



REGROUPEMENT
DES CENTRES D'AMITIÉ
AUTOCHTONES DU QUÉBEC

STRATEGIC PLAN

OBSERVATORY OF URBAN
INDIGENOUS REALITIES



2024–2027



Introduction

For over 50 years, the Native Friendship Centre Movement has been the largest infrastructure providing urban Indigenous people with services in Quebec, with locations in 14 cities. The first Centre was established in 1969, and Friendship Centres are now located throughout the province. The Centres are urban service hubs, active living environments and cultural anchors for Indigenous people.

Their mission is to improve the quality of life of urban Indigenous people, promote Indigenous cultures and foster closer ties between peoples. The Movement can count on a real estate company that collectively develops and applies innovative and sustainable real-estate infrastructure solutions that contribute to the wellness of Indigenous people.

The RCAAQ is aware that research, evaluation and knowledge mobilization are essential tools for the development of the Quebec Native Friendship Centre Movement, and for the growth and quality of life of urban Indigenous people. That's why, in December 2022, the RCAAQ announced the creation of its Observatory of Urban Indigenous Realities. In 2023, the Observatory's executive team was hired, a consultation and analysis process aimed at outlining the scope of this new vehicle by and for Indigenous people was carried out, and the team was strengthened as it pursued existing research and evaluation initiatives.

This strategic plan is the fruit of this work. It will guide the Observatory team's actions over the next four years.

"There was a great deal of planning, thinking and reflection that went into planning involvement throughout the land: everything was thought through, and the groups formed had diverse expertise to ensure success."

Elder from the Quebec Native Friendship Centre Movement



The approach¹

Analysis

Numerous documents, reports, websites and other sources were consulted to better understand the existing research and the internal and external context in which the Observatory will carry out its actions:

- Websites and documents published by several observatories
- Studies related to research in Indigenous settings
- Websites and documents published by Indigenous research organizations
- Reports and studies related to research and Indigenous people published by the Quebec and Canadian governments
- RCAAQ's current organization chart and job descriptions for certain positions
- Examples of research conducted in collaboration with the RCAAQ
- RCAAQ's Research Framework by and for Urban Indigenous People in Quebec
- The Native Friendship Centre Movement's diagnostic report and strategic plan

Consultations

In all, 50 people from 14 organizations were consulted, in addition to a questionnaire given to 141 Native Friendship Centre Movement employees.

These are the organizations **outside** the Movement that were solicited:

- National Association of Friendship Centres
- Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres
- Université du Québec network
- BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres
- Observatory of Black Communities in Quebec
- DIALOG network
- Lucie and André Chagnon Foundation
- First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission
- Observatoire québécois des inégalités
- Observatoire des tout-petits
- Observatoire estrien du développement des communautés

¹ For a detailed description of the approach and to understand some of the choices made by the Observatory, see the *Rapport_Observatoire du RCAAQ_Réflexion sur la structure de fonctionnement et les axes de développement potentiels*.



Our identity

Mission

The mission of the Observatory of Urban Indigenous Realities is to **gather, understand** and **share** knowledge related to urban Indigenous issues, focusing its actions on using **First Nations and Inuit knowledge and expertise** for the benefit of **society as a whole**.

GATHERING

- By continuously monitoring the research and knowledge being produced
- By selecting relevant data
- By creating a dashboard
- By organizing data by geographic location
- By monitoring data produced by the Friendship Centres and the SIRCAAQ
- By developing relationships with data-producing organizations and individuals

UNDERSTANDING

- By using research carried out by the Observatory team itself
- By preparing, analyzing and recommending funding for research
- By analyzing and interpreting data, knowledge, studies and narratives
- By developing relationships with research organizations studying subjects relevant to the Observatory
- By framing and defining an Indigenous-specific ethical framework
- By developing an evaluative culture within the Movement

SHARING

- By drafting publications and messages for various players involved in society
- By developing tools for mobilizing knowledge that are designed to ensure knowledge is put to actual use on the ground (practices, services, etc.)
- By developing an online portal dedicated to the Observatory
- By making various speeches and public appearances

FIRST NATIONS AND INUIT KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE

This refers to knowledge, innovations and practices of Indigenous communities throughout the world. It is the fruit of experience built up over centuries and tailored to the local context and culture.

SOCIETY AS A WHOLE

The Observatory carries out its work with a community of players that includes the Indigenous community, public decision-makers, the scientific community, donors and, of course, the Movement. Its work therefore benefits all of society, and it can be consulted, shared and used by anyone who would like to become involved in the advancement of Indigenous issues in Quebec.



Vision

First Nations and Inuit knowledge and expertise contribute **fully** to **society** and lead to Indigenous **self-determination**.

FIRST NATIONS AND INUIT KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE

This refers to knowledge, innovations, and practices of local Indigenous communities throughout the world. It is the fruit of experience built up over centuries and tailored to the local context and culture.

FULLY

This knowledge and expertise has always been present. The Observatory aims to highlight and promote them so that they can take their rightful place. This notion also brings us back to reconciliation, where Indigenous and non-Indigenous people move forward together, richer, and better for sharing their experiences and knowledge and for working as co-constructors.

SELF-DETERMINATION

Indigenous people's ability to regain power over the norms and institutions that affect them, over their choices and desires and, ultimately, over their destiny for current and future generations.

SOCIETY

The Observatory's dream is inclusive and concerns the whole of society.



Values

For the Observatory of Urban Indigenous Realities, the RCAAQ's values reflect the mission and vision it has set for itself. The Observatory is also an integral part of the Quebec Native Friendship Centre Movement.

Caring

The Observatory's projects will involve a wide range of people. The Observatory and its team will be especially careful to respect people's pace and the conditions under which their input will be obtained.

Cooperation

The spirit of cooperation means pooling knowledge and sharing expertise to achieve the best results. This implies mutual involvement and concerted efforts to achieve common goals. Recognition of cultural differences and existing knowledge is important, as is the creation of truly collaborative spaces.

Involvement

Involvement leads to reconciling with the past, enriching the present and building the future. It is demonstrated through the inspiring leadership of Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledge carriers.

Innovation

Innovation lies in the creation of knowledge that takes into account Indigenous people's knowledge and expertise. It is based on the principle of two-eyed seeing, which combines different types of knowledge. The combination of this knowledge and these approaches is transformative, since it reflects a desire to move away from current practices.

Integrity

Integrity means acting ethically and with discipline, while remaining true to our values. It allows us to put down roots and it guides our actions. Integrity enables us to act diligently and fairly, while ensuring that our mission is achieved and our vision and initiatives are aligned.

Respect

Respect means caring about the impact of our actions. We're grateful for the diverse knowledge that surrounds us and the people who came before us, while constantly striving to do better for the next seven generations. Respect is the foundation of all our relationships. It requires us to honour our traditions. It's expressed through our words and actions, and it results in good manners, good people skills and collective knowledge.



The plan, at a glance

Orientations	Associated goals
<p>Forming a team and establishing its work methods</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fill all the positions needed to carry out the Observatory’s mission ▪ Form the Knowledge Advisory Committee ▪ Create a pool of experts ▪ Establish team procedures and means of coordination ▪ Strengthen existing tools and develop new ones
<p>Positioning the Observatory</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mobilize the Native Friendship Centre Movement around the Observatory ▪ Establish structured partnerships in the Indigenous ecosystem ▪ Establish structured partnerships in the university and research ecosystem ▪ Create branding that is both connected with and distinct from the RCAAQ ▪ Give the Observatory visibility with various external actors
<p>Ensuring our viability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seek funding and resources for in-house research projects ▪ Secure additional funding and resources for the mission ▪ Obtain Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council funding
<p>Delivering initial mission-related results</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create a dashboard ▪ Start an in-house research project on culture and identity in urban settings ▪ Forge research partnerships ▪ Produce local data for certain urban areas where Centres are located



1. Forming a team and establishing its procedures

Form a solid team and establish procedures

The Observatory is in its infancy. People need to be recruited to move forward skillfully and steadily. This team will be supported by a committee and a pool of experts. In addition to welcoming all these people, we also need to rally them around the principles and procedures that are consistent with the Observatory's aspirations, while equipping ourselves with the right tools to get the job done.

Goals	Indicators/targets
1.1 Fill and retain all the positions needed to carry out the Observatory's mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hires have the skills to carry out their roles effectively, given there is little or no in-house expertise The team will be complete by the end of 2025 Turnover rate
1.2 Form the Knowledge Advisory Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Committee will hold its first meeting in fall 2024 Committee member involvement and turnover rate The recruits are able to meet the Observatory's needs
1.3 Create a pool of experts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff satisfaction with the experts' usefulness (access, quality of advice, respect for the Observatory's values) The experts' involvement and availability
1.4 Établir les façons de faire propres à l'équipe ainsi que les moyens de coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff satisfaction with Observatory team meetings, one-on-one meetings and its relationship with the Advisory Committee.
1.5 Strengthen existing tools and develop new ones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review all existing tools (frameworks, ethical consents, etc.) by the end of 2024. Develop a model research agreement by the end of 2024. Set up a tool for conducting literature reviews by the end of 2024. Develop relevant evaluation frameworks for all RCAAQ programs and services.



2. Positioning the Observatory

Within its field of expertise, either within or beyond the Movement

The Observatory has connections to build. First of all, within its “own family”—the RCAAQ, the SIRCAAQ, the Friendship Centres and so forth—but also with a number of involved external parties, such as other Indigenous organizations, universities, the research field in general and so on. The Observatory can position itself through these new connections and partnerships. It also seeks early visibility through distinctive branding and communication initiatives.

Goals	Indicators/targets
<p>2.1 Mobilize the Native Friendship Centre Movement around the Observatory</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Every executive director in the Movement must understand the Observatory’s mission and how it can help them ▪ The satisfaction of the executive directors of the Centres and the SIRCAAQ ▪ Each RCAAQ-affiliated executive management and their employees understand the Observatory’s mission, as well as where its responsibilities begin and end in relation to other executive managements ▪ The satisfaction of other RCAAQ-affiliated executive managements with the means of coordinating with the Observatory and its team ▪ The number of requests per year from the Centres and the SIRCAAQ, as well as their relevance to the Observatory’s mission
<p>2.2 Establish structured partnerships in the Indigenous ecosystem</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The quality of partnerships and their benefits (financial, actions, visibility) ▪ All partnerships are subject to a signed agreement confirming the parties’ involvement
<p>2.3 Establish structured partnerships in the university and research ecosystem</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The quality of partnerships and their benefits (financial, actions, visibility) ▪ All partnerships are subject to a signed agreement confirming the parties’ involvement ▪ The number of agreements signed over a four-year period
<p>2.4 Create branding that is both connected with and distinct from the RCAAQ</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create and unveil branding by October 2024 at the latest
<p>2.5 Give the Observatory visibility with various external actors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of appearances in local and national media ▪ Occupy a section of the RCAAQ website or have a separate website for the Observatory. ▪ The number of scholarships awarded to students of urban Indigenous issues over a four-year period



3. Ensuring our viability

Give ourselves the means to achieve our ambitions

The Observatory can already count on the enthusiastic and significant support of public and private partners. The Observatory will need specialized expertise, which will be expensive. Securing further funding and/or partnerships will enable the Observatory to gain momentum, take its place more quickly and strengthen its autonomy.

Goals	Indicators/targets
3.1 Seek funding and resources for in-house research projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The dollar amount ▪ The nature and importance of the contributions ▪ Funding conditions fit the Observatory’s research topics, values and research framework
3.2 Secure additional funding and resources for the mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The dollar amount ▪ The nature and importance of the contributions ▪ The flexibility in the use of funds granted
3.3 Obtain Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The dollar amount ▪ Funding conditions fit the Observatory’s research topics, values and research framework



4. Delivering initial mission-related results

Quickly demonstrate our relevance

Starting an observatory is no simple matter. And not everyone understands the major and wide-reaching impact an observatory can have. By completing projects quickly and competently, the Observatory will be able to demonstrate, through action, its intention to make a difference both within and beyond the Movement.

Goals	Indicators/targets
4.1 Create a dashboard	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The Centres' satisfaction with the dashboard▪ The availability of data related to the identified indicators
4.2 Start an in-house research project on culture and identity in urban settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Start the project no later than early 2026▪ The project will generate significant involvement
4.3 Forge research partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ All identified topics will be researched, with the aim of improving knowledge by 2027▪ All research will be in line with the Observatory's priorities▪ All research will adhere to the Reference Framework
4.4 Produce local data for certain urban areas where Centres are located	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Satisfaction of the Centres▪ Develop three performance indicators for Native Friendship Centres

