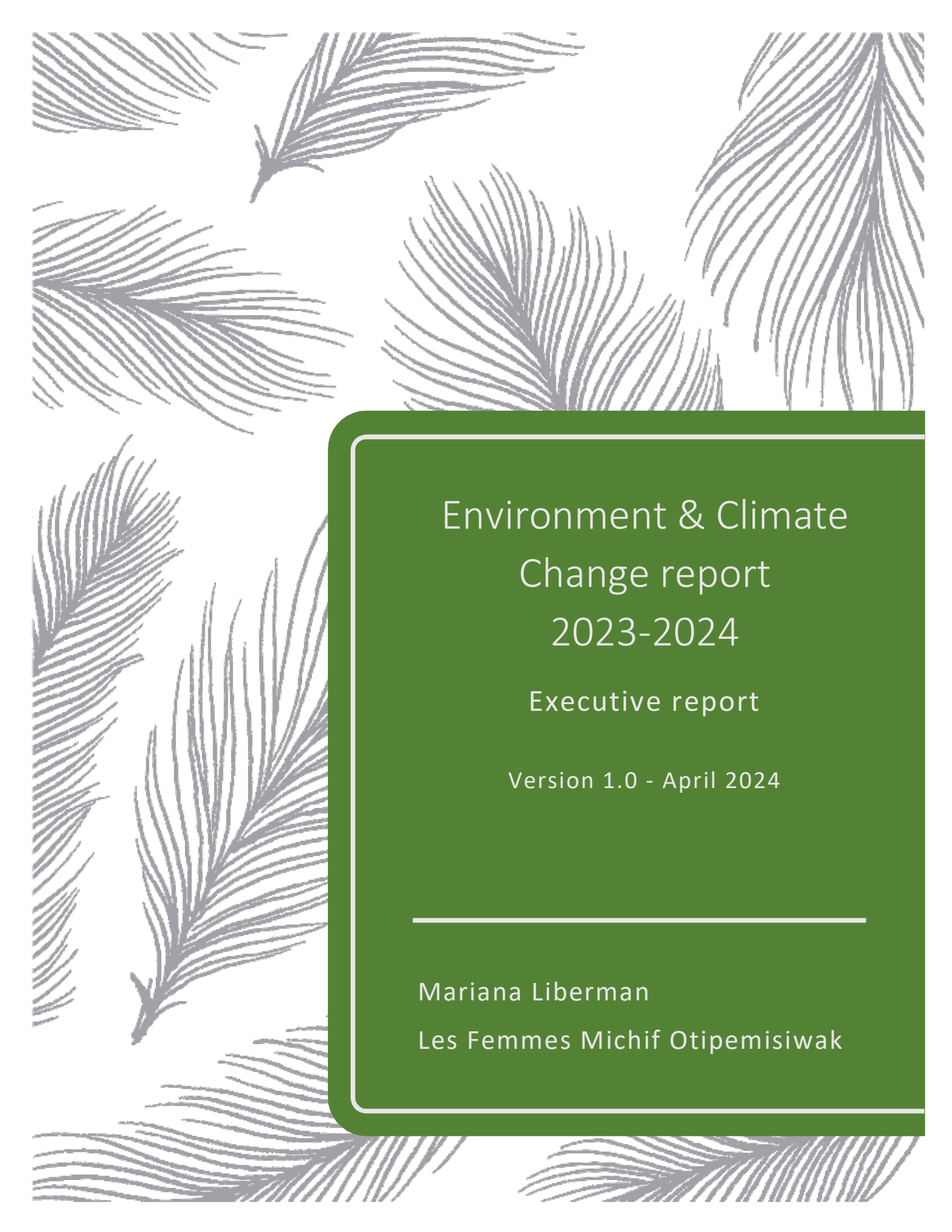




Environment & Climate Change report 2023-2024

Executive report

Version 1.0 - April 2024

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Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak

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We open this report with this photo taken in Montreal during the “Adaptation Futures” conference. It brings the resilience of Mother Earth to be reborn and heal in the most unexpected and adverse circumstances, just like Métis women.

1. Introduction

This report summarizes the actions taken by the Environment & Climate Change Department from May 2023 to March 2024 and the projects to be pursued this year. The goal for the following years is to develop consistent programs to achieve our mission considering our vision.

1.1. Vision

Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak (LFMO) envisions the empowerment of Métis women and gender-diverse people as original knowledge holders of the land, waters and sky that will allow us to face and tackle the challenges of a changing planet due to the environmental and climate crisis.

1.2. Mission

The Environment & Climate Change department's mission is to develop programs and policies that build bridges between our community and decision-makers. By shortening the distance between the Canadian government and Métis women and gender-diverse people, we honour our commitment to take free, prior, and informed decisions about our lands, waters and sky and the policies that will guarantee our stewardship of them.

2. 2023 Environment & Climate Change Department Actions

2.1 Research

Food Security and Sovereignty Survey and Research

In 2022, two engagement activities with Métis women triggered the discussion about food security and sovereignty and how reality (e.g., habitational, and economic situation, cultural connection, climate change, and environmental degradation) is impacting these basic rights. Complementing these engagement sessions in August 2023, LFMO launched an online survey to do qualitative and quantitative analysis of this topic and get detailed data to guide future actions. The survey was answered by 97 women from across Métis Motherland and isolated answers from eastern provinces.

The comprehensive report is accessible upon request and is attached in this document for more details. However, we include here the highlighted conclusions:

- Food security is jeopardized by many aspects: economic restrictions and the continuous increase in food costs, as well as a lack of access to traditional ways of getting food (harvesting, fishing, hunting, farming, and gardening).
- Food sovereignty is threatened by land disconnection and a lack of spaces to share traditional knowledge across generations.

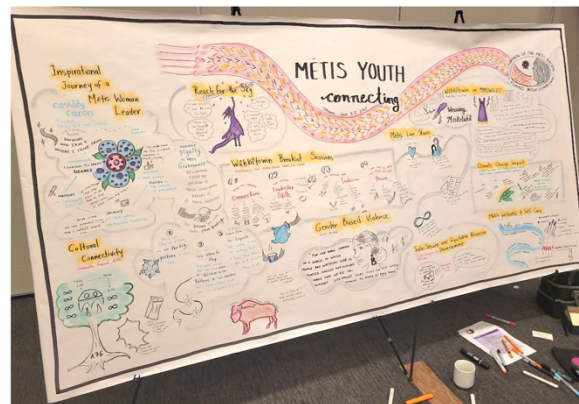
- Climate change is affecting the quality, quantity, and accessibility of good-quality food and medicines. Biodiversity loss, wildfires, and flooding have broken the connection between Métis people and especially between Métis women, with the land as a source of food and physical and spiritual healing.
- Métis women are calling on government institutions to take concrete actions, including policy revision and creation, to guarantee availability, accessibility, adequacy, and culturally relevant food.

2.2 Engagement

Métis Women Youth Summit

In September 2023, in Ottawa, LFMO developed a three-day Métis Women Youth Summit with 40 participants between 18 and 30 years old. The discussion covered many topics of interest, and the Environment and Climate Change department focused on two main issues: climate change impacts on Métis Women and Natural Resources Development Projects and MMIWG. Each block included presentations and open dialogues with LFMO and NRCan speakers.

The comprehensive report is accessible upon request and is attached in this document for more details. We include here the highlighted conclusions:



Work Art during Youth Summit by AHA- Graphic Facilitation (Photo: Mariana Liberman)

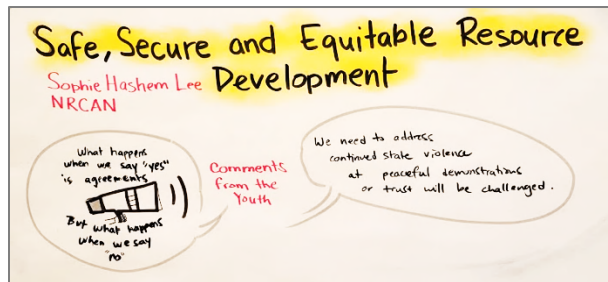
Climate Change Impact on Métis Women

- Climate Change impacts Métis women and gender-diverse folk in an intense and specific way. The impacts exceed the physical sphere, including physical health, and encompass spiritual and mental wellness. It breaks the connection between Métis people and the land and, consequently, the connection within the community. A direct impact is the loss of traditions, language, and traditional knowledge, including ecological knowledge.
- Colonial and patriarchal practices and policies restrict Métis women's participation in decision tables and criminalize environmental protests and the exercise of Indigenous rights such as Free, Prior, and Informed consent, self-determination, and self-governance.



Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ and Natural Resources Development

- While the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ (MMIWG2S+) crisis is a multifaceted structural, societal issue, it has a clear relationship to Natural Resources Development Projects and their impacts on the land and the community. Direct and indirect impacts of patriarchal and colonial practices are common in the development industry, leaving Indigenous women in a vulnerable socioeconomic situation.
- Even the National Inquiry's Final Report on MMIWG raised concern and awareness about the impact on Indigenous women and gender-diverse people, and there is still a lack of concrete distinction-based actions and policies, and the coordination of government, industry and organizations are still in an incipient state.



2.3 Events

Back to Batoche

In July of 2023, LFMO and its environmental team were present at culturally relevant spaces at “Back to Batoche” in the Saskatchewan historical area and in Klondike Days (K-Days) in Edmonton, Alberta.

During the days at “Back to Batoche,” we had the opportunity to dialogue with Métis people from across Motherland, who showed us the diversity of environments from which Métis traditions are built and grasping the holistic understanding of nature and culture they own. Furthermore, visiting the historical areas exposed how Métis have been removed from their land and practices to adapt to different systems of growing food and persist.

Cultural activities such as moosehide tanning, horse riding, and art exhibitions, including beading work, showed the omnipresence of the different elements of nature that are part of everyday activities and life projects in Métis culture.



Batoche Historical Site (Photo: Mariana Liberman)



Beading work showing the variety of flowers (Photo: Mariana Liberman)

Klondike Days (K-Days) at Edmonton

For 10 days, LFMO held a space in the Indigenous Peoples Pavilion at the K-Days exhibition center, focusing on the relationship between Métis Women and traditional plant use. We set up a space with a diverse collection of dry and fresh plants used for healing purposes in Métis culture. Also, we could integrate beautiful art pieces such as paintings and beading work on hides that represent Métis relevant plants and demonstrate how traditional knowledge is transferred to the next generations. We had uncountable conversations about the healing power of traditional medicine, and we felt a huge eagerness to learn more about them, especially how to grow or gather these plants.



We extracted from the conversations the need to create active knowledge-sharing networks where youth and elders can exchange experiences and stories. Many young people are recently discovering their Métis roots, and through traditional medicine, they are getting more deeply into their culture and traditions.



Kokum Betty and Uncle Eddy as didactic resources (Photo: Mariana Liberman)

For approaching children, we used the didactic resource of two puppets of traditionally dressed characters that enhanced and made the explanation of plant properties and the risk of losing them due to urban sprawl and climate change easier. We also shared with them and their parents the online resources of Kokum Betty, which teaches traditions about food, language, and nature. This activity enlightened us on the need to develop appropriate material according to age or education level in a way to keep traditional ecological knowledge for future generations.

2.4 Technical Meetings and Conferences

2.4.1 Goose Moon Table and Pre-Goose Moon Table

In March 2023, LFMO attended the 7th Meeting of the Métis Nation-Canada Joint Table on Clean Growth and Climate Change, held in Métis Crossing, Alberta. The goal of this meeting was to relaunch this joint table.

LFMO also participated in the Goose Moon Table in September in Ottawa. MNC, the governing members (MNO, MNS, MNBC and MNA), LFMO and ECCC members elaborated on the Métis Nation's Climate Priorities, including the Nation-to-Nation relationship with federal agencies.

LFMO is pleased to participate in this discussion space. As an organization with a focus on Métis women and Gender diverse people, we directly create networks with Federal Government Agencies, MNC and Provincial GMs. Our funding sources for research and advocacy for Métis women's and 2SLGBTQQA+ folks' voices come from built relationships, such as the "Mother of the Land, Water, and Sky" grant we receive from ECCC. However, LFMO does not have access to Emergency Management or Return of Federal Fuel Charge Proceeds in the National Environment arena, being women, girls, and gender-diverse people more deeply impacted by climate change, as Western and Indigenous science has demonstrated.

The individuals we advocate for reside in the territories where the governing members strategize and implement projects and plans. Presently, we lack a formal mechanism to ensure that Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQA+ folks are served in accordance with equity principles or that all projects and plans incorporate gender-based analysis and intersectionality while we are well-equipped and prepared to support MNC and the governing bodies in this area.

LFMO keeps working on developing specific expertise and tools in this field. However, we still need to jointly develop the processes that guarantee Métis women and 2SLGBTQQA+ people's rights.

2.4.1 Métis Nature Table. Technical pre-Table Workshop

On June 2023, LFMO attended a two-day workshop guided by MNC to discuss the operationalization of the Métis Nature Table, including the Governing Members (GMs) and Federal government departments such as the Canadian Wildlife Service. The discussions revolved around the table's vision, purpose, and terms of reference, and different voices expressed their points of view in preparation for the Nature Table, which took place in January 2024 in Saskatoon.

Among the highlighted topics, we have identified the following:

- Indigenous Guardians Program: The GMs developed this strong and successful program, which has secured funding until March 2026. However, there is some uncertainty about the future. Internally to LFMO, this topic calls for gathering data about women's and gender-diverse participation in this kind of program, barriers, and successful experiences and thinking about future initiatives focusing on our community.
- As the Nature Table will bring together Métis and government organizations, clear protocols about Indigenous Traditional Knowledge (ITK) management will need to be developed. Many doubts arose about how ITK will be included in discussions and guidelines.
- The high importance of language is used in the table as a common ground to build the dialogue.

- Accountability: This was an important topic that resonated with how we will act upon the outcomes from the Nature Table.
- The discussion was held prioritizing the following CBD targets:
 - Target 3: Protected and conserved areas
 - Target 5: Harvesting and Trade of Wild Species
 - Target 19: Resource Mobilization
 - Target 21: Data, Information, and Knowledge for Decision-Making is Available
 - Target 22: Inclusion of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, Women and Youth in Decision-Making

For extended information about this event, MNC provided the Workshop Summary.

2.4.3 Adaptation Futures

LFMO attended the conference “Adaptation Futures” in October in Montreal with the Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources economic support, MNC, and other GMs. The Conference was an opportunity for delegates to network, learn from, and share with climate adaptation policymakers, scientists, academics, and private industry leaders from around the world.

We attended several conferences from which we highlight Dr.

Myle Ballard’s. She elaborated on the work the Federal government is doing to raise Indigenous knowledge and how to co-develop mutual learning and enhance climate action. She brought up three important concepts about the relationship between “Western” and Indigenous science:

- Braiding is about combining different ways of knowing and being to achieve a “holistic understanding of the environment while maintaining the integrity of each knowledge system” (Ballard, M., 2021).
- Weaving Indigenous and Western science for better-informed decisions. This applies to methodologies, research paradigms and worldviews.
- Bridging “is about fostering awareness, understanding, and recognition of Indigenous science as a distinct and equal science to Western science approach” (Ballard, M., 2021). The goal is to create channels of knowledge exchange between Indigenous Knowledge holders and “Western” scientists.

Other sessions we attended focused on Indigenous Knowledge (e.g. Inuit knowledge about climate change), Indigenous-led solutions (e.g. Community-Based Monitoring by MNA), youth climate action and gender perspective.



2.4.4 COP28

In December 2023, LFMO participated in Dubai's Conference of Parties (COP28). Sharon Morin was appointed Canadian representative for the Métis Nation as a Knowledge holder and participated in several meetings and round tables with Indigenous Peoples worldwide.

LFMO hosted two events at the Indigenous Pavilion Peoples and the Canadian Pavilion, bringing the voices of Indigenous women in a session called “Indigenous Women’s time: Weaving Strategies to stand together against climate change.”

During our days at COP28, the LFMO team could gather information, relationships, and experiences to guide our plans and programs. In many aspects, we brought more questions than answers, but these are triggers to guide our work. We could see and experience how Métis women have been listened to and the importance of their voices in the international scene. This reaffirms our goal of keeping open spaces for learning, discussing, and bringing Métis women’s perspectives and solutions to the environmental crisis.

Future Actions to develop:

- Conduct research about the concrete impact on Métis women and gender-diverse folks due to climate change focused on data and policy gaps.
- Keep engaging with Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ to gather and uphold their perspectives on Just Transition, climate impact, and adaptation.
- Promote and support Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ participation in national and international environmental discussions.
- Continue building international networks of collaborations with Indigenous women.
- Continue national and international advocacy and interdisciplinary work about MMIWG2S+.

The complete report is attached to this document for complete details.

2.4.4 Convention On Biodiversity (CBD)

In July 2023, an agreement called “Supporting Capacity of National Indigenous Organizations to Engage in Conservation”¹ was signed between LFMO and ECCC. This agreement is meant to provide a three-year grant to attend international and national meetings and forums and support engagement sessions with Métis women and the 2SLGBTQQIA community on developing and implementing policies and programs related to conservation, wildlife, and biodiversity. We participated in all the engagement and informative sessions with the goal of participating in the

¹ This agreement ends on March 31st, 2026.

meeting in Geneva in November 2023. Unfortunately, we could not attend the in-person meeting due to personal issues.

During 2024, we will continue growing capacity and participating in meetings to bring Métis women's perspectives concerning the biodiversity crisis and DSI (digital sequence information) benefit-sharing discussion (digital sequence information). The last engagement session in which LFMO participated was on February 1st, 2024, with the goal of discussing the setting of priorities for future meetings of the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD).

2.5 Relationships

In 2023, LFMO developed several positive relationships with the aim of expanding Métis women and 2SLGBTQIA+ voices. One of the most relevant is our continuous communication and collaborative work with the Nòkwewashk division from NRCan (Natural Resources Canada). We are co-developing a strategy to create a common front of the industry, government, and Indigenous organizations in the fight against the MMWG2S+ crisis.

Other networks we are developing include:

- Transportation Canada
- Ramsar Program – ECCC
- Canada Water Agency
- CIRNAC
- Canadian Women's Foundation

3. Initiatives 2024

The following are the projects for 2024.

3.1 Climate Change (Mother of the Land, Waters and Sky)

- Engagement session to be held during the second/third quarter to mobilize climate change strategy for Métis women and discuss COP28 outcomes.
- Research:
 - Better understanding of the impact of climate change on Métis women.
 - Quantitative and Qualitative assessment of climate hazards impact (ongoing).
- Keep building national and international relationships.
- Participation in international forum COP or others.

To support our research work, we will have the temporal incorporation of another person in the team that will allow us to deepen in quantitative research as well as creating our own database and GIS support.

3.2 Biodiversity and DSI

- Research: “What is happening on the land?”: Census of all the activities, initiatives, plans, and programs led by Métis Organizations (ongoing)
- “Awareness Program” to understand and develop the relationship between “Biodiversity” and Métis women. To be developed.
- Engagement with national organizations and Métis/Indigenous women leading biodiversity projects. Participation in international forum BIO COP and/or others (Colombia, October 2024).

3.3 MMIWG2S+ and Extractive Industry

- Work Plan with NRCan-Nokwewashk
- Research: Métis women and extractive industry (internship)
- Relationship development with National Benefits Sharing Framework
- Relationship development with Impact Assessment Agency

3.4 Relationships and Communication

- Keep growing and enhancing LFMO-Environment institutional relationships:
 - Canada Water Agency
 - CIRNAC
 - Private institutions, NGOs (WECAN, ANMIGA, REPALEAC, Alianza Mesoamericana de Pueblos y Bosques, etc.)
- Métis Women Environmental Network.
- Environment Newsletter.
- Increase social media presence.

4. Conclusion

LFMO’s Environment & Climate Change department is a growing and developing structure. We believe that through continued networking and awareness building, we will reach our goals of bringing Métis women's and 2SLGBTQQIA+ perspectives to policies and programs to guarantee a better future for future generations. Our challenge is to connect the resources with the needs, and for that, we need to develop the right policies that consider distinction and gender-based approaches. The pathway to follow is to work in collaboration and mutual respect with federal and provincial governments, Indigenous organizations, and stakeholders.



Ottawa, April 2024