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The graphics of "Indigenous Languages" "that flows" in our strategic plan were inspired by the wise words of an Elder, who reminded us that:

**"Aboriginal languages are like the many streams that flow to form one mighty river which flows through souls nourishing their identity, traditions and way of life and carrying their hopes, dreams and desires into the everyday world of human existence."**

-Unknown Elder, Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures, National Consultations 2004























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# OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

## The Story of the OCIL

To explain the Strategic Priorities of the OCIL one must begin by understanding that, when the Commissioner and Directors were first appointed, there was no organization, no staff, no office and operational infrastructure, such as governance structures with policies and procedures. Starting from “ground zero”, we had to build the organization and bring the organization to “life” during a challenging time....which was the Covid pandemic. These conditions served to frame how the OCIL would approach the task of defining then working on the Strategic Priorities of the organization.

# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

## OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS, THE OCIL WILL FOCUS ON:

- Strengthening our relationships with communities (Communities)
- Building the OCIL organization (Office / Infrastructure)
- Becoming fully operational (Operational Capacity)
- Establishing relationships with key partners (Relationships)
- Undertaking Indigenous language projects (Projects)



## OUR APPROACH

The diagram represents our interpretation of how we will accomplish our Strategic Priorities. Overall, the diagram represents our belief that all of our actions over the next five years must be holistic....that is, all our actions are connected and interrelated. Our Strategic Plan is dynamic, where we continually learn as we progress through the five years of the Plan. In addition, all our Strategic Priorities occur simultaneously and not necessarily in a linear fashion....where one Priority must be accomplished before another can begin. In our Strategic approach, all of our Priorities are equal in value and although some may begin at different times, all will be accomplished by the end of our five year mandate.

## **STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

As an Indigenous organization with a national mandate, the OCIL developed a Strategic Plan and defined Strategic Priorities by grounding our approach in traditional Indigenous Knowledge, philosophies, and Ways of Understanding. From our unique understanding and appreciation of these various Indigenous Knowledge Systems, we decided to express our approach in the following manner:

## **CENTRE - COMMUNITIES**

In the middle of the diagram we place the word “Communities”. This represents our belief that Indigenous communities are at the “heart” of everything we do. All of our actions and activities, designed to accomplish our goals and objectives, must always keep in mind that the Indigenous communities of Canada remain at the forefront and centre of all that we do.

## **NORTH - OFFICE / INFRASTRUCTURE**

A primary task of bringing the OCIL to “life” involves the establishment of the physical offices of the organization. This task includes establishing our head office in Ottawa, as required by our mandate. As a national organization with a mandate that includes all Indigenous languages in Canada, our head office location may be supplemented by additional office locations in different regions across Canada.

## **SOUTH - OPERATIONAL CAPACITY**

The “north — south” axis in the diagram represents the “internal” aspects of the OCIL. In the “north” the building of the office locations with appropriate governance structures, policies and procedures, and the “south” representing the operational functionality and capacity of the organization. The intent is to fully operational, as an organization, by the end of the five year strategic plan. Elements of the strategic approach in this area include human resources, such as the hiring of staff, organizational development and structures and the development of a dispute resolution functions within the organization.

## **EAST - RELATIONSHIPS**

The “east-west” axis in the diagram represents the “external” aspects of the OCIL. In the “East” the word “relationships” refers to all the various parties, entities, and organizations that the OCIL will establish relationships with in order to fulfill our mandate. Contained within the OCIL Strategic Priorities is an “all of Canada” approach that attempts to engage and attract many different segments of society together to assist, augment, and expand the work of the OCIL. This element of the Strategic Plan would include investigating the establishment of an independent, not-for-profit Foundation to be associated with the OCIL efforts to reclaim, revitalize, maintain, and strengthen Indigenous languages. Also included is the participation in the United Nations International Decade of Indigenous Languages and establishing international connections and relationships.

## **WEST - PROJECTS**

The western direction is representative of the many and various projects that will be established to fulfill the mandate of the Commission. These activities will include such elements as research, the use of innovative technologies for language education and revitalization, such as Artificial Intelligence and Indigenous languages, participation in establishing a national center for Indigenous languages, and other projects designed to include, encourage, and further develop projects and activities that help the OCIL to fulfill its’ mandate.

## **SURROUNDING RING OF COLOURS**

The ring of colours surrounding the five Strategic Priorities represents the logo of the OCIL, where the connected directions and colours represent the 12 language families of the Indigenous Peoples in Canada. The inclusion of this visual aspect in the Strategic Priorities is there to remind us that, surrounding the work the OCIL, are all the languages of the Indigenous Peoples of Canada...that there should be no Indigenous language left behind.



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# HOW WE WILL MEASURE SUCCESS

## Our 4 Principles of measurement

From an understanding and grounding in Traditional Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Understanding, the OCIL has a vested interest in ensuring the long term viability of Indigenous languages and for measurable actions. Accordingly, our approach to measurement will be centred on the following 4 key principles:

At the heart of the OCIL are the Indigenous communities of Canada. As such we will continually strive, in the measurement of progress to achieve our strategic plan and priorities, to ensure that communities are involved in how we evaluate operational success.

As a unique national Indigenous organization, will ensure that each program and relationship includes a unique set of success metrics that are regularly reviewed for applicability and operational effectiveness.

We will always seek to learn...from what we are doing now and from what we have already done. By adopting an “ever-green” or dynamic approach to constant improvement, we will increase our understanding of how we can improve and develop more effective, efficient and cost-effective ways of delivering on our mandate.

We will continue to evaluate how we can become a better partner to others. Relationships always change. From this understanding, we will seek to understand and measure how relations have or may be changing and attempt to adapt to changing circumstances.





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