



FNTC Public Input Policy

PART I. INTRODUCTION

The First Nations Tax Commission (FNTC) is a shared governance organization with the responsibility of regulating First Nation fiscal powers pursuant to the *First Nations Fiscal and Statistical Management Act*. Under a Memorandum of Understanding with the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, the FNTC provides advice to the Minister on the approval of bylaws submitted by First Nations pursuant to section 83 of the *Indian Act*.

In the regulation of First Nation fiscal powers, the FNTC makes decisions that may affect the interests of various stakeholders such as First Nations, their members, their taxpayers, investors, neighbouring jurisdictions, other governments, assessment agencies, and other First Nation institutions.

Public input processes invite greater stakeholder involvement in the development and improvement of FNTC policies, procedures, standards, and services. This involvement provides three important benefits. First, it advances procedural fairness by ensuring that affected interests have an opportunity to be heard. Second, it allows stakeholders to provide their perspectives on how policies may affect their interests, and how they can be improved. Third, it strengthens confidence in the regulatory framework.

PART II. APPLICATION

The Public Input Policy establishes a framework and guiding principles to govern public input processes conducted by the FNTC in the development of FNTC policies, procedures, standards, and services.

PART III. PRINCIPLES

Transparency

The Commission shall ensure that the process for developing policy is clearly explained to stakeholders.

Fairness

The Commission affirms that all stakeholders who have an interest in an issue, or who are affected by an outcome, should have an opportunity to influence policies.

Accountability

The Commission shall ensure that policy, including its rationale, is communicated widely and promptly.

Accessibility

The Commission shall make reasonable efforts to ensure that all stakeholders, regardless of geographic, financial, or linguistic barriers, have access to any public input process that may affect them. Such access shall be provided through various methods including, but not limited to, the Commission's website.

Public materials intended for general use will be in plain language, so that the information can be effectively communicated to as many individuals as possible.

Timeliness

The Commission shall ensure that stakeholders receive notice of any public input process in a timely manner, and that stakeholders are given an opportunity to be heard within the timelines prescribed by the Commission.

PART IV. POLICY

1. Roles

Ensuring that public input is incorporated in FNTC policy making is a shared responsibility. Within this context, there are direct roles in supporting and implementing this policy statement and guidelines.

Chief Commissioner

The Chief Commissioner, in consultation with Commissioners, provides leadership by setting policy direction for the Commission, fostering and participating in public participation initiatives, and considering the outcomes of these processes when making decisions. A key responsibility is ensuring that public participation is an integral part of the design, delivery, and evaluation of policies and services. Together with Commissioners, the Chief Commissioner uses the results of public input processes to make decisions on policy directions affecting the First Nation property tax system.

Commission Secretariat

The Commission's Secretariat is responsible for recommending public input processes, as well as for planning, undertaking, and evaluating public input initiatives. This includes strategic communications and the development of appropriate information materials to support public input processes. Further, it is responsible for ensuring collaboration with other institutions where and when directed.

2. Public Comments

The Commission is committed to ensuring that the public can submit comments at any time regarding the FNTC, its role and functions, and its policies, procedures, and standards. Public comments are routinely reviewed and considered. Comments can be directed to the FNTC at:

First Nations Tax Commission
321 – 345 Yellowhead Highway
Kamloops, BC
V2H 1H1

Tel: (250) 828-9857
Fax: (250) 828-9858
Email: mail@fntc.ca

OR

160 George Street
Ottawa, ON
K1N 9M2

Tel: (613) 789-5000
Fax: (613) 789-5008

3. Public Input Plans and Procedures

All proposed public input processes must be supported by a public input plan. Public input plans must be approved by the FNTC before implementation. All plans must include the following elements:

A. Method of public input

The plan must describe the selected method of obtaining public input and the rationale for the method selected. Methods for obtaining public input may include, but are not limited to:

- solicitation of comments,
- workshops,
- focus groups,
- conferences, and
- public meetings.

The choice of which method to employ will depend on many factors, including:

- cost,
- complexity of issue,
- magnitude of issue,
- number and geographic scope of stakeholders affected, and
- time constraints.

B. Range of Stakeholders

The plan must clearly identify the stakeholders from whom input is being sought in the process. This can range from the general public, to a small targeted group (e.g., First Nations with taxpayer representation to council laws).

C. Form of Notice

Each plan will state the form of notice to be used to notify stakeholders of the public input process. This could include one or more of the following forms:

- FNTC website,
- FNTC’s “Clearing the Path” newsletter,
- direct correspondence (mail and/or electronic), and
- newspaper advertising.

D. Content of Notice

The plan must describe the content of the notice, which will provide at a minimum:

- a description of the subject matter of the public input process,
- how stakeholders can provide input,
- where additional information may be obtained,
- contact information, and
- any deadlines associated with providing input.

E. Timelines

The plan must state the proposed period in which public input will be sought.

F. Roles and Responsibilities

The plan must state the persons who will carry out the public input plan and their respective responsibilities.

G. Cost Estimate

If the implementation of the public input process will incur costs in addition to the time of the person responsible and minor costs for office supplies, the plan should include an estimate of these costs.

4. Feedback to Stakeholders

Where possible, all persons who have participated in a public input process will be acknowledged for their participation. In some instances, the FNTPC may provide additional feedback explaining how the input was considered in its policy formulation. The FNTPC shall ensure that the rationale for policy is communicated widely and promptly.

PART V EFFECTIVE DATE

This Policy is established and in effect as of June 10, 2009.

PART VI ENQUIRIES

All enquiries respecting this Policy should be directed to:

First Nations Tax Commission
321 – 345 Yellowhead Highway
Kamloops, BC
V2H 1H1

Telephone: (250) 828-9857
Email: mail@fntc.ca