

Indigenous Water Management Advisory Committee (IWMAC)

Terms of Reference

Background about Canadian Water Network (CWN)

CWN is a national nonprofit that works collaboratively with decision makers to address complex water challenges, particularly those at the intersection of communities, climate, and public health.

CWN's mission is to inspire and empower Canadians to lead the way in finding water solutions to protect our health, create vibrant and resilient communities, and respect our natural environment. We recognize that water connects all communities and ecosystems, and we seek to strengthen these relationships through collaboration, co-learning, and culturally grounded practices.

CWN is committed to reconciliation and to building respectful, reciprocal, adequate and meaningful relationships with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples as part of our shared responsibility for water. One of four corporate goals in our [2024-29 Strategic Plan](#) is to "develop and implement an Indigenous Reconciliation Plan in consultation with Indigenous-led organizations, strategic partners and program participants." Our aim is to foster trust, transparency, and mutual benefit in all aspects of our work, ensuring that actions are genuine, inclusive, and contribute to sustainable water stewardship.

CWN has embarked on three initiatives to support our engagement and collaboration with Indigenous peoples. Firstly, CWN is growing its organizational competence through internal Indigenous reconciliation and cultural awareness training.

Secondly, CWN has joined the Canadian Council of Indigenous Business' [Partnership Accreditation in Indigenous Relations program](#) to honour our relationships and to help integrate how we engage with Indigenous communities and Indigenous-led organizations across all our work.

Thirdly, CWN has created the CWN Foundation, a newly formed charity whose purpose is to support foundational education and training, research and innovation. Indigenous water management is identified as one of its program areas.

Purpose of the IWMAC

The purpose of the IWMAC is to provide culturally inclusive advice on CWN's fulfillment of its Strategic Plan goal on Indigenous Reconciliation, and act as a collaborative forum to identify needs within Indigenous water and wastewater management, and to co-develop collaborative initiatives to address these needs.

Responsibilities

Specifically, IWMAC's responsibilities are to:

1. Advise on culturally inclusive needs of Indigenous-led organizations working in water management — including the provision of drinking water, climate adaptation and mitigation, and public health — and how CWN may support these organizations.

2. Advise on potential strategic partners who work in or have experience in the areas of Indigenous water and wastewater management and adjacent activities (e.g. public health, climate mitigation and adaptation, etc.) and assist in making connections.
3. Advise on CWN and CWN Foundation proposals, programming, and projects to pursue related to supporting Indigenous water and wastewater management and adjacent activities.
4. Advise on CWN and CWN Foundation funding opportunities for CWN and CWN Foundation to pursue in partnership with Indigenous-led organizations as strategic partners.
5. Advise on ways CWN can hire, procure from, engage, and support Indigenous-led organizations and communities.
6. Develop governance models and systems for CWN that include Indigenous representation.
7. Support CWN's PAIR accreditation process on an as needed basis.

Membership

The number of committee members will range from a minimum of three to a maximum of 13. Terms will be staggered, from one to three years, depending on the level of commitment each member would like to make to IWMAAC.

From time to time, the IWMAAC may create ad hoc working groups with non-members to solicit specific, professional advice from a broader or specialized group.

Membership will include representatives from key Indigenous-led organizations, Indigenous academics and Indigenous Knowledge holders whose mandates or scope of work involve Indigenous water and wastewater management, water and wastewater infrastructure, and adjacent activities

At all times, the majority of IWMAAC members will be individuals who self-declare as Indigenous, as confirmed by Nation Membership status identification.

Membership will reflect First Nations, Inuit, Métis, and Modern Treaty and Self-Governing distinctions, as well as regional diversity.

Notwithstanding the above intent, members initially invited by CWN to join the IWMAAC were identified based on existing relationships with CWN, with the intention of building on and deepening these relationships.

Future members invited to join the IWMAAC will be identified in collaboration with the existing IWMAAC members.

The Committee will be co-chaired by two members of the committee — one male, one female — who will be appointed by the CEO of CWN in consultation with the members of the committee

Meetings

Meetings will be held online. The Committee will meet bimonthly or quarterly, depending on its workload.

Subject to funding, an in-person meeting may be held annually, preferably in parallel with another conference that members are likely to attend.

Each meeting will be between 90 and 120 minutes.

Meeting minutes will be shared with members.

Honouraria/Expenses

For those Indigenous members whose time is not paid by their employer, CWN will compensate them for their participation in the IMWAC through honoraria ranging from \$150 to \$500 per meeting, depending on the meeting length and the preparation required.

If the IMWAC meets in person, CWN will cover the travel and accommodation expenses of Indigenous members whose employers do not cover them.

Accountability

The Committee will be dually accountable to the CEO of CWN and the CWN Board of Directors. The CEO and Co-Chairs will share an annual Special Meeting with the CWN and CWN Foundation boards to provide the IMWAC's advice.

It is also acknowledged that Indigenous members are accountable to their organizations, nations, and communities. As needed, members will go back to their organization, nation, or community to obtain consent to participate in certain activities or projects and to affirm positions taken and advice provided.