (Rae Lakes) and Wekweètì (Snare Lake). Each community is a unique and valued part of the Tlicho Nation” (s. 1.2).

The Tlicho Constitution includes each of these four distinct Tlicho communities in its central government structures:

- 8.2 The Tlicho Assembly [Tlicho legislature or law-making body] shall be formed on the principle of equal representation from each Tlicho community and shall include the following:
- a) the Grand Chief;
 - b) the Chief of each Tlicho community; and
 - c) at least two (2) councillors from each Tlicho community.

¹A copy of the Tlicho Constitution is available at:

<https://tlicho.ca/sites/default/files/documents/government/tlichoconstitution.pdf>.



9.1 The members of the Chiefs Executive Council shall be the Grand Chief and the Chief of each Tlicho community.

While the Tlicho Constitution does not directly outline the governance structures of each of the four distinct communities, it reflects that, at minimum, each Tlicho community will have a Chief and Councillors (see s. 8.2(b) and (c) and 9.1 quoted above).

The Tlicho Constitution does not have any specific governance structures, leadership positions, or requirements for including Tlicho citizens who live outside of Tlicho lands.

The [Nisga'a Constitution](#)² outlines that the Nisga'a Government is composed of the central government (e.g., the Nisga'a Lisims Government) and governments for each of the four Nisga'a Villages that are a part of the Nisga'a Nation:

25(1) Nisga'a Government is composed of:

- a) Nisga'a Lisims Government; and
- b) Nisga'a Village Governments in the Nisga'a Villages of New Aiyansh, Gitwinksihlkw, Laxgalt'sap, and Gingolx.

While the Nisga'a Constitution does not outline the specific elected leadership roles of the Nisga'a Village Governments, it does include that each of those Nisga'a Villages can have it's own Village Charter (e.g., a Village constitution) that can outline these local governance matters.

The Nisga'a Constitution also includes a section specifically outlining structures that represent Nisga'a citizens in urban areas outside of Nisga'a lands and where there is a large population of Nisga'a people (e.g., Vancouver, Terrace, Prince Rupert). These "Nisga'a Urban Locals" have the responsibility, set out in the Nisga'a Constitution, to be a point of contact between the Nisga'a Government and citizens living in the geographic area of each Local:

26(3) The Nisga'a Nation recognizes that Nisga'a citizens ordinarily residing within each Nisga'a Urban Local Area have organized themselves in Nisga'a Urban Locals to, among other things:

- (a) provide liaison and contact between Nisga'a Government and Nisga'a citizens ordinarily residing within the Nisga'a Urban Local Area; and
- (b) inform Nisga'a Government about the views of Nisga'a citizens within the Nisga'a Urban Local Area.

(4) Nisga'a citizens ordinarily residing within a Nisga'a Urban Local Area are entitled to elect at least one individual to serve as a representative from that Nisga'a Urban Local to Nisga'a Lisims Government.

²A copy of the Nisga'a Constitution, is available at:

<https://www.nisgaanation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Constitution-of-the-Nisgaa-Nation-1998-10-01-1.pdf>.



- (5) Wilp Si'ayuukhl Nisga'a [Nisga'a legislature or law-making body] must make laws establishing:
- (a) the number of representative to Nisga'a Lisism Government to which each Nisga'a Urban Local is entitled;
 - (b) the boundaries of each Nisga'a Urban Local Area; and
 - (c) procedures to be followed before a Nisga'a Urban Local is established, changed or dissolved.

Notably, while representatives of the Nisga'a Urban Locals are included in the central Nisga'a Lisims Government they do not have the same responsibilities as the Nisga'a Village Governments which represent rights-holding Nisga'a communities. For example, Nisga'a Urban Locals do not have independent law-making powers and have administrative boundaries rather than Nisga'a Village lands (e.g., the traditional territory of each Nisga'a Village community).

The [Stó:lō Xwexwilmexw Government](#)³ represents six distinct Stolo communities: Aitchelitz, Leq'á:mel, Skowkale, Skawahlook, Tzeachten, and Yakweakwioose. While the Stó:lō Xwexwilmexw Government is still consulting on their draft constitution, it provides for a National Government and Village Governments for each of the six distinct Stolo communities. The National Government is composed of one leader from each of the Village Governments.

It is unclear how the draft Stolo Constitution may include citizens who live outside of Stolo lands.

WHAT WE'RE DOING NOW / EXISTING MNO STRUCTURES

As outlined above, MNO already has existing structures at the local, regional, and provincial levels of the Métis Government. Each of these structure include Métis leaders that are democratically elected by the constituency of MNO citizens they represent.

In the 2019 Self-Government Agreement the only thing that the MNO committed to was that the future MNO Constitution would include governance structures at the local, regional, and provincial levels:

- 6.04 The MNO is committed to ensuring that any Constitution developed under this Chapter will include Governance Structures at the local and regional levels that enable the Métis Communities Represented by the MNO to continue to have a meaningful role in the Métis Government, as well as ensure that their participation and informed consent is required where the Métis Government may make decisions related to rights protected by sections 25 and 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982* held by the Métis Communities Represented by the MNO.

³For more information about the Stolo Constitution, please see the video available at this link:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=O61AWT7tYZc>.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How should the future Métis Government have a provincial-level government structure that represents each of the rights-holding Métis communities in Ontario?
 - Should each rights-holding Métis community vote for a representative to the provincial body? (e.g., similar to how the Regional Councilor sits on PCMNO today)
- Should there be other positions on the provincial-level government structure, like a President, Chair, Secretary-Treasurer or others, that are elected through a province-wide, all-citizen vote?
 - What are the responsibilities of these positions?
 - Do the titles of these positions reflect their responsibilities (e.g., President or Chair, Regional Councilor, etc.)?
- How should the Constitution include regional and local government structures for each of the rights-holding Métis communities in Ontario?
 - Should the details of these structures be set out in regional or community constitutions or the overall MNO Constitution?
 - Should any minimum requirements be included in the MNO Constitution (e.g., having the President from each local/Community Council included on a regional government structure, etc.)?
 - Should there be any requirements, such as having a certain number of elected leaders for a local or regional government structure in order to fulfill certain responsibilities (e.g., President, Chair, Secretary-Treasurer and at least 2 Councilors for each local structure)?
- How should the future Métis Government include citizens who live outside of the traditional territory of the Métis communities as a part of its governance structures?
 - Should there be local or regional structures responsible for representing these citizens in areas outside of rights-holding Métis communities, like the Nisga'a Urban Locals?
 - Should citizens who live outside of the traditional territory of the Métis communities get a separate representative on the provincial body?
 - Should the local or regional structures of the Métis communities in Ontario include a seat or position that represents citizens outside of the traditional territory of the Métis communities?
- Should titles for elected leaders stay the same or change? (e.g., Presidents, Regional Councilors, Chair or Vice Chairs, etc.).
- Should the names of various governance structures stay the same or change? (e.g., Chartered Community Councils, PCMNO, Regional Committees, etc.).
- What are some names and titles that reflect the different responsibilities of elected leaders or structures representing rights-holding Métis communities, or those representing citizens who live outside of the traditional territory of these Métis communities?
 - For example: the Nisga'a use "Nisga'a Village Governments" in their Constitution for the rights-holding Nisga'a communities and "Nisga'a Urban Locals" for structures that represent Nisga'a citizens outside of Nisga'a lands.