

SUMMARY REPORT

MEETING ON THE QUEBEC FIRST NATIONS REGIONAL INFORMATION GOVERNANCE STRATEGY

OUR HERITAGE — OUR KNOWLEDGE

May 7 and 8, 2024

Le Centre Sheraton
Montréal Hotel



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The information governance regional working group is deeply grateful to all the participants who contributed to the success of the meeting on the regional information governance strategy for First Nations, held at Le Centre Sheraton Montreal on May 7 and 8, 2024. More than 110 representatives of First Nations communities in Quebec came together under the theme "Our Heritage, Our Knowledge." Organized by the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission (FNQLHSSC), in collaboration with the regional commissions and organizations of the Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador (AFNQL), the event reflects our shared dedication to protecting and honouring our cultural and intellectual heritage.

For over 30 years, First Nations in Quebec and across Canada have joined forces to take back control of their information, data and knowledge. This meeting is a further testament to our shared determination to persevere in this effort. Your collective participation, engagement and reflection enriched the discussions and helped us formulate an approach to information governance that respects our values and our needs.

We wish to express our deepest thanks to all the participants for their presence, their contribution and their dedication. We would also like to express our gratitude to Debbie Delisle, the Elder who accompanied us, for her wise words during the opening and closing ceremonies; to Jane Gray, our master of ceremonies; and to all the presenters, whose involvement greatly contributed to the success of this first meeting on the regional information governance strategy.

Together, we demonstrated once more that the solidarity and cooperation of our nations are the keys to our success. We hope we can continue to work together to build a future in which our knowledge and our heritage will be protected and honoured for generations to come.

With great appreciation,

The Information Governance Regional Working Group



BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

In the interest of self-determination and the democratization of information, it is imperative that we establish mechanisms to ensure that all the information collected about First Nations is managed by First Nations for their individual and collective benefit. Decision makers in First Nations communities and organizations must have the expertise and resources required to use this information in their planning, management, assessment and decision-making processes.

In this spirit, the Chiefs of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) passed a resolution in 2016 emphasizing the importance of recognizing First Nations data sovereignty and calling on the federal government to fund the establishment of regional information governance centres. Following the resolution, funding was granted to the First Nations Information Governance Centre (FNIGC) and its partners to develop a national data governance strategy and begin the preliminary work to establish regional information governance centres.

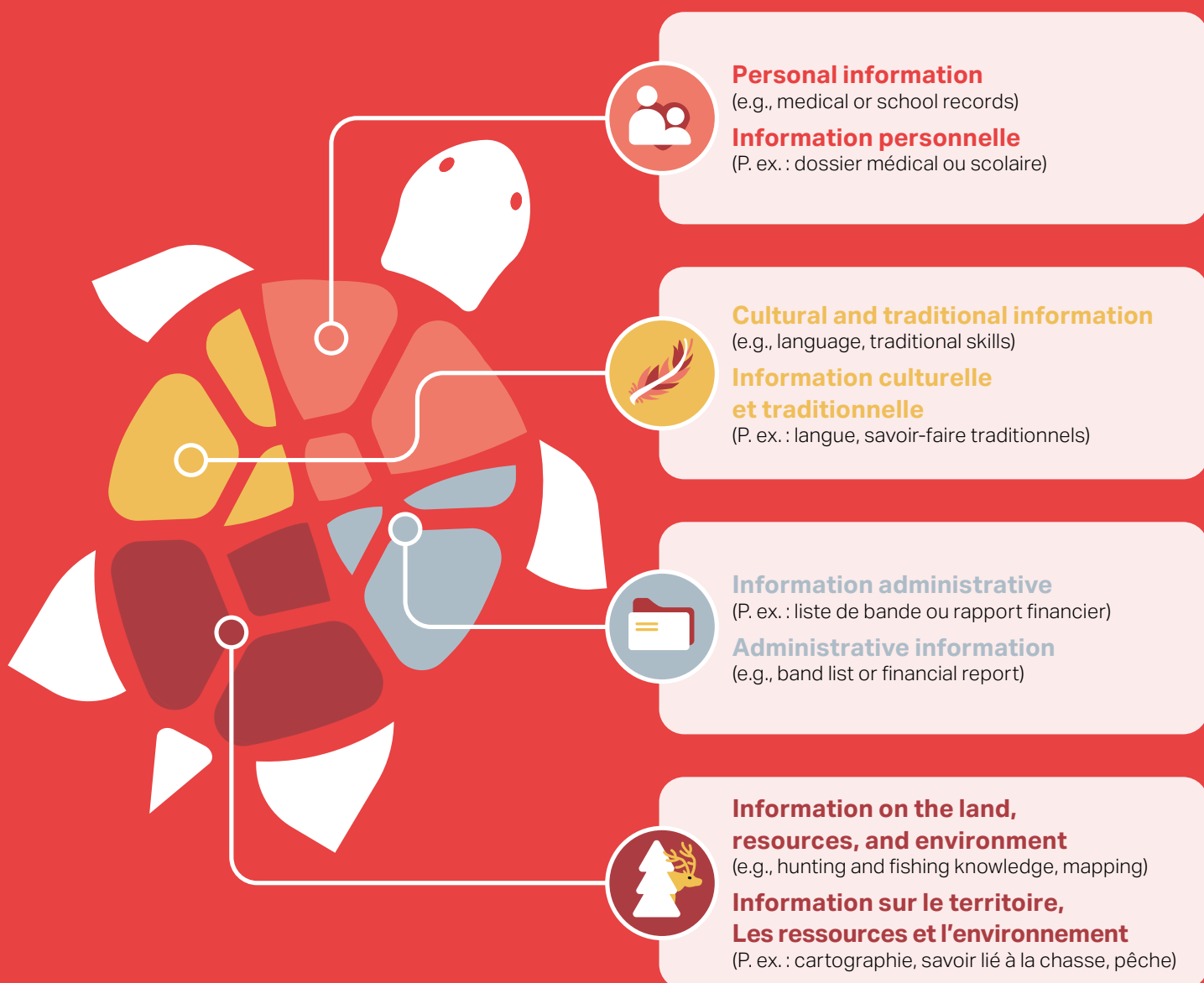
The AFNQL Chiefs support these efforts and recognize how important it is that First Nations control and protect their data.



The FNQLHSSC was tasked with coordinating the regional information governance strategy. The work is being carried out in consultation with the AFNQL regional commissions and organizations (RCOs), with the participation of First Nations communities and organizations in Quebec. The strategy aims to create structures and mechanisms that will enable First Nations to regain control over data and information pertaining to them, offer services adapted to their cultures and their collective and local realities, and support leaders in making informed decisions.

This first regional meeting was organized to bring together key players and begin important discussions, with the aim of raising First Nations' awareness about information governance and fostering discussions to better identify current needs, strengths and issues. During the meeting, numerous local and regional initiatives were presented, and community representatives in attendance were given the opportunity to speak. **More than 110 participants from 24 First Nations communities and 20 First Nations organizations** contributed to the efforts needed to advance the co-construction of adapted, effective solutions on a regional scale.

Bear in mind that information governance spans every activity sector (education, health, economic development, housing, culture, land, etc.) and is an essential component of any self-determination process. It is an undisputed source of power.





Participating communities

- » Ekuanitshit
- » Gesgapegiag
- » Kahnawà:ke
- » Kanesatake
- » Kawawachikamach
- » Kebaowek
- » Lac-Simon
- » Listuguj
- » Manawan
- » Mashteuiatsh
- » Nutashkuan
- » Odanak
- » Opitciwan
- » Pakua shipu
- » Pessamit
- » Pikogan
- » Sheshatshiu
- » Timiskaming First Nation
- » Uashat mak Mani-Utenam
- » Unamen Shipu
- » Wemotaci
- » Wendake
- » Winneway
- » Wôlinak

Participating organizations

- » Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador
- » Ndakina Office of W8banaki
- » Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay
- » First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Economic Development Commission
- » First Nations Human Resources Development Commission of Quebec
- » First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission
- » First Nations Education Council
- » First Nations Information Governance Centre
- » Conseil de la Nation Atikamekw
- » Cree Nation Government
- » Quebec Native Women Inc.
- » Innu Round Table Secretariat
- » First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Sustainable Development Institute
- » Institut Tshakapesh
- » Innu Takuaihan Uashat mak Mani-Utenam
- » Kiuna Institution
- » Mamit Innuat
- » Minwashin
- » Onkwata'karitáhtshera Secretariat
- » First Nations Quebec Labrador Youth Network

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MEETING

Presentations on the national and regional information governance strategy¹

The first morning of the regional meeting was devoted to three important presentations:

HISTORY AND REALITIES OF INFORMATION GOVERNANCE

- 1** Nancy Gros-Louis McHugh from the FNQLHSSC presented the history and current realities of information governance. She provided essential background information for understanding the evolution and challenges of information management in First Nations communities.

THE FIRST NATIONS INFORMATION GOVERNANCE CENTRE (FNIGC) AND THE NATIONAL STRATEGY

- 2** Erin Corston, Jonathan Dewar and Gonzague Guéranger from the FNIGC presented their organization and the national data governance strategy. The objective of the presentation was to highlight national information governance efforts and show how these initiatives support communities across the country.

PHASE 1 OF THE REGIONAL INFORMATION GOVERNANCE STRATEGY

- 3** Emilie Grantham from the FNQLHSSC presented the first phase of the regional information governance strategy, detailing the work underway to conceptualize a regional information governance centre by and for First Nations in Quebec. The presentation highlighted the importance of setting up structures to meet the needs of communities.

These presentations laid the foundations for a common understanding and led to enriching discussions on the future of First Nations information governance.

¹ All the presentations can be accessed here: <https://files.cssspnql.com/s/vTSiXGahjh4eqFs?path=%2F>



Panel: Sovereignty and information – Current and future societal issues

The participants were very impressed with the panel “Sovereignty and information – Current and future societal issues,” moderated by Francis Verreault-Paul, AFNQL Chief of Staff. The discussions focused on three central questions:

1. What does the sovereignty of First Nations data and information mean to you?
2. What do you think needs to be done for First Nations to regain control of their data, information and knowledge?
3. What is your vision of a regional centre whose mandate would be to support First Nations in Quebec in all matters concerning their data and information and the protection of their knowledge?

Each panellist was able to express their point of view on each question, providing rich and varied perspectives thanks to their diverse backgrounds and areas of expertise. Panellists included Debbie Delisle, Elder of the Kahnawà:ke community; Gabrielle Vachon-Laurent, Youth Voice and Interim Executive Director of the First Nations Quebec Labrador Youth Network; Pascal Sasseville-Quoquochi, Director of Educational Services for the Wemotaci community; and Lance Haymond, Chief of the Kebaowek community.

The discussions highlighted the importance of teaching traditional knowledge and of the connection to the land. There was an emphasis on the need to work together to achieve autonomy and guarantee First Nations ownership and control of their information. In addition, the panellists reiterated that First Nations organizations are there to support communities; the communities are thus encouraged to turn to these organizations for expertise.

Speaking on the vision for a future regional information governance centre, the panellists stressed that it is imperative that communities participate in its creation and that the needs they communicate be taken into account. It is also essential to involve young people in the process to ensure sustainable management of information and knowledge. The centre must also be accessible to community members and organizations.

In short, this panel helped to identify areas for consideration and concrete actions to strengthen First Nations’ information and data sovereignty, while encouraging cooperation and community autonomy.



Link to the video of the panel

To view the videos, click on the link and open it in a new tab in order not to interrupt your navigation on the tool sheet.

Community initiatives and workshops

The four major themes of information governance, established during the development of the *Quebec First Nations Information Governance Framework* (2019), were covered:



Two presentations and two workshops were organized for each theme in order to explain key concepts, present inspiring initiatives by communities and nations, and identify the strengths, challenges and needs of these communities and nations.

This section provides summaries of the presentations for each theme and presents the main findings from the workshops.

Summary of the presentations

PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION OF KNOWLEDGE



This theme refers to the mechanisms in place to protect and preserve traditional and contemporary knowledge, such as confidentiality of information, intergenerational transmission, and collective ownership of knowledge.

Caroline Lemire and **Richard Ejinagoji Kistabish** presented their non-profit cultural organization Minwashin.² They spoke of their efforts to preserve Anicinabe arts, languages, culture and information assets, particularly through the use of digital technologies.

Kathleen André and **Martial Fontaine** presented their contribution to the Innu community of Uashat mak Mani-Utenam. They spoke of their commitment to passing on knowledge of traditional Innu medicine to younger generations.

Both presentations focused on the conservation, preservation and revitalization of knowledge, languages and cultures, while also underscoring the importance of optimizing access to information based on local needs. There was also an emphasis on the fact that the repatriation of information, archives, knowledge and artifacts requires appropriate infrastructure and entails obligations and responsibilities.

² Minwashin website: minwashin.org/en/

ETHICS AND PRINCIPLES OF OCAP®



This theme deals with the principles and values guiding the collection, processing, storage, use and dissemination of information and data, including the principles of ownership, control, access and possession (OCAP®), the use of the *First Nations in Quebec and Labrador's Research Protocol* and other guidelines put in place by communities, nations and organizations.

Hélène Boivin, President of the Mashteuiatsh Tipelimitishun (self-governance) Commission, presented several concrete examples of First Nations applying the OCAP® principles and managing research data. She spoke about the importance of seeing research projects through from start to finish in order to control the information pertaining to the community or nation. She also spoke about certain issues to take into consideration.

Mickaël Castilloux-Gaboury, project manager at the Ndakina Office of W8banaki,³ explained how the W8banaki Nation has put in place a mechanism to ensure that researchers from outside the Nation respect OCAP® principles. He described the workings of the research coordination committee, headed by the Ndakina Office, which ensures that research takes into account the values of the Odanak and Wôlinak communities and serves the Nation. He also described a local research protocol and spoke about the challenges involved in applying OCAP® principles.

³ Website of the Ndakina Office: gc.nwa.com/en/ndakina-office/

ACCESS TO AND USE OF INFORMATION



This theme covers all the tools, mechanisms and agreements that make it possible to access, repatriate and use information in order to make informed decisions.

André Michel, Director, Environment and Territory, Innu Takuaikan Uashat mak Mani-Utenam (ITUM) Council,⁴ addressed the issue of mobilizing Nitas-sinan data keepers to ensure the management and protection of traditional territory resources through surveillance activities and animal population censuses. A training program has been developed for this purpose, and it is offered directly in the community. Mr. Michel also emphasized the advantages of data produced by and for the community.

Vivienne Walz, Community Health Plan Liaison for Onkwata'karitáhtshera,⁵ **Derek Montour**, Director of Health and Social Services at Kahnawake Shakotii'a'Takehnhas Community Services, and **Dr. Colleen Fuller**, family physician and public health specialist for Onkwata'karitáhtshera, explained how the community of Kahnawà:ke has developed a portrait of the population's health status and the impacts of the latter. They also discussed the collection and repatriation of data from different sources, the involvement of community members, the challenges they have encountered, and enabling factors.

⁴ Innu Takuaikan Uashat mak Mani-Utenam Council website: www.itum.qc.ca

⁵ Onkwata'karitáhtshera website: www.onkwa.org

DATA MANAGEMENT, SECURITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY



This theme covers all the mechanisms and systems used to manage, organize and store data, as well as the protocols in place to ensure data security.

Sylvie Létourneau, documentation technician and coordinator of documentation services at the Conseil de la Nation Atikamekw,⁶ presented the Centre d'archives and its data management activities. She explained that the Centre collects several archive formats on various subjects concerning the Atikamekw Nation. She outlined the principles that guide archival and data management activities, particularly the principles of provenance and respect of archival structure (*respect des fonds*). She also spoke about the archival access policy adopted by the Council in 2006, the standards for archival work, and the Centre's security and confidentiality measures.

Sophie Papineau, Director of Data Governance, and **Normand Généreux**, IT Applications Coordinator, both from the First Nations Education Council (FNEC),⁷ presented CANO, an education information system that they began using in 2009. They detailed the type of data stored in the system and explained that the data is managed based on OCAP® principles. They also mentioned the creation of a data management committee and spoke of adopting best practices to ensure confidentiality and security.

⁶ Conseil de la Nation Atikamekw website: www.atikamekwsipi.com/

⁷ First Nations Education Council website: cepn-fnec.ca/en/

Main findings from the workshops

The second day was dedicated to workshops in which participants discussed the four major themes that were presented the previous day. Participants were invited to form sub-groups to answer three questions concerning the strengths, challenges and needs of their community, nation or organization in relation to each theme. The contributions of each sub-grouped were pooled at the end of the workshops. These were in-person workshops, with the exception of a workshop on knowledge protection and preservation, offered in a hybrid format.

Several of the general findings from the workshops overlap with the four main themes of information governance.⁸

STRENGTHS

There are good practices in place in most communities and organizations

- ▶ Intergenerational transmission of the knowledge of Elders on the territory.
- ▶ Promoting the culture and the language (many community initiatives in place).
- ▶ Strong sense of belonging to the land. Occupation and protection of the land, land guardians in numerous communities (e.g., negotiation for land recognition, protected sites).
- ▶ Use of digital databases (e.g., ALMASS, EMR, CANO).
- ▶ Consultation with community members and community involvement in important decisions by the Chiefs and the council (e.g., group discussions, surveys, referendums).

ISSUES

Main challenges in most communities and organizations

- ▶ Lack of human, financial and material resources in communities.
- ▶ Lack of structure to evaluate and coordinate research projects (e.g., absence of protocol, lack of written processes and documents, challenges in applying OCAP® principles, responding to requests in a reactive manner rather than taking proactive steps).
- ▶ Challenges with regard to data management, security and archiving (e.g., boxes of documents to be digitized, fire hazard, lack of a document management system).
- ▶ Rapidly evolving technologies and cybersecurity (e.g., hackers becoming increasingly proficient, lack of recovery plan, control of IT by external consultants).
- ▶ Planning and services not always adapted to needs (e.g., objectives imposed by lenders, lack of overall vision, political turnover).
- ▶ Lack of reliable technological infrastructure.
- ▶ Lack of centralization and exchange of information within communities (e.g., working in silos, each sector having its own data, lack of communication, doubling up of tools).
- ▶ Lack of resources and tools for data monitoring by and for communities.
- ▶ Lack of sharing networks between communities (e.g., exchange of best practices, new programs that are available).

⁸ This is an overview of the main findings from the workshops. It is not an exhaustive list of the strengths, challenges and needs identified. A more complete documentation is in progress.

NEEDS

Services required in most communities and organizations

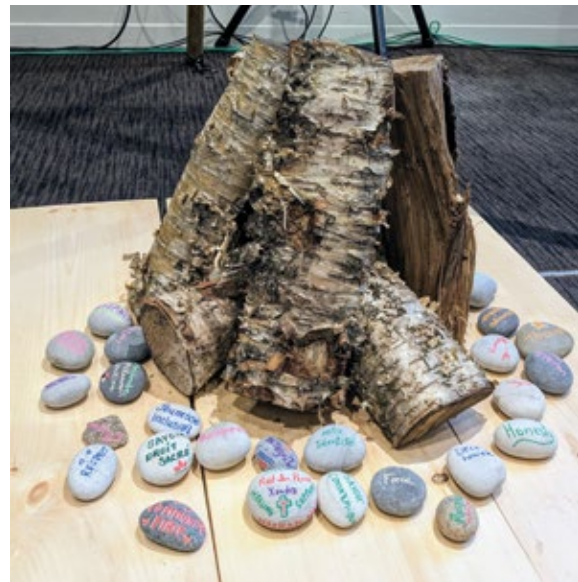
- » Need to repatriate data to communities (e.g., federal and provincial government data, archives, historical artifacts).
- » Need to control information belonging to First Nations (e.g., protecting the knowledge, cultural information and data ownership of each community).
- » Development of agreements and standards (e.g., data use and access policies, document retention standards, research project evaluation models).
- » Training and local capacity building (e.g., evaluation of research projects and First Nations OCAP® principles, information management, data collection and analysis, intellectual property).
- » Support, accompaniment and consulting services (e.g., ethics support, statistical services, archiving support).
- » Need for resources to evaluate and coordinate research projects (e.g., protocol in place, formal structure and human resources assigned to evaluating and monitoring research projects).
- » Support, exchange of tools and networking between nations (e.g., support for partnership development, agreement to pool knowledge and community tools, legal advice on information rights).
- » Promotion and preservation of culture (e.g., identifying and prioritizing knowledge to be preserved, knowledge inventory service).
- » Data management, information security and archiving (e.g., organizing archives in communities, setting up an easy-to-navigate management system with limited, controlled access).
- » Knowledge of technological tools, development of new tools, and the use of guidelines for artificial intelligence (e.g., inventory of technological tools, software that can meet various needs, security of information systems).
- » Documentation of community needs and realities on the ground (e.g., member participation, surveys, interviews, annual meeting, presence of Elders).
- » Policies, laws and regulations developed by First Nations (e.g., heritage protection laws, intellectual property rights legislation, tripartite agreement).
- » Human resources and workforce needs (e.g., training plan for developing information governance expertise, local human resources for data management and security, data technicians, archival resources, youth involvement, financial support).

ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT DURING THE MEETING

Activity on the values of the future regional centre

For the first meeting on the regional information governance strategy, participants were invited to bring a stone from their territory. During the meeting, they wrote on it a value that they considered essential for their future centre. All the stones were then placed around the central fire in the main hall to symbolize unity and collective commitment to the principles that will guide the process.

The main values that emerged were respect, integrity, honesty, truth and strength.



Lanyards for the badges given to participants, made by artisans Josianne Mapachee from Pikogan and Mireille Gros-Louis from Wendake.



Activity on the upcoming visits to communities

A giant map of Quebec showing all the First Nations communities was set up in the lobby near the main room. Participants were invited to place a coloured dot on their community if they wanted to receive a visit from the team coordinating the regional strategy. The visit will be an opportunity to discuss the strategy and assess the community's strengths and needs in terms of the organization, control and protection of information.

In total, 11 communities indicated that they were interested in receiving a visit. Several visits in these communities will take place in fall 2024.

Visual thinking

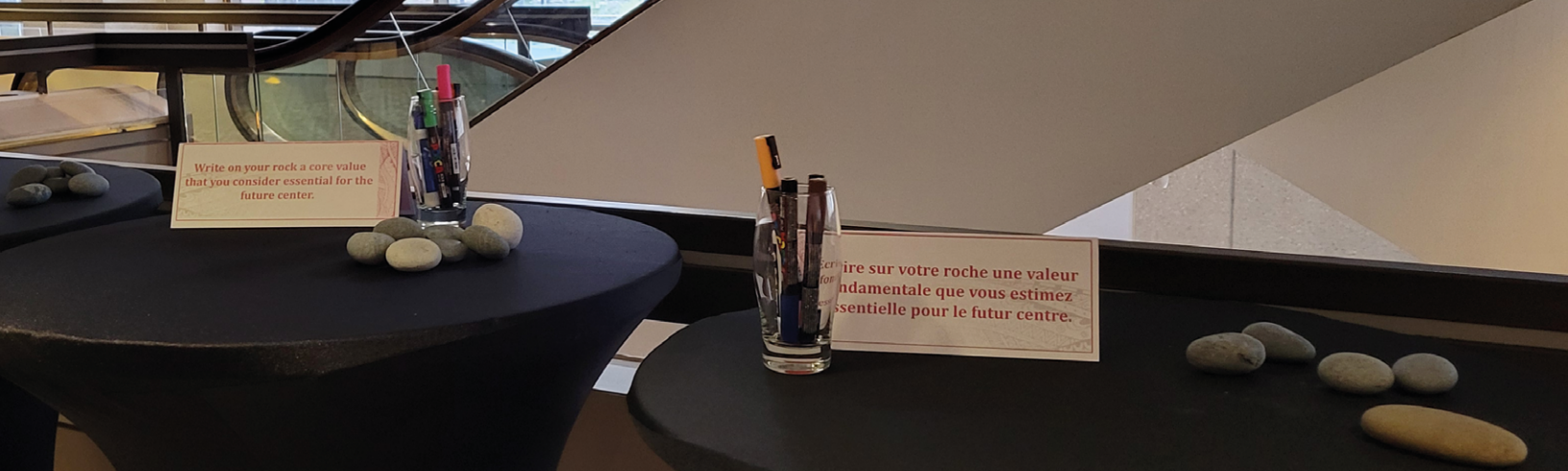
The organization Percolab Coop was invited to do visual note taking during the workshops and presentations. The result was remarkable, and it inspired many of the participants. Many had never before witnessed artists illustrating the key points

of presentations in real time. This innovative approach of visually capturing ideas and discussions had a lasting impact on participants and enriched their overall experience.



Rencontre sur la stratégie régionale de gouvernance de l'information pour les Premières Nations au Québec
7 et 8 mai 2024

Meeting on the regional information governance strategy for First Nations in Quebec
7 - 8 May 2024



Mentimeter

At the end of the meeting, participants were asked the following question: "What do you think should be one of the first services that the regional information governance centre offers to communities and nations?" The virtual tool Mentimeter was used to gather responses, and following came up most common:

- » Offering training and capacity building
- » Supporting and accompanying communities
- » Creating a secure data and archive centre
- » Providing legal advice and information on legislation relating to data
- » Understanding the needs of the different communities
- » Networking and exchanging information and tools between communities and Nations
- » Obtaining funding

Promotional video for the meeting on the regional information governance strategy for First Nations in Quebec

A documentary-style promotional video was shot to present the initiatives, challenges and opportunities associated with this strategy, while showcasing the contributions of many of those involved and sharing their testimonials. In addition to being a lasting record of the very first regional meeting, it will help to raise awareness among community members and partners and help them to understand the importance and the impacts of this collaborative approach.

Enjoy!



To view the videos, click on the link and open it in a new tab in order not to interrupt your navigation on the tool sheet.



The meeting was impeccably organized. Your attention to detail was evident in every aspect: excellent composition of panels in plenary and in thematic discussions, wonderful moderators and emcee. The four sub-themes were well articulated in panel discussions and when broken down in workshop questions allowed for productive discussions. Finally, the Percolab illustrations added some lightness and will serve as important artifacts of this historic process.

- Meeting participant

I hope that there will be more to come.

- Meeting participant

The workshops were really worthwhile, and they were well organized and run. I think you made a good choice on which topics to cover.

- Meeting participant

I would have liked more time to hear everyone's answers. The time was really limited. I would have liked to attend all the workshops to hear everyone's thoughts. Overall, it was a very fulfilling and comprehensive meeting.

- Meeting participant

Thank you for all the creative touches, the good organization and a wonderful event! We could have kept talking for another day or two!"

- Meeting participant

Thank you for organizing this important and foundational meeting for First Nations self-determination."

- Meeting participant

I really enjoyed taking part in the event, and it made me more aware of the need for and importance of such an approach.

- Meeting participant



CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The meeting fully achieved its objectives of making First Nations more aware and informed about the regional information governance strategy, mobilizing them around the strategy, and fostering discussion. By bringing together stakeholders in a spirit of co-construction, the event facilitated a better understanding of the needs, strengths and issues of each community, thus laying a solid foundation for future action.

The discussions centred on four main themes: the protection and preservation of knowledge; ethics and principles of OCAP®; accessibility and use of information; and data management, security and confidentiality. These topics are of the utmost importance to our collective future.

This meeting was a valuable opportunity to share knowledge and develop communities' skills in information governance.

The next steps are as follows:

- » **Co-constructing the strategy and the regional information governance centre**
Joint efforts will continue to be made to develop a strategy and establish a regional centre that responds to communities' needs and aspirations.
 - » **Analyzing the legislative environment**
An in-depth review of existing legislative frameworks will be carried out to ensure that the strategy complies with the laws and regulations in force in the province of Quebec.
 - » **In the fall of 2024, conducting visits to interested communities**
These visits will be an opportunity for deeper discussion and for consultations with communities on the ground.
 - » **Organizing the next regional meeting, to be held in 2025.**
- In conclusion, this meeting not only achieved its initial objectives but also laid the foundations for a solid partnership and long-term collaboration that aims for strengthened, autonomous information governance among First Nations in Quebec. The meeting gave rise to fruitful discussions and commitments that will constitute an essential milestone in guaranteeing ethical, secure and accessible information management, respectful of the needs and aspirations of First Nations. It marks the beginning of ongoing, sustained cooperation centred on empowering First Nations through strengthened, shared information governance.
- » **Staying in touch with the participants**
Participants who provided their contact information will be followed up with. They will receive emails notifying them of important developments regarding the regional information governance strategy.
 - » **Developing and implementing the communications strategy**
This strategy will be essential to ensuring effective dissemination of information and encouraging active participation by stakeholders.



APPENDIX

Meeting agenda

DAY 1

Time	Activities	Presenters
8:30 a.m.	Opening ceremony	Debbie Delisle , Elder from Kahnawà:ke
8:45 a.m.	Opening and welcoming remarks	Francis Verreault-Paul , AFNQL Chief of Staff and Derek Montour , President of the FNQLHSSC Board of Directors
9:15 a.m.	Presentation on the history and realities of information governance	Nancy Gros-Louis McHugh , FNQLHSSC
9:45 a.m.	Presentation on the First Nations Information Governance Centre (FNIGC) and the national strategy	Jonathan Dewar , Erin Corston and Gonzague Guéranger , FNIGC
10:25 a.m.	Presentation on phase 1 of the regional strategy	Emilie Grantham , FNQLHSSC
11 a.m.	Panel: Sovereignty and information – Current and future societal issues moderated by Francis Verreault-Paul , AFNQL Chief of Staff	Gabrielle Vachon-Laurent , FNQLYN Pascal Sasseville-Quoquochi , Wemotacii Debbie Delisle , Elder from Kahnawà:ke Lance Haymond , Chief of Kebaowek
SIMULTANEOUS PRESENTATIONS		
1:15 p.m.	Presentation 1: Protection and preservation of knowledge	Caroline Lemire and Richard Ejinagoji Kistabish , Minwashin Kathleen André and Martial Fontaine , Uashat mak Mani-Utenam
	Presentation 2: Ethics and principles of OCAP® (Ownership, Control, Access and Possession)	Hélène Boivin , Mashteuiatsh Mickaël Castilloux-Gaboury , Ndakina Office
	Presentation 3: Accessibility and use of information	André Michel , Conseil ITUM Vivienne Walz , Onkwata'karitáhtshera Secretariat and Derek Montour , Kahnawake Shakotii'a'Takehnhas Community Services
	Presentation 4: Data management, security and confidentiality	Sylvie Létourneau , Centre d'archives du Conseil de la Nation Atikamekw Sophie Papineau and Normand Généreux , FNEC

DAY 2

Time	Activities	Presenters
SIMULTANEOUS WORKSHOPS		
9 a.m.	Workshop 1: Protection and preservation of knowledge	
	Workshop 2: Ethics and principles of OCAP® (Ownership, Control, Access and Possession)	
	Workshop 3: Accessibility and use of information	
	Workshop 4: Data management, security and confidentiality	
11:15 a.m.	Future actions and next steps	FNQLHSSC
	Closing ceremony	Debbie Delisle , Elder from Kahnawà:ke



Booths

Each First Nations regional commission and organization had the opportunity to set up a booth to share information and promote its activities to participants.

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THANK YOU

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