

Nation to Nation Water Inc.

Community | Industry | Environment - Clean Water For All

Nation to Nation W.A.S.H. Project

Water Access, Security and Heritage

Founding and Guiding Document

A national Indigenous-led project to gather, protect, and elevate Indigenous perspectives, experiences, and concerns related to source water, drinking water, wastewater treatment, groundwater, and commercial and industrial impacts on water security.

Water Access

Reliable safe drinking water and wastewater systems.

Water Security

Protection of source water, groundwater, quantity, quality, and watersheds.

Water Heritage

Cultural, spiritual, historical, and intergenerational relationships with water.

Prepared as a founding reference for research, funding, partnership, and engagement purposes.

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1. Founding Statement

The Nation to Nation W.A.S.H. Project - Water Access, Security and Heritage - is an Indigenous-led national research, engagement, and policy development initiative created by Nation to Nation Water Inc. to gather, protect, and elevate Indigenous perspectives, experiences, and concerns related to water.

The project is founded on the understanding that water security is not only a matter of infrastructure. It is also a matter of health, culture, rights, environmental responsibility, community continuity, and responsibility to future generations.

The Nation to Nation W.A.S.H. Project will bring together Indigenous knowledge, lived community experience, technical water-sector understanding, environmental concern, and policy analysis to develop practical calls to action and recommendations related to:

- Source water protection.
- Drinking water access and reliability.
- Wastewater treatment.
- Groundwater protection.
- Water security in Indigenous communities.
- Environmental impacts caused by industrial and commercial activity.
- Community-led solutions.
- Government responsibility.
- Industry accountability.
- Long-term Indigenous water sovereignty.

This document establishes the founding purpose, scope, structure, guiding principles, methodology, and intended outcomes of the Nation to Nation W.A.S.H. Project.

2. Project Name

Nation to Nation W.A.S.H. Project

Water Access, Security, and Heritage

The acronym W.A.S.H. reflects the project's core areas of concern:

- Water Access - ensuring Indigenous communities have reliable access to safe drinking water and appropriate wastewater treatment.
- Water Security - protecting water quality, water quantity, groundwater, source water, watersheds, and long-term community resilience.
- Water Heritage - recognizing the cultural, spiritual, historical, and intergenerational relationship Indigenous Peoples have with water.

The project name also reflects the role of water in cleansing, renewal, responsibility, and balance.

3. Project Purpose

The purpose of the Nation to Nation W.A.S.H. Project is to create a national Indigenous-led process for gathering information, identifying concerns, developing calls to action, and preparing recommendations related to water access, water security, and water heritage.

The project will gather information from Indigenous communities and stakeholders regarding current and emerging water-related challenges, including:

- Current drinking water conditions.
- Potable water treatment capacity.

- Reliability of water treatment facilities.
- Wastewater treatment capacity and reliability.
- Factors affecting the operation and maintenance of water and wastewater systems.
- Budget pressures and infrastructure gaps.
- Promised actions, delayed projects, and unfulfilled commitments.
- Environmental changes affecting water systems.
- Groundwater and source water impacts.
- Upstream contaminants and pathways of contamination.
- Industrial and commercial impacts on water quality, water quantity, and water security.
- Community concerns related to long-term water access and environmental protection.

The project will use surveys, roundtable discussions, national refinement sessions, and Indigenous-guided analysis to produce recommendations for Indigenous representative organizations, the Government of Canada, Indigenous Services Canada, and industry.

The project is designed to move beyond discussion alone. Its purpose is to support action, accountability, funding reform, better implementation, improved environmental outcomes, and practical pathways toward Clean Water For All.

4. Guiding Vision

The guiding vision of the Nation to Nation W.A.S.H. Project is that every Indigenous community should have access to safe, reliable, culturally respectful, and environmentally responsible water systems.

The project is rooted in the belief that water is life, and that water must be protected not only for present use, but for the generations yet to come.

The project recognizes that water security includes:

- The protection of source water.
- The reliability of drinking water treatment.
- The safe and effective treatment of wastewater.
- The protection of groundwater.
- The health of watersheds.
- The accountability of upstream and industrial users.
- The ability of Indigenous communities to participate meaningfully in decisions that affect their lands, waters, health, economies, and futures.

The project will be guided by traditional North American Indigenous beliefs related to:

- Balance between people, water, land, technology, economy, and development.
- Cleansing as both a physical and spiritual responsibility.
- Multigenerational stewardship and responsibility to those not yet born.
- Reciprocity between communities, industry, government, and the natural world.
- Respectful relationship with water as a living and life-sustaining force.
- Community-guided decision-making rooted in lived experience, local knowledge, and Indigenous authority.
- Protection of knowledge according to the protocols of the communities and peoples who share it.

The project will not treat Indigenous Peoples or Indigenous perspectives as uniform. First Nations, Inuit, and Metis communities are distinct. Each community has its own laws, histories, protocols, governance structures, lands, waters, languages, and priorities. The W.A.S.H. Project will respect those distinctions.

5. Alignment with Nation to Nation Water Inc.

The Nation to Nation W.A.S.H. Project is aligned with the broader mission and direction of Nation to Nation Water Inc.

Nation to Nation Water Inc. advances the principle:

Community | Industry | Environment - Clean Water For All

The W.A.S.H. Project reflects this direction by focusing on the relationship between:

- Indigenous communities and their water needs.
- Industry and its environmental responsibilities.
- Government and its implementation obligations.
- The environment and its ability to sustain life across generations.

The project supports Nation to Nation Water Inc.'s commitment to:

- Water security.
- Water sovereignty.
- Indigenous-led engagement.
- Practical and implementable solutions.
- Respectful Nation-to-Nation relationships.
- Integration of Indigenous knowledge and technical water expertise.
- Community-specific responses rather than one-size-fits-all solutions.
- Stronger accountability for environmental impacts.
- Long-term protection of source water, drinking water, wastewater systems, and groundwater.

The W.A.S.H. Project is both a research initiative and a foundation for advocacy, partnership, implementation, and policy change.

6. Foundational Principles

The Nation to Nation W.A.S.H. Project will be guided by the following foundational principles.

6.1 Water Is Life

Water is not merely a commodity, utility, or infrastructure asset. Water sustains people, lands, animals, medicines, food systems, ceremonies, economies, and future generations.

6.2 Indigenous Leadership

The project must be Indigenous-led and informed by Indigenous communities, leadership, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, youth, operators, land users, and technical experts.

6.3 Community Experience Matters

The lived experience of communities must be treated as valid knowledge. Community members know how water issues affect daily life, health, culture, confidence, and long-term planning.

6.4 Source Water Protection Is Water Security

Safe drinking water cannot be separated from source water protection. The quality and quantity of source water, groundwater, and watersheds directly affect the ability of communities to achieve water security.

6.5 Wastewater Is Part of Water Security

Wastewater treatment must be treated as a core part of water security. Poorly functioning wastewater systems can affect health, land, waterways, fish, wildlife, and downstream communities.

6.6 Industrial Impacts Require Accountability

Commercial and industrial activity can affect water quality, water quantity, groundwater, and source water. Industry must be part of the solution and must be accountable for preventing, reducing, monitoring, and remedying negative impacts.

6.7 Balance Between Community, Industry, and Environment

Solutions must recognize the need for economic activity while ensuring that Indigenous communities, water systems, lands, and future generations are not sacrificed for development.

6.8 Multigenerational Stewardship

The project will be guided by responsibility to future generations. Decisions about water must consider long-term impacts, not only immediate costs or short-term project cycles.

6.9 Respect for Distinct Indigenous Peoples

First Nations, Inuit, and Metis communities have distinct rights, governance structures, histories, and relationships with water. The project must not collapse these distinctions into a single pan-Indigenous narrative.

6.10 Knowledge Protection

Information shared by communities must be protected. Cultural knowledge, community-specific information, and sensitive environmental concerns must not be extracted, misused, or publicly disclosed without appropriate consent.

7. Core Project Objectives

The Nation to Nation W.A.S.H. Project will pursue the following objectives.

Objective 1: Document Current Water Conditions

Gather information about current drinking water, wastewater, source water, groundwater, and environmental water conditions in Indigenous communities.

Objective 2: Identify Infrastructure and Operational Barriers

Assess the technical, financial, staffing, training, maintenance, and operational barriers affecting water and wastewater systems.

Objective 3: Understand Environmental and Industrial Impacts

Gather information about how industrial, commercial, upstream, municipal, agricultural, extractive, and other non-natural activities may be affecting water quality, water quantity, groundwater, source water, and community water security.

Objective 4: Gather Indigenous-Led Calls to Action

Create space for Indigenous stakeholders to identify concerns, priorities, cultural guidance, and calls to action.

Objective 5: Develop Policy and Funding Recommendations

Prepare recommendations related to infrastructure funding, implementation, operations and maintenance, monitoring, source water protection, wastewater treatment, and long-term water security.

Objective 6: Build Practical Pathways for Industry

Identify ways industry can reduce harm, improve environmental outcomes, strengthen transparency, participate in remediation, and build more respectful relationships with Indigenous communities.

Objective 7: Support Water Sovereignty

Contribute to a national Indigenous-led framework that supports Indigenous authority, knowledge, decision-making, and long-term control over water-related priorities.

Objective 8: Advance Clean Water For All

Support practical outcomes that improve access to safe water, protect impacted water systems, and strengthen relationships between communities, government, and industry.

8. Key Areas of Focus

The project will be organized around six key areas of focus.

8.1 Drinking Water Access and Reliability

This area will examine whether Indigenous communities have reliable access to safe potable water.

Topics will include:

- Current potable water sources.
- Current drinking water treatment methods.
- Water treatment plant age, condition, and capacity.
- Reliability of existing facilities.
- Boil water advisories or recurring water safety concerns.
- Taste, odour, colour, trust, and community confidence in drinking water.
- Operator staffing and retention.
- Operator training and certification.
- Maintenance and repair needs.
- Emergency response capacity.
- Community growth and future demand.
- Funding adequacy.
- Capital replacement needs.
- Promised upgrades or commitments.
- Gaps between commitments and completed implementation.

8.2 Wastewater Treatment and Environmental Health

This area will examine wastewater systems and their relationship to community health, environmental protection, and downstream impacts.

Topics will include:

- Current wastewater treatment systems.
- Wastewater system capacity.
- Reliability of wastewater infrastructure.
- Lagoon, mechanical, decentralized, or alternative systems.
- Overflow, bypass, leakage, or discharge concerns.
- Sludge handling and disposal.
- Maintenance and repair needs.
- Operator staffing and training.
- Budget sufficiency.
- Capital replacement needs.
- Odour, health, land, water, fish, wildlife, and downstream impacts.
- Climate and seasonal impacts on wastewater systems.
- Promised upgrades or funding commitments.

- Barriers to wastewater system implementation.

8.3 Source Water, Groundwater, and Watershed Protection

This area will examine the condition and protection of source water, groundwater, and watersheds.

Topics will include:

- Source water vulnerability.
- Groundwater contamination concerns.
- Changes in water quality.
- Changes in water quantity.
- Changes in water flow.
- Watershed degradation.
- Upstream activities affecting water systems.
- Cumulative environmental impacts.
- Drought, flooding, erosion, wildfire, permafrost, changing snowpack, and other environmental changes.
- Loss of traditional access to water sources.
- Impacts on fishing, harvesting, medicines, food security, cultural practices, and ceremony.
- Monitoring gaps.
- Remediation needs.

8.4 Commercial and Industrial Environmental Impacts

This area will focus on non-natural threats to water systems caused or worsened by commercial and industrial activity.

Topics will include impacts or potential impacts related to:

- Mining.
- Oil and gas.
- Forestry.
- Agriculture.
- Manufacturing.
- Waste disposal.
- Municipal or regional discharge.
- Construction.
- Roads and land disturbance.
- Resource extraction.
- Industrial water withdrawal.
- Upstream development.
- Contaminant release or migration.
- Tailings, runoff, leaching, spills, and discharge.
- Insufficient monitoring.
- Inadequate consultation.
- Inadequate remediation.
- Lack of transparency or reporting.

The project will seek to understand not only the presence of industrial activity, but also how communities experience, monitor, report, and respond to water impacts associated with that activity.

8.5 Water Governance, Rights, and Accountability

This area will examine how water-related decisions are made, who is accountable, and where gaps exist.

Topics will include:

- Indigenous authority over water-related decisions.

- Community participation in water planning.
- Federal, provincial, territorial, municipal, and Indigenous jurisdictional gaps.
- Treaty responsibilities.
- Duty to consult.
- Free, prior, and informed consent considerations.
- Funding approval and implementation processes.
- Monitoring and reporting.
- Enforcement and remediation.
- Industry accountability.
- Government accountability.
- Community access to information.
- Indigenous data governance.
- Protection of sensitive knowledge.

8.6 Cultural, Spiritual, and Heritage Dimensions of Water

This area will ensure the project reflects the cultural, spiritual, and heritage significance of water.

Topics may include:

- Water as a living relation.
- Water as a source of cleansing, balance, and renewal.
- Water teachings, where communities choose to share them.
- Roles of Elders and Knowledge Keepers.
- Roles of women, youth, harvesters, fishers, water carriers, and land users.
- Ceremony and cultural practice.
- Impacts on medicines, food systems, and land-based knowledge.
- Intergenerational responsibility.
- Language and place-based knowledge.
- Community protocols for sharing and protecting knowledge.

The project will not require communities to disclose sacred or protected knowledge. Cultural guidance will be gathered only where it is appropriate and willingly shared.

9. Research Questions

The project will be guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the current drinking water challenges facing Indigenous communities?
2. What are the current wastewater treatment challenges facing Indigenous communities?
3. What operational, financial, technical, staffing, environmental, and jurisdictional barriers affect water and wastewater systems?
4. What gaps exist between promised water-related actions and completed implementation?
5. How are source water, groundwater, watersheds, and traditional water uses being affected by environmental change?
6. How are industrial and commercial activities affecting water quality, water quantity, water access, and water security?
7. What types of industrial or commercial activities are most commonly identified by Indigenous communities as threats to water systems?
8. What contaminant pathways are known, suspected, or feared by communities?
9. What cultural, traditional, and community-specific principles should guide water security solutions?
10. What actions do Indigenous communities identify as necessary for government?
11. What actions do Indigenous communities identify as necessary for industry?
12. What funding, policy, implementation, and accountability changes are needed to support long-term water security?

13. How can industry reduce harm, improve monitoring, strengthen transparency, and build better relationships with communities affected by water impacts?
14. What national recommendations can be advanced while respecting the distinct rights, priorities, and jurisdiction of individual First Nations, Inuit, and Metis communities?

10. Project Methodology

The Nation to Nation W.A.S.H. Project will use a three-phase methodology.

1. Phase One: Survey-Based Information Gathering
2. Phase Two: Indigenous Stakeholder Roundtable Discussions
3. Phase Three: National Refinement Roundtables and Final Recommendations

The methodology will combine:

- Quantitative survey data.
- Qualitative community narratives.
- Roundtable dialogue.
- Thematic analysis.
- Technical water-sector review.
- Environmental concern mapping.
- Indigenous knowledge-informed interpretation.
- Policy and implementation analysis.

The project will prioritize respectful engagement, cultural safety, informed participation, and protection of sensitive information.

11. Phase One: Survey-Based Information Gathering

11.1 Purpose

Phase One will gather broad information from Indigenous communities, organizations, operators, leadership, and stakeholders about current water issues.

The survey process will establish a national picture of concerns related to:

- Drinking water.
- Potable water treatment.
- Wastewater treatment.
- Source water.
- Groundwater.
- Environmental change.
- Industrial and commercial impacts.
- Funding and implementation gaps.
- Promised actions and unmet needs.

11.2 Survey Design

The survey will be designed to gather information in three primary sections:

1. Drinking water and potable water treatment.
2. Wastewater treatment.
3. Environmental, source water, groundwater, and industrial impacts.

The survey will allow for both structured responses and written explanations. This will ensure the project captures measurable data while also making space for community experience and context.

11.3 Survey Section One: Drinking Water and Potable Water Treatment

This section will gather information on:

- Community impacted.
- Respondent role or perspective.
- Current potable water source.
- Current water treatment method.
- Reliability of the current facility.
- Age and condition of infrastructure.
- Treatment capacity.
- Service interruptions.
- Boil water advisories or recurring safety concerns.
- Operator staffing.
- Operator training and retention.
- Maintenance and repair needs.
- Emergency repair requirements.
- Current budgets.
- Budget adequacy.
- Capital replacement needs.
- Promised upgrades.
- Promised funding.
- Timelines for promised actions.
- Gaps between commitments and implementation.
- Community confidence in drinking water.
- Current and future drinking water priorities.

11.4 Survey Section Two: Wastewater Treatment

This section will gather similar information regarding wastewater treatment, including:

- Current wastewater treatment system.
- System age and condition.
- System capacity.
- Reliability of wastewater treatment.
- Overflow, bypass, leakage, or discharge concerns.
- Lagoon or mechanical system issues.
- Sludge management.
- Staffing and operator capacity.
- Training needs.
- Maintenance needs.
- Repair needs.
- Current budgets.
- Budget adequacy.
- Capital replacement needs.
- Environmental impacts.
- Odour, health, land, water, fish, wildlife, and downstream concerns.
- Promised upgrades.
- Promised funding.
- Barriers to implementation.
- Current and future wastewater priorities.

11.5 Survey Section Three: Environmental, Source Water, Groundwater, and Industrial Impacts

This section will gather information related to environmental impacts on water security and access.

Topics will include:

- Source water quality concerns.
- Source water quantity concerns.
- Groundwater concerns.
- Changes to water levels, flows, or seasonal availability.
- Environmental changes affecting water systems.
- Drought, flooding, erosion, wildfire, or climate-related pressures.
- Upstream contaminants.
- How contaminants are introduced into water systems.
- Known or suspected contaminant pathways.
- Industrial or commercial activity near water sources.
- Historical industrial impacts.
- Current industrial impacts.
- Potential future industrial impacts.
- Resource extraction impacts.
- Agricultural impacts.
- Municipal or regional impacts.
- Commercial activity impacts.
- Monitoring gaps.
- Reporting gaps.
- Remediation concerns.
- Effects on fishing, harvesting, medicines, cultural practices, ceremony, food security, and land use.
- Desired actions from government.
- Desired actions from industry.
- Desired actions from Indigenous organizations.
- Desired technical or funding supports.

11.6 Phase One Outputs

Phase One will produce:

- National Indigenous water survey tool.
- Survey dataset.
- Preliminary national summary.
- Regional or thematic issue summaries.
- Drinking water concern summary.
- Wastewater concern summary.
- Source water concern summary.
- Groundwater concern summary.
- Industrial and commercial impact summary.
- Initial identification of priority issues for roundtable discussion.

12. Phase Two: Indigenous Stakeholder Roundtables

12.1 Purpose

Phase Two will move beyond survey data into deeper dialogue with Indigenous stakeholders.

The purpose of these roundtables is to gather detailed information, identify root causes, document community experiences, and generate specific calls to action.

The primary focus of the roundtable discussions will be First Nations, Inuit, and Metis communities that:

- Require water treatment support.
- Have met or unmet drinking water needs.
- Have met or unmet wastewater treatment needs.
- Have concerns related to source water or groundwater.
- Have water systems under threat.
- Have water systems compromised by activities that do not naturally occur.
- Are affected by industrial or commercial activity.
- Are affected by upstream contaminants.
- Require stronger funding, implementation, monitoring, or remediation.

12.2 Participants

Roundtable participants may include:

- First Nations leadership.
- Inuit community representatives.
- Metis community representatives.
- Elders.
- Knowledge Keepers.
- Youth.
- Water treatment operators.
- Wastewater operators.
- Lands and resources staff.
- Environmental monitors.
- Health staff.
- Infrastructure and public works staff.
- Harvesters.
- Fishers.
- Land users.
- Indigenous technical organizations.
- Indigenous rights holders.
- Indigenous community members.
- Indigenous businesses and service providers.
- Water-sector professionals.
- Environmental specialists.

12.3 Roundtable Discussion Themes

Each roundtable will explore:

Current Water Reality

Participants will describe the current drinking water, wastewater, source water, groundwater, and environmental water conditions affecting their community or region.

Root Causes

Participants will identify the technical, financial, environmental, jurisdictional, political, or industrial causes contributing to water insecurity.

Cultural and Community Impacts

Participants will describe how water challenges affect health, culture, ceremony, harvesting, food systems, medicines, land-based practices, trust, dignity, and future generations.

Industrial and Commercial Impacts

Participants will identify industrial, commercial, upstream, or non-natural activities that are affecting or may affect water quality, quantity, access, or security.

Government Responsibility

Participants will identify what the Government of Canada, Indigenous Services Canada, and other federal departments should do differently.

Industry Responsibility

Participants will identify what industry should do to prevent harm, reduce impacts, improve monitoring, increase transparency, remediate damage, and build respectful relationships.

Community-Led Solutions

Participants will identify solutions already being developed, proposed, or requested by communities.

Cultural Guidance

Participants will provide guidance, where appropriate, on how solutions can reflect balance, cleansing, stewardship, reciprocity, and respect for water.

Calls to Action

Participants will generate specific calls to action that can be refined in later phases of the project.

12.4 Phase Two Outputs

Phase Two will produce:

- Roundtable facilitation guide.
- Roundtable summary reports.
- Thematic analysis of priority issues.
- Community-identified calls to action.
- Proposed solution pathways.
- Cultural guidance summary.
- Industry accountability themes.
- Government implementation themes.
- Draft recommendation framework.

13. Phase Three: National Refinement Roundtables

13.1 Purpose

Phase Three will bring together findings from the surveys and stakeholder roundtables into a national refinement process.

This phase will include a series of four national roundtables designed to refine calls to action and proposed solutions before final recommendations are presented to Indigenous representative organizations, government, and industry.

13.2 Objectives of the National Roundtables

The four national roundtables will:

- Review findings from Phase One and Phase Two.
- Refine calls to action.
- Refine proposed solutions.
- Identify national priorities.

- Identify regional considerations.
- Confirm cultural and technical themes.
- Clarify government recommendations.
- Clarify industry recommendations.
- Identify implementation pathways.
- Prepare final recommendations for presentation.

13.3 Engagement with National Indigenous Organizations

Following the national roundtables, the refined findings and recommendations will be prepared for presentation to:

- Assembly of First Nations.
- Metis National Council.
- Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami.

The purpose of this engagement will be to seek review, guidance, refinement, and potential support before the recommendations are advanced to government and industry.

This process is not intended to replace direct engagement with individual Nations, communities, or rights holders. Instead, it will provide a national-level pathway for review and refinement while respecting the distinct authority, rights, and priorities of First Nations, Inuit, and Metis communities.

13.4 Final Recommendation Audiences

Final recommendations will be prepared for four primary audiences.

Government of Canada

General recommendations related to commercial and industrial environmental impacts, federal coordination, source water protection, groundwater protection, water security, accountability, monitoring, and remediation.

Indigenous Services Canada

Specific recommendations related to implementation and funding of water security in Indigenous communities, including drinking water infrastructure, wastewater infrastructure, operations and maintenance, operator training, emergency response, long-term planning, and capital replacement.

Industry

Recommendations for pathways to improve environmental outcomes, lessen negative impacts on communities, increase transparency, support monitoring, improve engagement, prevent harm, and participate in remediation.

Indigenous Representative Organizations

Recommendations for advocacy, policy development, technical support, coordination, and continued Indigenous-led water security work.

13.5 Phase Three Outputs

Phase Three will produce:

- National roundtable reports.
- Refined calls to action.
- Final recommendation report.
- Government briefing package.
- Indigenous organization briefing package.
- Industry pathway document.
- Public-facing summary report.
- Presentation deck for partners and funders.
- Implementation roadmap.

14. Knowledge Protection and Indigenous Data Governance

The Nation to Nation W.A.S.H. Project will require strong protections for information, knowledge, and data.

The project will be guided by Indigenous data sovereignty principles, including community control, consent, appropriate use, and protection of sensitive information.

The project will commit to the following:

- Participants will be clearly informed about the purpose of the project.
- Participants will be informed about how information will be used.
- Sensitive community information will not be publicly disclosed without permission.
- Cultural knowledge will be protected according to local protocols.
- Communities may identify information that should remain confidential.
- Survey and roundtable findings will be reported in ways that avoid harm.
- Specific community examples will not be used publicly without consent.
- Information will be used to support advocacy, funding, implementation, and improved outcomes.
- The project will avoid extractive research practices.
- The project will return value to participants through reporting, recommendations, and continued advocacy.

A formal data governance protocol should be adopted before surveys and roundtables begin.

15. Ethical Research Approach

The Nation to Nation W.A.S.H. Project will be designed as an Indigenous-led applied research and engagement initiative.

The ethical approach will include:

- Free, informed, and voluntary participation.
- Clear explanation of project purpose.
- Respect for community protocols.
- Cultural safety.
- Protection of confidential information.
- Avoidance of harm.
- Respect for Indigenous knowledge systems.
- Recognition of local authority and lived experience.
- Plain-language communication.
- Participant review where appropriate.
- Accountability back to participating communities.
- Respect for First Nations, Inuit, and Metis distinctions.
- Avoidance of pan-Indigenous generalization.

Where required by funders, academic partners, or institutional collaborators, the project may also seek formal research ethics review.

16. Project Governance

The project should include a governance model that reflects Indigenous leadership, cultural accountability, technical credibility, and transparent project management.

16.1 Project Leadership Team

The Project Leadership Team will be responsible for:

- Project management.

- Funding administration.
- Partner coordination.
- Research design.
- Survey development.
- Roundtable planning.
- Communications.
- Reporting.
- Final deliverables.
- Presentation of recommendations.

16.2 Indigenous Advisory Circle

The Indigenous Advisory Circle will provide cultural, ethical, and community guidance.

The circle may include:

- Elders.
- Knowledge Keepers.
- Community representatives.
- Youth.
- Water carriers.
- Land users.
- Indigenous technical advisors.
- Regional representatives.

The Advisory Circle will help guide:

- Cultural protocols.
- Engagement practices.
- Knowledge protection.
- Interpretation of findings.
- Ethical considerations.
- Final recommendations.

16.3 Technical Working Group

The Technical Working Group will provide subject-matter expertise.

The group may include:

- Water treatment operators.
- Wastewater operators.
- Engineers.
- Environmental specialists.
- Source water experts.
- Groundwater experts.
- Policy advisors.
- Infrastructure specialists.
- Indigenous technical service providers.

The Technical Working Group will help ensure that recommendations are technically sound, implementable, and connected to real-world water system conditions.

16.4 Community and Stakeholder Participants

Community and stakeholder participants will contribute lived experience, local knowledge, concerns, priorities, and proposed solutions.

Their participation will be central to the legitimacy and usefulness of the project.

16.5 Partner and Funder Table

Partners and funders may support the project through funding, technical assistance, research collaboration, outreach, or implementation support.

However, partners and funders must not control Indigenous knowledge, community findings, or final recommendations.

17. Partnership Model

The Nation to Nation W.A.S.H. Project is suitable for partnership with:

- Indigenous governments.
- First Nations.
- Inuit communities and regional organizations.
- Metis governments and organizations.
- Tribal councils.
- Indigenous technical service organizations.
- Indigenous water organizations.
- Academic institutions.
- Water operator associations.
- Environmental organizations.
- Industry partners.
- Engineering firms.
- Water technology firms.
- Federal departments.
- Provincial and territorial departments.
- Philanthropic foundations.
- Research funders.
- Infrastructure funders.

Partnerships should be based on:

- Mutual benefit.
- Transparency.
- Cultural safety.
- Respectful engagement.
- Shared responsibility.
- Practical implementation.
- Protection of Indigenous knowledge.
- Respect for community authority.
- Commitment to improved water outcomes.

Potential partner roles may include:

- Funding support.
- Technical advice.
- Survey distribution.
- Roundtable hosting.
- Research support.
- Data analysis.
- Community engagement.
- Environmental expertise.
- Policy review.

- Industry participation.
- Implementation planning.
- Communications support.
- Knowledge sharing.

18. Intended Deliverables

The project may produce the following deliverables:

1. Founding and guiding project document.
2. National Indigenous water survey tool.
3. Drinking water issue summary.
4. Wastewater issue summary.
5. Source water and groundwater concern summary.
6. Industrial and commercial impact summary.
7. Regional or thematic water security summaries.
8. Roundtable facilitation guide.
9. Roundtable summary reports.
10. Cultural guidance summary.
11. Calls to action document.
12. Draft recommendation framework.
13. Final national recommendation report.
14. Government briefing note.
15. Indigenous organization briefing package.
16. Industry pathways report.
17. Public-facing summary report.
18. Presentation deck for funders and partners.
19. Implementation roadmap.
20. Communications materials.
21. Future partnership and funding strategy.

19. Anticipated Outcomes

The Nation to Nation W.A.S.H. Project is intended to produce meaningful outcomes for communities, government, industry, and national water policy.

19.1 Community Outcomes

The project will support:

- Stronger documentation of Indigenous water concerns.
- Increased visibility of drinking water needs.
- Increased visibility of wastewater needs.
- Greater understanding of source water and groundwater concerns.
- Better recognition of cultural and environmental impacts.
- Community-informed calls to action.
- Stronger advocacy tools.
- Better connection between lived experience and policy recommendations.

19.2 Government Outcomes

The project will support:

- Clearer recommendations for funding and implementation.
- Improved understanding of infrastructure and operational gaps.
- Better information on industrial and environmental impacts.
- Stronger basis for policy reform.
- Practical direction for Indigenous Services Canada.
- Practical direction for federal departments responsible for environmental protection, infrastructure, health, and economic development.
- Improved accountability for promised actions.

19.3 Industry Outcomes

The project will support:

- Clearer understanding of Indigenous water concerns.
- Practical pathways to reduce harm.
- Improved environmental accountability.
- Better monitoring and reporting.
- Improved engagement practices.
- Opportunities for remediation and partnership.
- Stronger alignment between economic activity and water stewardship.

19.4 National Outcomes

The project will support:

- A national Indigenous-led water security framework.
- Stronger connection between infrastructure, source water protection, and environmental responsibility.
- Better alignment between communities, industry, and government.
- Increased understanding of groundwater and source water concerns.
- Improved dialogue on industrial impacts.
- Advancement of Clean Water For All.

20. Work Plan and Timeline

The project may be structured over an estimated 18 to 24 months, depending on funding, partner participation, and community engagement requirements.

Stage 1: Project Design and Mobilization

Activities may include:

- Confirm project governance.
- Establish Indigenous Advisory Circle.
- Establish Technical Working Group.
- Develop survey tools.
- Develop data governance protocol.
- Confirm partners.
- Prepare communications materials.
- Identify roundtable regions and participants.
- Prepare ethics or consent materials, where required.

Stage 2: Phase One Survey Launch

Activities may include:

- Launch national survey.
- Conduct outreach.
- Support participant access.
- Collect survey responses.
- Review and clean data.
- Prepare preliminary analysis.
- Identify priority themes.

Stage 3: Phase Two Stakeholder Roundtables

Activities may include:

- Host regional or thematic roundtables.
- Gather detailed stories, concerns, and recommendations.
- Identify priority calls to action.
- Summarize findings.
- Validate themes where appropriate.
- Identify community-led solution pathways.

Stage 4: Analysis and Draft Recommendations

Activities may include:

- Analyze survey and roundtable findings.
- Develop draft calls to action.
- Prepare draft recommendation framework.
- Identify government pathways.
- Identify industry pathways.
- Identify community and Indigenous organization pathways.

Stage 5: Phase Three National Roundtables

Activities may include:

- Host four national roundtables.
- Review findings.
- Refine calls to action.
- Refine proposed solutions.
- Confirm national themes.
- Prepare final recommendation structure.

Stage 6: National Indigenous Organization Review

Activities may include:

- Present findings to Assembly of First Nations.
- Present findings to Metis National Council.
- Present findings to Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami.
- Seek feedback, refinement, and guidance.
- Incorporate recommended changes where appropriate.

Stage 7: Final Reporting and Presentation

Activities may include:

- Complete final report.
- Prepare government briefing materials.
- Prepare industry pathway report.
- Prepare Indigenous organization briefing package.
- Prepare public summary.
- Prepare presentation materials.
- Present recommendations to federal government, Indigenous Services Canada, industry, and partners.

21. Budget Categories for Funding Applications

The project budget may include:

- Project management.
- Research design.
- Survey platform and data management.
- Community outreach.
- Communications materials.
- Honoraria for Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and participants.
- Roundtable facilitation.
- Venue rentals.
- Travel and accommodations.
- Meals and hospitality.
- Translation or interpretation, where required.
- Accessibility supports.
- Technical advisors.
- Environmental and water system expertise.
- Data analysis.
- Report writing.
- Graphic design and publication.
- Legal review.
- Ethics review.
- Data governance support.
- Partner coordination.
- Administrative support.
- Final presentations.
- Knowledge sharing and dissemination.
- Contingency planning.

22. Evaluation Framework

The project will be evaluated using both process and outcome measures.

22.1 Process Measures

Process measures may include:

- Number of survey responses.
- Number of communities or regions represented.
- Number of roundtables held.
- Number of participants engaged.
- Representation of First Nations, Inuit, and Metis perspectives.
- Participation of Elders and Knowledge Keepers.

- Participation of youth.
- Participation of water and wastewater operators.
- Participation of leadership, land users, and technical experts.
- Completion of reports and deliverables.
- Partner participation.
- Participant satisfaction.
- Timeliness of deliverables.

22.2 Outcome Measures

Outcome measures may include:

- Quality and usefulness of calls to action.
- Strength of final recommendations.
- Adoption or use of recommendations by partners.
- Use of findings in funding or policy discussions.
- New partnerships created.
- Improved industry understanding.
- Increased visibility of source water and groundwater concerns.
- Identification of implementation-ready priorities.
- Increased awareness of industrial impacts on Indigenous water security.
- Increased support for Indigenous-led water security work.

23. Risk Management

The project will include risk management planning to protect participants, strengthen participation, and support useful outcomes.

Risk: Low Survey Participation

Mitigation may include working through trusted Indigenous organizations, using clear communications, providing multiple participation methods, and explaining how information will be used.

Risk: Sensitive Information Disclosure

Mitigation may include strong data governance rules, informed consent, anonymized reporting, community review, and clear confidentiality options.

Risk: Pan-Indigenous Generalization

Mitigation may include respecting distinctions among First Nations, Inuit, and Metis communities and avoiding universal claims.

Risk: Industry Resistance

Mitigation may include framing industry recommendations as practical pathways to improve outcomes, reduce harm, improve transparency, and build better long-term relationships.

Risk: Government Inaction

Mitigation may include producing clear, actionable, evidence-informed recommendations with implementation pathways and funding implications.

Risk: Research Fatigue

Mitigation may include purposeful engagement, participant compensation where appropriate, plain-language communications, and reporting back to participants.

Risk: Lack of Implementation

Mitigation may include building implementation planning into the project from the beginning and identifying responsible parties, timelines, and funding pathways.

24. Communications Approach

The communications approach for the Nation to Nation W.A.S.H. Project should be clear, respectful, grounded, and action-oriented.

Core messages may include:

- Water is life.
- Clean Water For All.
- Community | Industry | Environment.
- Indigenous-led water security.
- Source water protection matters.
- Wastewater is part of water security.
- Groundwater must be protected.
- Industrial impacts require accountability.
- Communities must guide solutions.
- Research must lead to action.
- Water security is a shared responsibility.
- Future generations are part of every water decision.

Communications materials may include:

- Project overview.
- Survey invitation.
- Community information sheet.
- Partner proposal.
- Funder proposal.
- Roundtable invitation.
- Social media graphics.
- Presentation deck.
- Final public report.
- Briefing notes.
- Partner updates.
- Media backgrounder.

25. Intended Use of This Document

This founding and guiding document is intended to serve as the primary reference document for the Nation to Nation W.A.S.H. Project.

It may be used to:

- Explain the full scope and intention of the project.
- Support funding applications.
- Support partnership proposals.

- Guide research design.
- Guide survey development.
- Guide roundtable planning.
- Support engagement with Indigenous communities.
- Support engagement with Indigenous representative organizations.
- Support engagement with government.
- Support engagement with industry.
- Establish project values and principles.
- Communicate project purpose to stakeholders.
- Maintain alignment across project phases.

This document may be adapted into shorter materials, including executive summaries, briefing notes, slide decks, funding narratives, partner letters, and public-facing communications.

26. Closing Declaration

The Nation to Nation W.A.S.H. Project is founded on the understanding that water security is inseparable from community well-being, environmental protection, cultural continuity, and responsibility to future generations.

The project recognizes that Indigenous communities continue to face water-related challenges that are technical, financial, environmental, political, historical, and cultural. It also recognizes that communities hold knowledge, experience, and solutions that must guide the path forward.

Through surveys, Indigenous stakeholder roundtables, national refinement sessions, and culturally grounded analysis, the Nation to Nation W.A.S.H. Project will gather the information needed to develop clear calls to action and practical recommendations for government, Indigenous organizations, and industry.

The project will seek to strengthen accountability, improve implementation, protect source water and groundwater, support reliable drinking water and wastewater systems, and create pathways for industry to reduce harm and improve environmental outcomes.

The Nation to Nation W.A.S.H. Project is a commitment to balance, cleansing, stewardship, relationship, and action.

It is a commitment to communities.

It is a commitment to future generations.

It is a commitment to water.

Community | Industry | Environment - Clean Water For All