



**First Nations
in Quebec
and Labrador's
Research Protocol
COMPANION GUIDE**

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Lead writer

Joannie Gray Roussel, Support Agent – Research and Evaluation – First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission (FNQLHSSC)

Review committee

Suzy Basile, Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue (UQAT)
Nancy Gros-Louis McHugh, Research Sector Manager – First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission (FNQLHSSC)

Patricia Montambault, Research Agent – First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission (FNQLHSSC)

Illustrations

Tim Whiskeychan

Translation

Edgar

Proofreading

Edgar

Graphic design

Mireille Gagnon – First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission (FNQLHSSC)

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All requests must be addressed to the FNQLHSSC and sent by mail or email to:

First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission
250 Place Chef-Michel-Laveau, Suite 102, Wendake, Quebec G0A 4V0

info@cssspnql.com

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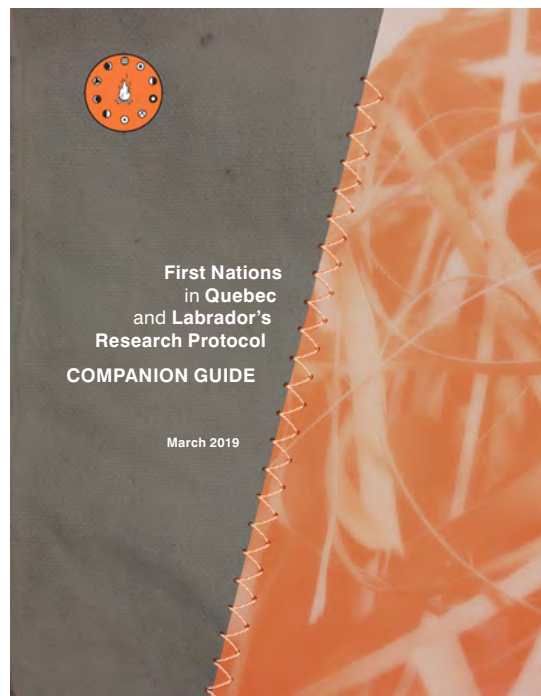
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The cover page features three representative elements of First Nations knowledge. More specifically, three raw materials: the white canvas used by the First Nations to build architectural structures for sleeping, working, praying, playing, giving birth, cooking, etc.; the ash splints used for building useful articles such as baskets, and the stitching. These materials are still used today.

These objects were chosen to illustrate the importance of a dual perspective when conducting research in the context of First Nations, i.e., to consider the knowledge acquired for millennia by the First Nations alongside the knowledge acquired through scientific research methods.

The symbolism of the perfectly straight seam is representative of the meticulous work done by the First Nations to make clothing and other objects; it represents the two worlds of knowledge, that of First Nations and that of scientific research.

These three elements are also included in the summary poster accompanying the research protocol. An unfinished basket sits in the background as an analogy between the methodologies used in research and the expertise of First Nations.



Note:

All of the references between square brackets [P. X] link to the AFNQL's First Nations in Quebec and Labrador's Research Protocol (2014).

ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

This guide is intended for anyone wishing to carry out a research project with the First Nations or on the territory of the First Nations in Quebec. The goal of this guide is to summarize the information contained in the AFNQL's Research Protocol, mainly the steps before, during and after the research project.

The First Nations in Quebec and Labrador's Research Protocol of the Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador (AFNQL) (2014) originates from the statement of principles that was ratified by the AFNQL Assembly of Chiefs in the fall of 2014. This statement of principles was used to identify the objectives of this protocol.

Where to Find the AFNQL Research Protocol

The AFNQL's Research Protocol (2014) can be accessed through the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission (FNQLHSSC) documentation centre's website by clicking [here](#) or visiting www.cssspnql.com/en/fnqlhssc, clicking on "Publications," and then typing "First Nations in Quebec and Labrador's Research Protocol" into the search bar.

What is Research?

Simply put, research is a procedure that attempts to explore a question or problem. Research can involve individuals, groups or data (quantitative or qualitative). The many techniques used to collect adequate data include questionnaires (in person, online or by phone), discussions (discussion groups, talking circles), and available information (data from a software or database).

How to Conduct Research with External Partners

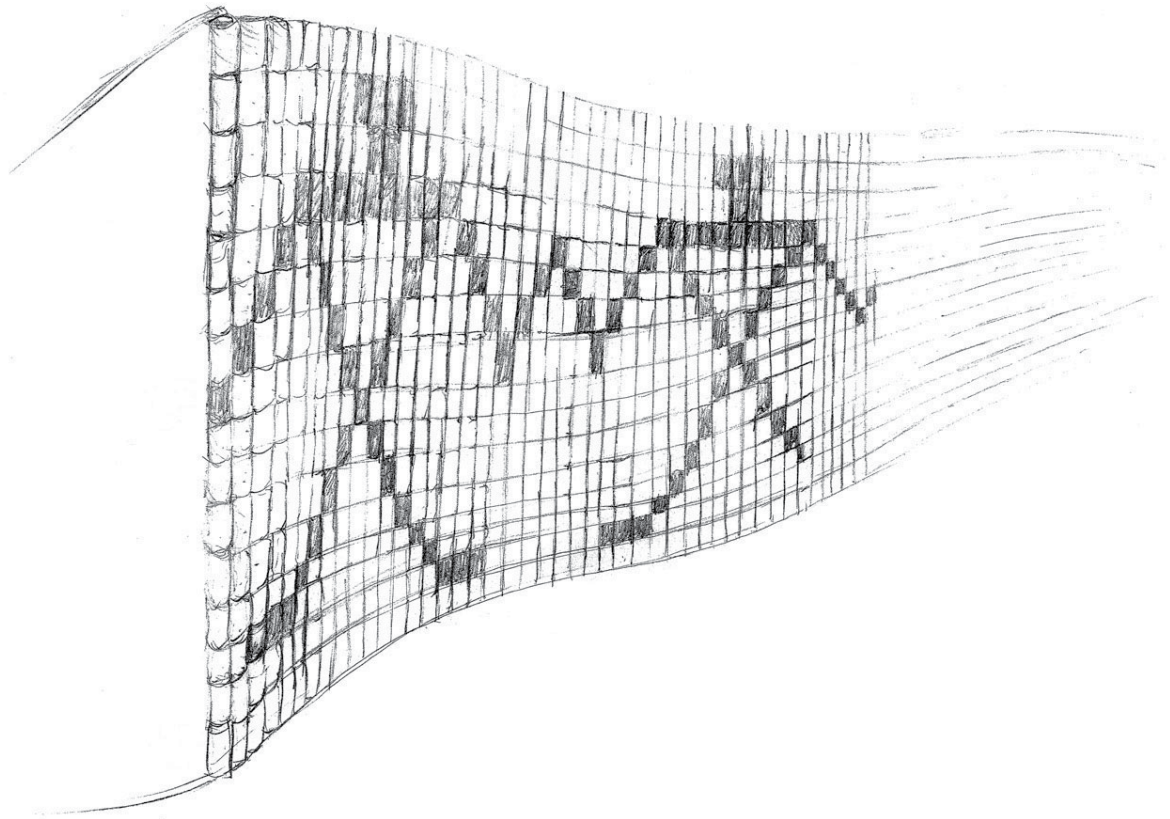
It is possible to develop or co-construct a research project by creating or participating in a research team. The status of First Nation representatives in a research team may be main researcher, co-researcher, partner or collaborator. The First Nation should ideally be involved at all stages of the research if it so desires and has the capacity. It is up to the First Nation to decide how much time and resources they want to invest in the research project.

We Have a Project—Where Do We Start?

You must first define the objectives of your research project according to your needs and priorities. It is important that any research project be accompanied by a research protocol or agreement that will be signed by all parties. (See Appendix 1)

How to Apply the Research Protocol

The AFNQL Research Protocol must be used and understood by all stakeholders in the research project (e.g., First Nations representatives, researchers, assistants, coordinators, participants). As you read the research protocol, you will notice that the text is illustrated with concrete examples in boxes labelled “Did you know that?” and “Notes.” The text is also accompanied by a series of appendices to provide additional information.



INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This protocol is aimed at First Nations who are asked to participate in research or who wish to do their own research. The scientific community must take into account this research protocol and any other protocols from the communities; these protocols should take precedence over those proposed by researchers.

This protocol pursues two objectives:

- To raise awareness among First Nations, First Nations organizations and the scientific community with regard to the importance of ethical research;
- To suggest an ethical framework for research that prioritizes respect for First Nations in the form of:
 - i. Fundamental values which guide the research process with First Nations, like a storyline;
 - ii. Basic research principles among First Nations (culture, vision of the world, good practices, etc.);
 - iii. Unavoidable steps. [P. VI]

The AFNQL's Research Protocol is therefore part of this context of research decolonization. It seeks to respond to the desire of First Nations to reclaim their research projects by proposing principles such as reciprocity and by emphasizing the importance of establishing relationships of trust in these projects. [P. 3]

Fundamental values

Taking into account the history of research conducted in a First Nations context, as well as the First Nations' desire to self-govern and have their distinct identities and cultures recognized, the research protocol sets out three fundamental values to help establish an ethical space: respect, equity and reciprocity. [P. 5]

Action principles dictated by values

The First Nations principles of ownership, control, access and possession (OCAP™) are value statements which pave the way to positive changes in the research and information and knowledge management fields. These principles allow a mutual trust relationship to be established between First Nations, the scientific community, governments and other stakeholders. [P. 7]

Pages 7 to 11 define the OCAP™ principles, i.e., the principles of ownership, control, access and possession. For more information about the OCAP™ principles, you can visit the website of the First Nations Information Governance Centre (FNIGC) or Centre de gouvernance de l'information des Premières Nations (CGIPN) [online](#).

Intellectual property

Intellectual property is the result of an act of creation—an invention, a text, a painting, a design, a song, etc. There are three main types of intellectual property protected by Canadian laws: patents, copyrights and trademarks. [P. 50] Collective intellectual property designates the rights of Indigenous people over their collective knowledge. Collective intellectual property is aimed mainly but not exclusively at traditional knowledge.

Collaborative research

First Nations have a right of examination and decision on all the steps of the proposed research. The right of examination includes the:

- research topic;
- consultation process;
- proposed methods;
- approach (selection of participants and meetings);
- data collection material developed for the research;
- research results and products (interpretation and validation);
- anticipated benefits (presentations, publications, etc.) and research follow-up if applicable. [P. 16]

Consultation

An initial consultation should be held with the First Nation involved with the research topic even before developing it in detail. The consultation determines whether or not the research project meets the First Nation's needs and complies with local protocols, as well as the level of involvement of the First Nations people at every step. [P. 17] Specific consultations must be done with particular groups (Elders, women, youth, trappers, healers, entrepreneurs of all ages) when necessary.

Acknowledgement of First Nations knowledge

It is understood that each nation, if not each First Nations community, is in the best position to explain what traditional knowledge means to them, the way knowledge is transmitted and who can access it. They must be consulted for any information about that knowledge. [P. 19] In addition, it is not recommended to take First Nations knowledge out of its context and then translate it into so-called scientific language in order to include it in more traditional research results. [P. 20]

Sharing benefits

Carrying out research projects brings benefits, which must be recognized from the start for all involved parties (SSHRC, NSERC and CIHR, 2014). The First Nation must be able to measure direct and indirect benefits flowing from its active implication. The research and its results must be beneficial to the entire community. [P. 21]

Sharing benefits also translates into developing or reinforcing local capacities, which can happen on an individual or community basis. For instance, on an individual basis, a First Nation / community can require First Nations students to be hired as research assistants or that First Nation / community individuals be trained as research officers, or become co-researchers. Representatives of the research community can be expected to provide knowledge transfer (related to research) to the First Nation / community. [P. 21]

Accountability

Accountability is more than simple responsibility and has legal implications. When a person or organization is accountable, it means that they can bear the legal responsibility of their actions. In the case of research projects, all participating parties are accountable to other parties, that is, legally responsible. The research team is accountable to the First Nation that it is working with, and the First Nation is accountable to the research team that it agreed to collaborate with. [P. 23]

Sacred heritage and cultural knowledge

The spiritual beliefs and principles of First Nations are diverse and can vary greatly from one nation to another. The same goes for their usage and meaning. [P. 24] It is important to take into account the distinctions and signification of First Nations objects when developing research projects, holding research activities or other events (powwows, ceremonies, rituals, etc.) being held in First Nations communities and territories. [P. 24]



Appropriate use of collected information

Ethical research principles state that prior, free and informed consent also applies to the use of collected information. The information and material collected for research must be used in compliance with the initial research agreement. Consequently, when a researcher plans to use collected information for a secondary use or transfer it to a third party, they must seek the participants' approval. [P. 27]

Steps before, during and after the research

I. First contacts: Initial contact should be in the form of a letter of intent asking for a meeting with local First Nations authorities, in order to discuss the proposed research's objectives. That first letter must be sent to the appropriate First Nations authorities.¹ [P. 29] From the first steps of the consultation with First Nations, it is important to decide who will be the owner of the results; if shared ownership is planned, details must be clearly established before collecting any information. [P. 30]

II. Sources of financing: It is essential for First Nations to be fully aware of who the project designer is and where the funds are coming from. Donor agencies and sponsors and the roles they wish to play, if applicable, must be clearly mentioned in the research agreement. [P. 30]

III. Research agreement: The collaborative research agreement² can be interesting for First Nations, as it is usually written with research partners. The research agreement should be written in a mutually agreed on language, which is understood by all parties involved. [P. 31]

IV. Research ethics board (REB): Research projects that must be evaluated by a research ethics board (REB) before they begin are the ones involving humans (UQAT, 2010). Some First Nations, communities or organizations have already established a procedure for issuing research ethics certificates. This certificate should have precedence over the one issued by the research institution or university to which the researcher belongs. [P. 33]

V. Informed consent/confidentiality/right to refuse: Before they begin, all research projects must receive collective consent from the First Nations or organization rightfully tasked with giving that consent. The consent must be made in a written form, after detailed analysis of the research project, which itself must be submitted in writing to local authorities (letter or agreement protocol). [P. 35]

VI. Collection of information: The collection of information can occur on or off the First Nations territory, depending on the type of information sought. It can focus on material or non-material heritage. It is understood that, even if the collection of information is done based on document sources (e.g., archives), the First Nations concerned should be informed. [P. 36]

1. Respecting local authority means that the first letter should be sent to the band council, instead of any other individual or organization from the community. However, depending on the context and the relationship established between the research team and the community, the letter can be sent to another person in charge. [P. 29]

2. A collaborative research agreement template is shown in Appendix 1.

VII. First Nations methods: There is no single and best research methodology (SSHRC, NSERC and CIHR, 2014); using a variety of First Nations and occidental principles is recommended (Loppie, 2007). [P. 39]

VIII. Data/information analysis and interpretation: The involvement of First Nation partners for data analysis and interpretation will prevent erroneous interpretation and potential misunderstandings. The degree of First Nation involvement at this step must be determined between partners before beginning research activities, in the research agreement. [P. 41]

IX. Validation: Beyond respect and equity matters, this exercise is necessary to guarantee the results' accuracy, especially if statements were translated from one language to another, as certain concepts in First Nations languages may be difficult to translate into French or English (Asselin and Basile, 2012). [P. 42]

X. Research products and results: The products (reports, summaries, articles, etc.) must be clear and accessible for First Nations and in the language of their choice, before making them available to the scientific community, government authorities or general population. [P. 44]

XI. Monitoring methods: Monitoring methods consist in an exchange of information between the parties concerned and a monitoring of activities planned in the research project. In fact, from the request for funding and at the beginning of the research project, the research team should at least plan on going back to the community to present their results. [P. 44]

XII. Translation, language and communication: The research team must often rely on the skills of First Nation / community individuals to act as interpreters or translators during their research activities. A research project should therefore use a language understood by all participants. All publications issued from the research project, subject to privacy requirements, should mention the contribution of all individuals involved. [P. 45]

XII. Diffusion plan: In a collaboration perspective, the First Nation / community partners and the research team should agree on a research results diffusion plan.³ [P. 46]

3. A dissemination plan template is shown in Appendix 7 to the protocol. [P. 99]

CONCLUSION

We hope that this companion guide will be useful to you and will encourage you to consult the long version of the protocol to find the clarifications and solutions needed to ensure that research in First Nations in Quebec and Labrador is conducted smoothly. Research decolonization through the development of tools by First Nations over the past decades has widely contributed to changing the way research is understood and done with them. Today, the First Nations in Quebec and Labrador's Research Protocol provides an ethical process that considers the desires and needs of First Nations. [P. 47] The consultations led for the revision of the protocol show that, from now on, advocacy efforts on the importance of defining and controlling research parameters should be focused on First Nations. [P. 47]

Glossary

Found on pages 48 to 50.

Bibliography

Found on pages 51 to 55.



Appendices

Appendix 1: Research Agreement Template [P. 57]

Appendix 2: Data Sharing Agreement Template [P. 76]

Appendix 3: Template for the Declaration of Confidentiality and the Conduct of Research [P. 86]

Appendix 4: Consent Form Template for Research Participants [P. 89]

Appendix 5: Consent Form Template for Research Participants (Atikamekw Language) [P. 92]

Appendix 6: Consent Form Template for Research Participants (Innu Language) [P. 95]

Appendix 7: Dissemination and Communication Plan Template [P. 99]

Appendix 8: Certificate of Destruction of Personal and Confidential Information [P. 103]

Appendix 9: AFNQL's Resolution [P. 104]

Resources

As First Nations, you have access to several First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission (FNQLHSSC) services, including within the research sector. If you have employees or a team that is interested in research, you may receive training or coaching from our team.

After reading this guide and the protocol, you can receive training on the OCAP™ principles online⁴ through the First Nations Information Governance Centre (FNIGC) website or by clicking [here](#). Training for First Nations communities and organizations is offered by the FNQLHSSC in English and French. A presentation of the research protocol and its application is also available for the general public.

4. The training is offered for \$249, plus tax. For groups of 10 or more, please write to ocap@fnigc.ca or call 1-866-997-6248.

APPENDIX

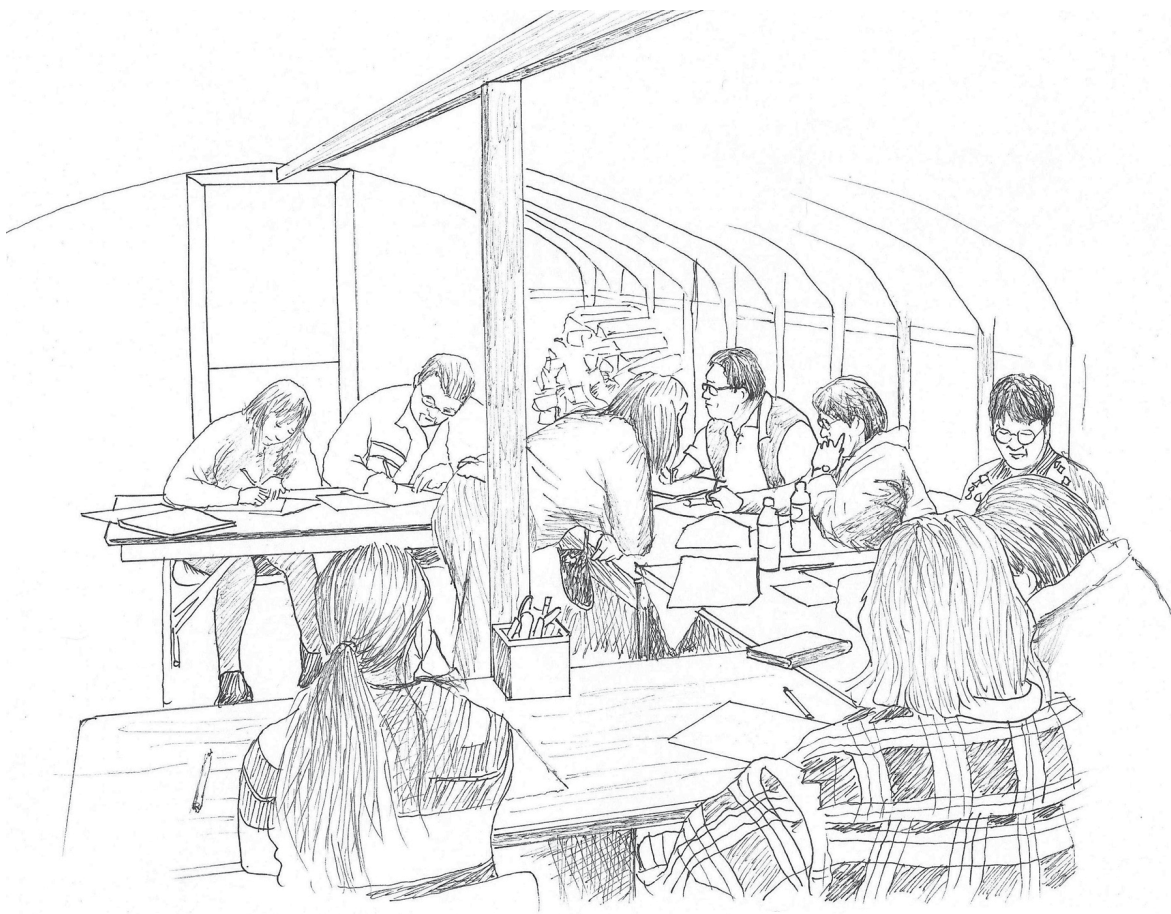
These steps are presented for information only. According to the collaborative approach, the community should choose how much they want to get involved for each step.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE RESEARCHER AND THE COMMUNITY AT EVERY STAGE OF THE RESEARCH

	Responsibilities of the researcher	Responsibilities of the community ⁵
Identification of research topic	Confirm with the community whether the research topic meets a need	Consult with various community stakeholders to ensure that the research topic meets a need
	Learn about community processes and ways of doing things	Share guidelines or local ways of doing things
	Develop and obtain community consent	Community approval
Creation of research agreement and design	Draft the research design and the research agreement	Write the research agreement in collaboration with the researcher
	<i>Depending on the topic of study (e.g., collecting from people), obtain an ethics certificate⁶</i>	Ensure that the researcher has obtained an ethics certificate
Research field	For the entire data collection process, be sure to be accompanied by a local stakeholder	Provide the necessary support to the researcher and ensure that the research agreement is respected
Data analysis	According to the agreement, the researcher individually or collaboratively analyzes the data	Ensure that data is analyzed and interpreted according to local context
	Validate the interpretation of the data with the community	
Writing of publications	According to the agreement, the researcher prepares the products of the research individually or collaboratively	Ensure that the products comply with the research agreement and the deadlines
Sharing and use of knowledge	According to the agreement, the researcher returns the databases to the community	Use research results to meet the community's initial need
	The researcher presents the results of the research to the community	

5. If your community has appointed someone to be responsible for information governance, that person will be responsible for those steps and for following up with the researcher.

6. Some communities have set up a research ethics board.





Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador
250 Place Chef-Michel-Laveau, suite 201
Wendake, Quebec G0A 4V0
Phone number: 418-842-5020
Fax: 418-842-2660

apnql@apnql-afnql.com
www.apnql-afnql.com