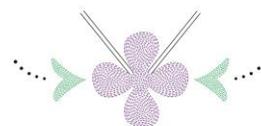


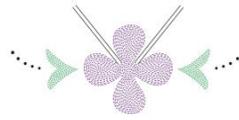
# RESEARCH PLAN

This document lays out the basic framework, vision, key considerations, project criteria and overall strategy guiding the research of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

*National Inquiry  
into Missing and  
Murdered  
Indigenous  
Women and Girls*



*Enquête nationale  
sur les femmes et  
les filles  
autochtones  
disparues et  
assassinées*



# Research Plan

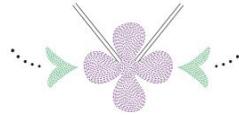
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Prepared by the Research Team<sup>1</sup>

October 2017

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## Research Framework

The research framework that will guide the National Inquiry’s multidisciplinary research projects is rooted in Indigenous concepts, theories, methodologies, ethics, decolonizing protocols and practices, resilience, resistance and cultural resurgence. It also incorporates culturally-relevant feminist intersectional gender-based analysis.<sup>2</sup>

## Research Vision

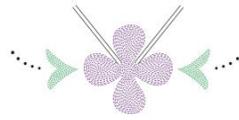
Based on initial discussion with Commissioners about their research vision as seen through a trauma-informed, decolonizing, culturally-specific and gendered approach, the Research Plan maps out two parallel paths of inquiry—a road and a river that meet in a space of reconciliation.<sup>3</sup>

Together these will inform the National Inquiry’s findings and recommendations and help Commissioners make key decisions regarding the overall structure, content, tone and



production of the National Inquiry’s Interim and Final reports.<sup>4</sup>

The **ROAD** as a path of inquiry represents the large body of knowledge that already exists—the facts that will be gathered from previous commission reports, academic studies, and policy papers to identify and fill research gaps on the issues set out in the National Inquiry’s terms of reference.



The **RIVER** as a path of inquiry represents a more fluid, relational and holistic approach—one that will be informed by the National Inquiry’s own process<sup>5</sup> as new knowledge is generated from statements, evidence and information gathered throughout the Truth-Gathering Process.<sup>6</sup>

Under the **terms of reference**, the National Inquiry is mandated to inquire into and report on:

- systemic causes of all forms of violence—including sexual violence—against Indigenous women and girls in Canada, including underlying social, economic, cultural, institutional and historical causes contributing to the ongoing violence and particular vulnerabilities of Indigenous women and girls in Canada;
- institutional policies and practices implemented in response to violence experienced by Indigenous women and girls in Canada, including the identification and examination of practices that have been effective in reducing violence and increasing safety;

and to make recommendations on:

- concrete and effective action that can be taken to remove systemic causes of violence and to increase the safety of Indigenous women and girls in Canada; and
- ways to honour and commemorate the missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Canada.

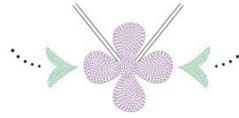
Ideally, the National Inquiry would commission research reports, but given the limited our time frame and the dates for submission of the Interim and Final Reports, our ability to commission these reports will be limited.

All of the data collected from both paths of inquiry will be analyzed through a decolonizing culturally-specific gendered and rights-based approach that

situates Indigenous women, girls and LGBTQ2S people not solely as victims or survivors of violence but as holders of inherent, constitutional, Treaty and human rights that are still being violated.<sup>7</sup>

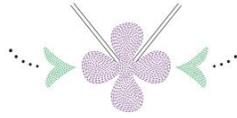
These two paths of inquiry are both reflective and forward-looking. The National Inquiry will build on past knowledge and engage in a process of trauma-informed truth gathering to chart a new pathway of reconciliation toward a better future, where:

- All Canadians learn about and understand the systemic causes and impacts of all forms of violence against Indigenous women and girls in Canada. This includes the underlying



social, economic, cultural, institutional and historical causes that are rooted in gendered injustices of ongoing colonialism and the violation of their inherent, constitutional, Treaty and human rights;

- There are comprehensive and effective remedial and reparative policies, programs and best practices in place to remove systemic causes of violence, provide equitable access to justice through Indigenous legal systems, ensure the safety and well-being of Indigenous women, girls and LGBTQ2S people in their own families and communities, and in urban, rural and remote centres across Canada, and that Indigenous families, particularly vulnerable children and youth, are receiving the supports they require to heal and flourish;
- Missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and LGBTQ2S people are honoured and commemorated by their families, communities and all Canadians through grassroots initiatives and publicly funded arts-based projects that support healing and Indigenous cultural resurgence at community, regional and national levels;
- Indigenous women's significant contributions to society are visible in Canada's national history and public education institutions;
- Indigenous women's authority, leadership and decision-making rights and responsibilities in national and regional jurisdictions and organizations, and in international bodies and settings are recognized, respected, and upheld;
- Indigenous women and girls' rights to gender equity and freedom from violence are recognized as integral to the broader right of Indigenous self-determination, including that Indigenous women's authority, leadership, and decision-making roles, rights and responsibilities in First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities have been fully restored within their own Nation's culturally-specific Indigenous law and governance systems, consistent with international human rights law, instruments, standards and benchmarks on gender equity, including the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and with domestic equality rights guaranteed under Canada's Constitution and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms;



- Justice, healing, and reconciliation is fostered in relationships within Indigenous families, communities, and Nations, and between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canadian society; and
- All Canadians understand and value diverse Indigenous legal systems, each with its own concepts, ceremonies, protocols and practices for resolving conflicts, remedying harms, restoring trust and repairing damaged relationships; and that all Canadians recognize and uphold Indigenous women’s right to gender equity in accessing and applying these laws within their own Nations, and respect the critical contributions that Elders and Knowledge Keepers make to justice, healing and reconciliation in their own families, communities and Nations, and with non-Indigenous peoples in broader Canadian society.

The reports will be produced in both official languages of Canada (French and English). Parts of the reports may be drafted in either of those languages and translated to the other.<sup>8</sup> To the extent possible, the use of Indigenous languages will be employed in the written reports, however timing and cost create limitations.

## Strategic Considerations

### 1. Coordinating the work of the Research and Legal Teams

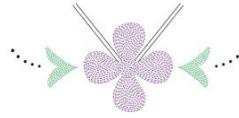
As the Legal Team will be taking the lead role on subpoenaing and analyzing evidence on some of the specific issues identified in this Research Plan, it will be critical for the Research and Legal Teams to work collaboratively to develop a *common case theory*.

This will require a protocol in place to facilitate the timely transmission of evidence to the Research Team, including: evidence entered into the formal record of the National Inquiry, relevant legal briefs, analysis and recommendations related to the information gathered by the legal team.

This data will feed into findings and recommendations of the Interim and Final Reports.

### 2. Coordinating the work of Research and Statement-Gathering Teams

The Research Team will work collaboratively with the statement-gathering team to develop a protocol to ensure that the collective voices, perspectives and wisdom of family members of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls and survivors of violence are reflected in



the Interim and Final Reports. This will require timely access to written transcripts of statements made at public hearings and other events, as well as any private statements gathered by the National Inquiry.

### 3. Coordinating research with the production of the Interim and Final Reports

Decisions regarding the *structure, content* and *tone* of the National Inquiry's reports have strategic implications for research. The reports must reflect the Commissioners' philosophy and vision and fulfill the National Inquiry's mandate.

Developing the key narrative storyline along with a draft table of contents and index early in the process will guide research activities and help prioritize research projects. Decisions regarding the accessibility, narrative style, language and literacy level must also be made. Timelines for meeting report deadlines must be agreed upon.

Terminology is also important. The use of an appropriate lexicon will determine the tone of the narrative and its level of accessibility. Concepts, names and terms in various Indigenous languages should be used throughout the reports.

### 4. Ensuring inclusivity, accountability, and transparency

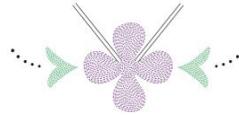
In addition to the published reports, several online interactive web pages and resources have been proposed to foster inclusivity. Identified topics include storytelling for youth, arts-based initiatives, resources for women, communities, families and loved ones, and information on Indigenous laws and governance.

Transparency and accountability can be fostered by communicating what the Research Team is doing and providing online research-related resources on various topics.<sup>9</sup>

### Research Project Criteria

The National Inquiry's research projects will be designed to meet the following criteria:

- They must build on the Government of Canada's pre-Inquiry engagement process, the reports cited in the National Inquiry's terms of reference and other relevant national and international reports and studies to avoid duplicating existing research and to address research gaps;

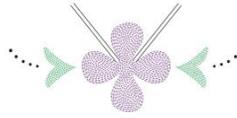


- They must be consistent with Commissioners’ forward-looking vision for the future;
- They must examine issues through a decolonizing, culturally-specific gendered and rights-based approach to analyze systemic and structural laws, policies, practices and attitudes of all forms of colonial violence against Indigenous women and girls, and undertake a comparative analysis to identify approaches and best practices that are decolonizing, not recolonizing;
- They must consider how applying the UNDRIP’s principles, norms, and standards of self-determination through a decolonizing, culturally-specific, gendered, and rights-based approach will reduce, eliminate, and prevent violence against Indigenous women and girls and protect their inherent, constitutional, Treaty and human rights in relation to the specific issue under study—a key theme that will be woven throughout the National Inquiry’s reports;
- They must substantiate the findings and recommendations in the Interim and Final Reports;
- They must be completed and feed into the Interim and Final Reports on a timeline that meets report deadlines.

## Paths of Inquiry

The National Inquiry’s research strategy—called the *Paths of Inquiry*—provides a more detailed map outlining the specific research projects designed to gather and analyze evidence, supporting stories and information from multiple sources. These include:

- a) Indigenous women and girls and their family members who have been victims of all forms of violence;
- b) Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers;
- c) various institutional representatives and subject experts;
- d) practitioners and community members with expertise in best practices; and
- e) national and international reports, studies and multidisciplinary literature.



Together, the completed research projects will create a foundation for making findings and recommendations and producing reports that are consistent with the Commissioners' forward-looking vision.

Because the National Inquiry is national in scope, it faces the challenge of ensuring that its reports reflect the cultural and regional diversity of First Nations, Inuit and Métis voices, perspectives and experiences from across the country. To ease this challenge, the Research Strategy is based on cross-cutting lines of inquiry that will weave together multiple perspectives using broad thematic research clusters and strategic themes throughout.

The Research Strategy will be a useful tool for mapping, coordinating and tracking multiple research projects and activities providing systematic data collection and analysis for the National Inquiry's reports. This will prevent unnecessary duplication and make the most efficient use of the Research Team's human, financial and operational resources.

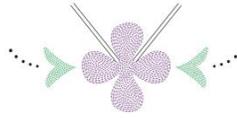
### Cross-cutting lines of inquiry

Several cross-cutting lines of inquiry will be woven into thematic research clusters:

- First Nations, Inuit and Métis Perspectives
- LGBTQ2S Perspectives
- Historical Perspectives
- Gender Perspectives
- Disability Perspectives
- Intergenerational Perspectives: Elders, Children and Youth
- Urban, Rural and Remote Perspectives
- Community, Regional and Québec-specific, National and International Perspectives

### Thematic research clusters and sub-themes

There are currently seven (7) thematic research clusters (discussed below). Within each cluster, there are multiple sub-themes, many of which continue to be refined, but thumbnail sketches



are included below. Note that many of these sub-themes will only be in cursory review (building on existing documentation and past recommendations), given time and resource constraints.

#### Cluster 1: Violence and Indigenous Women, Girls and LGBTQ2S People

##### Sub-Themes:

- a. Beyond “missing and murdered”: Violence has many faces
- b. Colonial roots of gendered violence in kinship relationships and land-based ways of life
- c. Exclusion as violence: Replicating colonialism by marginalizing Indigenous women’s priorities in communities and organizations
- d. Violence against Indigenous women, girls and LGBTQ2S people: The international context

#### Cluster 2: Knowing the Past, Taking Action for the Future

##### Sub-Themes:

- a. Missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and LGBTQ2S people: Existing findings of fact and recommendations
- b. Practices for preventing, reducing, and eliminating the vulnerability of Indigenous women and girls to disappearance and violent death

#### Cluster 3: Advocacy, Action, and Media

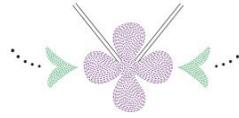
##### Sub-Themes:

- a. Impact of family, community, grassroots and political advocacy for an Inquiry
- b. Family, community and grassroots mobilization
- c. Roles of the media

#### Cluster 4: Institutional Systems of Colonial Violence

##### Sub-Themes:

- a. How institutional systems of colonial violence are replicated in existing social policies, programs and services
- b. How criminal justice systems and law enforcement practices contribute to Indigenous women and girls’ greater vulnerability to violence



### Cluster 5: Resilience, Resistance, Resurgence: Indigenous Women Reclaiming Power and Place

#### Sub-Themes:

- a. Indigenous concepts, theories and practices of well-being: Teachings for Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers
- b. Indigenous law: Pathways of gendered justice, peace and reconciliation
- c. Indigenous ways of life: Restoring Indigenous women and LGBTQ2S people's role in Indigenous political, economic, social and cultural life
- d. Indigenous freedom from colonial violence: Political, economic, social and cultural rights of Indigenous women and girls, including LGBTQ2S people

### Cluster 6: Commemoration, Art, Public History and Education

#### Sub-Themes:

- a. Decolonizing through art, truth-sharing, healing and reconciliation
- b. Indigenous truth-telling, oral history and multi-generational stories
- c. Commemorating and honouring the lives of Indigenous women, girls and LGBTQ2S people who have been lost to violence or who are missing and murdered
- d. Bearing ethical witness to truth-sharing stories of violence: Decolonizing non-Indigenous Canadians
- e. Decolonizing education and pedagogy to re-story national history
- f. The role of archives and museums in remaking public history

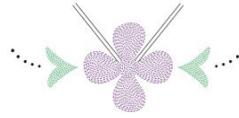
### Cluster 7: Action for Change: Evaluation and Monitoring the National Inquiry Calls to Action<sup>2</sup>

#### Sub-Themes:

- a. Indigenous critiques of Western-based evaluation models
- b. Strategies for monitoring which Calls to Action<sup>2</sup> have been implemented and measuring their success over time.



National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls  
Enquête nationale sur les femmes et les filles autochtones disparues et assassinées



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<sup>1</sup> Sources consulted include: Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, Final Report of the MMIWG National Inquiry Pre-Inquiry Engagement Process, May 2016; Report of the Ipperwash Inquiry, Part Two, Vol. 3 Chapter 12: Research and Consultation; Forsaken: Report of the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry, Vol. IV, The Commission's Process; Report of the Manitoba Justice Inquiry, Vol. 1 Chapter 1, "The Inquiry and the Issues,"; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, "Integrated Research Plan"; RCAP, Public Policy and Aboriginal Peoples, 1965-1992, Vol. 1, *Soliloquy and Dialogue: Overview of Major Trends in Public Policy Relating to Aboriginal Peoples*, 1996 (esp. Ch. 3 "Approach to the Research"); Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report, Vol. 1 Ch. 11, Management and Operations Reports, Research Dept., and Vol. 1 Ch. 6 Methodology and Process; *Blueprint from an Inquiry: Learning from the Failures of the [BC] Missing Women Commission of Inquiry*, 2012.

<sup>1</sup> See for example, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London: Zed Books, 1999); Margaret Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009); Leslie Brown and Susan Strega, eds. *Research as Resistance: Critical, Indigenous and Anti-oppressive Approaches* (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 2005); Norman K. Denzin, Yvonna S. Lincoln and Linda Tuhiwai Smith, eds. *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2008); Native Women's Association of Canada, *Culturally Relevant Gender Based Models of Reconciliation*, March 2010; Joyce Green, ed., *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism* (Blackpoint, NS: Fernwood Publishing, 2007).

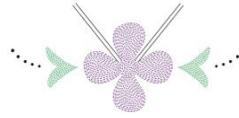
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<sup>3</sup> The TRC's vision of reconciliation evolved over the course of its mandate to be defined broadly as "an ongoing process of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships." From this perspective, reconciliation "is about coming to terms with the events of the past in a manner that overcomes conflict and establishes a respectful and healthy relationship among people moving forward."<sup>[ii]</sup> In the Commission's view,

A critical part of this process involves repairing damaged trust by making apologies, providing individual and collective reparations, and following through with concrete actions that demonstrate real societal change. Establishing respectful relationships also requires the revitalization of Indigenous law and legal traditions. It is important that all Canadians understand how traditional First Nations, Inuit, and Metis approaches to resolving conflict, repairing harm, and restoring relationships can inform the reconciliation process...These traditions and practices are the foundation of Indigenous law; they contain wisdom and practical guidance for moving towards reconciliation across this land.

*Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*, Vol. 6, pp.3, 11 & 12.

<sup>4</sup> The thematic research clusters and strategic themes could potentially form the basis of volumes and chapters in the final report. Within each chapter (e.g., child welfare, health, justice system, law enforcement, etc.) the first part could set out what is known, the second part could identify what is needed to address harms, using



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emblematic case studies of best practices, and the third part could be findings and recommendations. First Nations, Inuit and Métis perspectives and the voices of families could be addressed throughout each chapter (rather than being stand-alone surveys of groups of Indigenous groups/peoples/nations).

<sup>5</sup> Under the terms of reference, in conducting its work, the Inquiry process is:

- 1) to be trauma-informed and respect the persons, families and communities concerned;
- 2) to provide an opportunity for persons, families and community members to express and share their experiences and views, particularly on ways to increase safety and prevent and eliminate violence against Indigenous women and girls in Canada;
- 3) to be culturally appropriate and to acknowledge, respect and honour the diverse cultural, linguistic and spiritual traditions of Indigenous peoples;
- 4) to promote and advance reconciliation and to contribute to public awareness about the causes of and solutions for ending violence experienced by Indigenous women and girls in Canada.

<sup>6</sup> The National Inquiry has chosen to use the phrase “Truth Gathering Process” to describe the Inquiry process, including three phases of hearings: Community Hearings, Expert Panels and Institutional Hearings. The phrase “Truth Gathering Process” speaks to an ongoing process, rather than an event. It allows for the multiple “truths” or perspectives to be brought forward. It is not presumptive about finding the truth or deciding what is the truth.

<sup>7</sup> *Canada’s Residential Schools: Reconciliation, Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*, Vol. 6, 85-87. Other works consulted include, Vlsuki Nesiah, et al., *Truth Commissions and Gender: Principles, Policies and Procedures*, (New York: International Centre for Transitional Justice (ICTJ), July 2006); ICTJ, *Strengthening Indigenous Rights through Truth Commissions: A Practitioners Resource* (New York: ICTJ, 2012).

<sup>8</sup> If we had more time, we would suggest co-drafting certain key portions of the report. However, this often triples or quadruples the required time, and necessitates different types of resources. Therefore given time and resource constraints, we will be relying on translation.

<sup>9</sup> Where technology is an issue in remote locations, special accommodations will have to be considered.