[Right Relations Collaborative](https://rightrelationscollaborative.ca/)

Framework for Assessing Potential Partners
Updated: September 2023

**Purpose**

This evolving Framework enables the Collaborative to vet potential funders and partners through a transparent process based on our collective values and priorities. It streamlines the work of measuring new parties against a baseline ethical framework to protect the reputation and integrity of the Collaborative and its members.

**Acknowledgements**

This Draft Framework draws on examples from:
● Indigenous Climate Action
● Northern Manitoba Food, Community, and Culture Collaborative
● Qqs (Eyes) Projects Society
● ŚW̱,ȻENEṈITEL

We gratefully acknowledge their leadership in modelling pathways for ethical engagement.

**Approach**

The Collaborative’s vision includes the eradication of colonial grantmaking practices and creation of an equitable balance of power in funding relationships with Indigenous leaders setting the table for respectful engagement. This is a vision which requires building trust and buy-in amongst participants and makes a significant ask of funding partners to leave the biases, power dynamics, and inequitable practices of conventional philanthropy at the door.

The basic structure of the Collaborative:

1) Indigenous leaders and advisers create a values-based engagement framework that is led by the needs, expertise, and autonomy of community organizations. This sets the table for collaboration rooted in culturally safe, decolonial, and anti-oppressive approaches.
2) Funders engage as a supported cohort to reflect on their “money story” and how conventional philanthropic practices uphold white supremacy, including structured, facilitated opportunities to learn from the Indigenous cohort in a non-extractive way.
3) Deliverables beyond mutual learning include organic, region-specific models for decolonial philanthropy; a pooled fund for Indigenous organizations to access; support for organizational development; and other coaching and capacity building supports.

Key criteria for respectful engagement include recognition of and compensation for the expertise of Indigenous leaders; boundaries and values set by Indigenous leaders; and a mutual commitment of all parties to engage in deep learning and unlearning to support the development of respectful and sustainable relationships between participating Indigenous organizations and non-Indigenous funders.

**Overview of 3-Step Process**

To ensure that the Collaborative remains culturally safe and able to maintain the necessary depth and trust of relational work and shared learning, potential funders interested in joining the Collaborative will participate in a 3-step process.

1) Funders will have the opportunity to self-assess using the attached Framework approved by the Aunties Council. If their self-assessment demonstrates compatibility with the mandate of the Collaborative, they will proceed to Step 2.

2) The leads for the Collaborative, through independent research or in conversation with the funder, will assess them against an internal checklist and make a recommendation to the Aunties Council on how to proceed.

3) If there is possible or clear alignment, the co-leads will recommend the Funder Partner to the Aunties Council for consideration/approval. If there is no alignment, the Funder will be invited to re-apply when their learning journey brings them into clearer alignment with the Collaborative.

**Baseline Expectations**

We expect the following commitments from our incoming Funder Partners. By completing and submitting the Engagement Framework for consideration, we understand you to be in agreement.

1) Funders make a minimum 3-year (preferably 5-year) commitment to the Collaborative and its pooled fund

2) Funder Partner contributions to the pooled fund do not render our Indigenous Partners ineligible for direct support

*Thank you for your interest in supporting the Right Relations Collaborative. Our cohort of funder allies are taking action to support decolonial philanthropy and unlearn white supremacy; because this kind of deep work requires trust, it is important to ensure new funders who wish to join the Collaborative are aligned with our goals and values. Please be as specific as possible and include concrete examples.*

1. What is the name of your foundation/company?

2. Summarize your “money story.” Where does your accumulated wealth originate? And is that accumulation of wealth predicated on ongoing harm, or historical harm?

3. What is your typical scale of giving? And what proportion of that total giving goes to Indigenous communities/organizations? Please refer to percentages or dollar figures if possible.

4. Do you have current relationships with Indigenous communities or Indigenous organizations? What does this look like in your work? Please refer to The Circle's [I4DM (Definitional Matrix)](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1LoYIY5C-B7RCi-AIvQVWpg8u4McDOtWp/view) and its [Guidelines for Use](https://www.the-circle.ca/uploads/1/2/5/6/125694502/i4dm_definitional_matrix_guidelines_for_use__1_.pdf) in order to understand what we mean by Indigenous organizations.

5. What relationships do you have with the Nations whose territories host your foundation/company’s offices or staff?

6. Summarize how your organization/company understands or supports the concepts of #LandBack and #CashBack.

7. How does your organization/company engage with the TRC [Calls to Action](https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf)?

8. Are you a member of [The Circle](https://www.the-circle.ca/)?

9. How has your foundation/company demonstrated leadership in identifying and addressing marginalizing practices of conventional philanthropy? And what does continued unlearning and vigilance look like for you?

10. How important is *Indigenous success* to your foundation/company? What are some of your potential *non-financial/in-kind* offerings that can support Indigenous success?

11. How did you hear about the Collaborative?

12. Who should we correspond with about this opportunity? Please leave a name and contact information.

Thank you for sharing more about your giving practices and core ethics. A member of the Collaborative will reach out to you and follow up once we’ve had an opportunity to digest your reflections.