



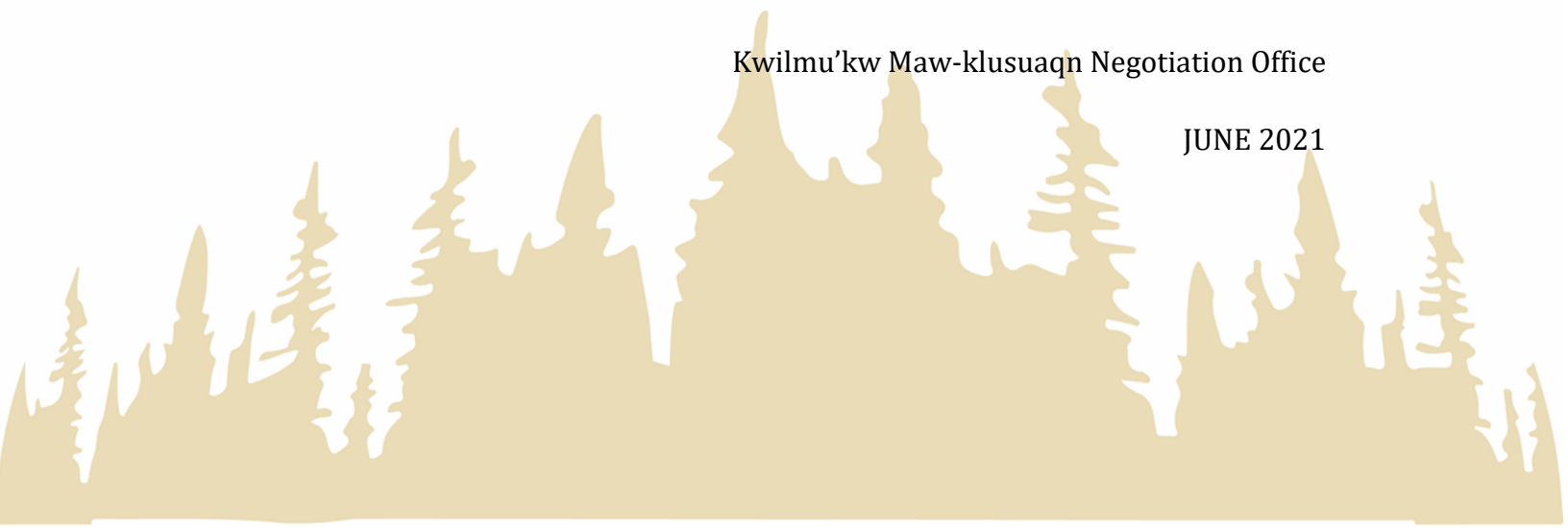
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GUIDE

Authentic Mi'kmaw Cultural Tourism Guidelines for Nova Scotia

(See the *Interim Report* for more information)

Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn Negotiation Office

JUNE 2021





INTRODUCTION

Since time immemorial, the L'nu'k (Mi'kmaq people) have been artists and crafters. Art was a natural reflection of the world around us. It infused our culture through the beauty and structure of our tools and clothing, our stories, our songs, and our dances. Artists in our communities were recognized and revered for the contributions they made to our way of life. They were respected and supported so that they could do what they do best - inspire beauty and create joy while also helping our communities ensure they had the items they needed to survive.

Mi'kmaw Cultural Tourism provides an opportunity for our people to share our culture and language with others. It instills a sense of pride within our communities, especially for our youth – our next generation. Cultural Tourism creates opportunities to educate and share awareness of who we are as L'nu'k, as well as increasing economic benefit for our communities and entrepreneurs. Whether it is sharing our stories over a campfire, while paddling our ocean waters, or while preparing a traditional meal, the essence of who we are as Mi'kmaq is important and of value.

This Community Guide¹ is a draft document based on interviews with over 20 Mi'kmaw Elders, Knowledge Keepers, tourism operators and artisans. It outlines ideas for creating Authenticity Guidelines, following up on the *Cultural Tourism Strategy for the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia (Strategy)*, commissioned by the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Chiefs in 2018, to outline opportunities and necessary steps for growth in the Indigenous tourism sector in Nova Scotia.

With this draft document, we are seeking to engage with community - Mi'kmaw Elders, Knowledge Keepers, community leaders, artists, crafters, performers, tourism operators and interested community members - to obtain feedback and input for the development of the Guidelines for Authentic Mi'kmaw Cultural Tourism for Nova Scotia. We hope to hear discussions about Mi'kmaw songs, dances, traditional stories, history, traditional images (e.g., petroglyphs) and other cultural ceremonies and practices and how you want to see the Mi'kmaw story told.

¹ In addition to this Community Guide, there is a full draft interim report available with more detailed information and research. Please contact Shannon at KMKNO for a copy.



WHY ARE AUTHENTIC MI'KMAW CULTURAL TOURISM GUIDELINES NECESSARY?

Although we know the COVID-19 pandemic has had huge impacts on the tourism industry globally, we also know that tourism will return and we want to be ready to welcome visitors from around the world. Extensive research has shown that visitors to Nova Scotia want authentic cultural experiences. Here, it doesn't get any more authentic than L'nu'k – the first peoples of this land.

Authentic Mi'kmaw Cultural Tourism Guidelines are required to support the growth and evolution of the Mi'kmaw tourism industry, while safely creating and sharing Mi'kmaw culture and heritage as a tourism offering. At its core, Mi'kmaw Cultural Tourism must be Mi'kmaq-led and have a sincere appreciation and celebration of Mi'kmaw culture. Authenticity – what is real and truly Mi'kmaq – comes from the hearts, minds, voices and hands of the Mi'kmaq - past, present, and future.

Authenticity Guidelines will help our communities to clarify the features of an authentic Mi'kmaw tourism experience for Mi'kmaw tourism operators. They help to address pressing questions such as:

- Which cultural practices or ceremonies can be shared with visitors? Under what circumstances? Which practices or ceremonies should not be shared with visitors?
- Can fees be applied to cultural traditions, knowledge, or ceremonies? How?
- Can ceremonies be part of a larger set of experiences purchased as a package?
- Are spiritual songs and stories able to be shared? Under what circumstances?
- Can ceremonies be photographed and/or filmed?
- What can visitors participate in? What can visitors observe?
- How do the Guidelines protect traditional knowledge from exploitation?
- How do we determine who can deliver authentic Mi'kmaw experiences?
- Who determines who, and what is authentic? What process is needed to certify this?
- Who oversees the implementation of (and enforcement of) the Authenticity Guidelines?
- Are there community considerations that impact what can be shared and what is to be kept sacred?
- How are the Authenticity Guidelines communicated to visitors/tour operators and tourism partners?



Ideally, these Guidelines will be a catalyst for the growth of Mi'kmaw Cultural Tourism, including for those already delivering cultural tourism experiences, and those yet to be created and delivered by Mi'kmaw community members. A desirable outcome of the development of these Guidelines is a sense of ownership and control over our culture, a sense of confidence and unity throughout our communities and an increasing number of Mi'kmaq owned and operated cultural tourism businesses offering authentic experiences and products. This will also help tourism associates throughout the province to better understand how to partner with, and support, Mi'kmaw Cultural Tourism.

THE IMPORTANCE OF AUTHENTICITY

“A Nation approach to broadly share authentic Mi'kmaw culture, language and landscape to enable visitors and residents to connect with, understand and more fully appreciate the original peoples of Nova Scotia, while contributing to socio-economic development in support of greater self-reliance through best-in-class Mi'kmaw cultural tourism.”

This vision for Mi'kmaw Cultural Tourism is grounded in the Mi'kmaw values of legitimacy, self-determination, and self-reliance. Collaboration and co-creation are essential for working together to create and grow tourism opportunities with a strong foundation based on Mi'kmaq values - *L'nuimk* - the essence of being Mi'kmaq.

- Pkijo'tmnej – Let's make it last long
- Wlo'tmnej – Let's treat it well
- Maliaptmnej – Let's take care of it



Mi'kmaw authenticity, in a visitor context, supports the presentation and celebration of authentic culture and tradition, by contributing to, presenting, maintaining, and advancing the Mi'kmaq way of life. Implicit in this is ownership and control of Mi'kmaw cultural tourism enterprises. This ensures cultural integrity, while directing both social and economic benefits to the community and its members.



WHAT WE LEARNED

These Guidelines are an initial best attempt to translate complex and powerful discussions into an actionable checklist and guiding resource. The development of the Guidelines will be an ongoing journey. At a high level, there are clear emerging principles that seem to resonate with all Mi'kmaq, while other aspects of authenticity are more complicated and difficult to define. Selected findings from the interviews with Mi'kmaw Elders and Knowledge Keepers are provided below:

- Terms such as honesty, sincerity, positive intentions, and openness were used to describe authenticity. While there was agreement that authenticity comes from Mi'kmaw traditions, ceremony, language, ways of learning and doing, and many intangibles, perspectives are shaped by age, religious affiliation, gender, historical legacy, personal experience, among other factors.
- Everyone agreed that transparency and openness about a story or product's origin and connection to history and tradition is paramount to Mi'kmaw cultural authenticity.
- There was broad agreement that tourism is an important way to celebrate the Mi'kmaw culture.
- A Mi'kmaq delivered tourism experience must connect the visitor to Mi'kmaw culture to be considered authentic.
- It is acceptable to share community ceremonies (e.g., dancing, feasting, pow wows, mawiomis), but it is generally unacceptable to share spiritual, personal and medicine ceremonies (e.g., sweat lodge, naming ceremony) as part of a tourism experience.
- Sharing and monetizing Mi'kmaw ceremonies is a difficult cultural and ethical question, and the answer will likely evolve over time.
- Questions involving ceremonial fees may require input from the Chief and Council, as well as Elders, Knowledge Keepers and other Mi'kmaw experts.
- Authentic experiences, stories, and traditions will vary from Mi'kmaw community to Mi'kmaw community.
- While nearly all participants agreed that it is appropriate for non-Mi'kmaq to collaborate with Mi'kmaw communities and entrepreneurs, Mi'kmaw community members must create, control, and deliver the experience: and
- There was consensus that authenticity (including approval, application, and ongoing refinement of the Guidelines) must be led by Elders, with the support of other Mi'kmaw subject matter experts, and approved at the Community and/or Nation level.



THE ROLE FOR COMMUNITIES TO GUIDE NEXT STEPS

Further dialogue and engagement with Mi'kmaw Elders and Knowledge Keepers, as well as leadership and Mi'kmaw tourism industry participants, is necessary to advance and refine the Authenticity Guidelines – particularly in relation to different approaches and options for collaboration on cultural tourism between Mi'kmaq and non-Mi'kmaq partners. The accompanying Guidelines Checklist (Appendix A) should be viewed as a draft for community review, input and refinement going forward. Judging authenticity is complex and evolving.



Ongoing collaboration with Mi'kmaw Elders and Knowledge Keepers will be integral to ensuring the Guidelines adapt and continue to be relevant.

Points to consider in reviewing the draft Guidelines include:

- What are the strengths of the draft Guidelines?
- What suggestions do you have for improving the draft Guidelines?
- What, if anything, is missing from the draft Guidelines?
- How would community members and businesses be supported to follow the Guidelines?
- What steps, if any, should be taken if community members and businesses do not follow the Guidelines?
- What is the best approach to achieving Community and/or Nation level approval of the Guidelines?
- Would you be available to provide guidance for a community member seeking direction on a cultural tourism experience?
- Is it fair to ask other Mi'kmaw Elders and Knowledge Keepers to provide guidance for a community member seeking direction on a cultural tourism experience?
- What resources are required to support ongoing Elders and Knowledge Keeper involvement in the authenticity process?
- How do we ensure that tourism operators are supported with both cultural guidance and business guidance?
- What is acceptable to offer for a fee to visitors seeking to learn more about the Mi'kmaw culture and history? How would we set the fees? Examples:
 - Guided hike with an Elder along the Bay of Fundy to hear legends or look at medicines
 - Drum making workshop
 - Cooking class using traditional foods and preparation methods
 - Canoeing the shores of the Bra d'Or Lakes to learn about the cultural significance of the lands and waters



- Are the Guidelines helpful in navigating options and approaches for collaboration between Mi'kmaq and non-Mi'kmaq tourism operators to deliver tourism experiences? Why or why not?
- What would you add to a Mi'kmaq Cultural Tourism Authenticity Toolkit? What is undeniably, authentically Mi'kmaq?
- What is sacred and not for sale?
- What would you add to the checklist?





APPENDIX A: AUTHENTIC MI'KMAW CULTURAL TOURISM GUIDELINES

Our ancestors have shared our culture with visitors to our traditional territories since time immemorial, closely guided by their community values of respect, honour and integrity. The only way for our industry to succeed is to continue following those guiding principles when we develop and deliver Mi'kmaq cultural tourism experiences. It not only makes for an authentic experience for our visitors, but also helps to ensure that our future generations have that same opportunity.

Mi'kmaq Cultural tourism authenticity supports the presentation and celebration of authentic culture and tradition by contributing to, presenting, maintaining, and carrying forward traditional and current Mi'kmaq ways of life. An essential element of this is Mi'kmaq ownership and control of cultural tourism enterprises. This ensures cultural integrity, while directing both social and economic benefits to the Community and Community members.

The following Mi'kmaq Cultural Tourism Authenticity Checklist was developed based on the Authentic Mi'kmaq Cultural Tourism Guidelines for Nova Scotia, while reflecting the ITAC Indigenous Tourism Self-Assessment Guide. The development of an Authentic Cultural Tourism Experience Development Guide for the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia will be informed by discussion of the following draft protocols:

Mandatory Protocols

The following are considered “mandatory protocols” to be considered an Authentic Mi'kmaq cultural experience. Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn Negotiation Office (KMKNNO) supports the authority of each community to determine their own cultural protocols and boundaries, while recognizing the diverse values and beliefs of community members.

Is your cultural tourism operation a Mi'kmaq owned and operated business or led by a Mi'kmaq Community or organization?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Is the cultural content of the experience or product developed by Mi'kmaq Community members?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Is the cultural content approved by the appropriate Elder, Knowledge Holder or Chief and Council? (What is the approval process within your community?)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Is the experience Mi'kmaq delivered? (If there are partnerships and collaborations, what is acceptable?)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Does the experience exclude sacred ceremonies? (Has the community determined this? Is there a list or policy or document to refer to?)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>



Does the operation reflect Mi'kmaw cultural values? (How does this connect back to community values? Can you articulate what they are?)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Does the operation reflect Mi'kmaw culture and traditions? (How does this connect back to your community? What is it based on? Elder teachings? Historical knowledge? Family stories?)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>

Recommended Protocols

The following are considered “recommended protocols” to be considered an Authentic Mi'kmaw cultural experience. Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn Negotiation Office (KMKNNO) supports the authority of each community to determine their own cultural protocols and boundaries, while recognizing the diverse values and beliefs of community members.

Experience Delivery:

Have the operator and front-line staff completed requisite authenticity training (e.g., cultural appreciation)?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Is the Mi'kmaw presenter speaking from lived experience?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Is the Mi'kmaw presenter sharing what they have learned from an Elder or Knowledge Keeper?	
Is the experience personalized or shared in an intimate setting?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Is the experience shared in a culturally relevant or appropriate setting?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Does the experience provide a personal connection between the Mi'kmaw operator and the visitor?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Is the Mi'kmaw language appropriately reflected in the experience?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Does the experience enable the visitor to learn about the Mi'kmaw language?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>

Communication:

Does your tourism experience provide opportunities for visitors to interact face-to-face with Mi'kmaw artisans, craftspeople, Elders, storytellers, hosts or entertainers?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Are visitors exposed to local Mi'kmaw language? Is the Mi'kmaw language included on items such as greetings, signage, printed materials, websites, social media, and other means of communication?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Have you protected sensitive cultural activities, artifacts, and sites from visitors?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>



Community Support:

Are the guests provided with an outline of what to expect from their Mi'kmaw experience and what is considered acceptable behaviour while on site and in the community?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Do visitors have access to materials that give information on the host Mi'kmaw culture and community? Consider: Are the materials online? Can bookings be made online? Is there a website to access information? Do you use different social media? Do you have additional physical materials onsite? These materials may include guidebooks, pamphlets, brochures, videos, books or other materials.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Is the local Mi'kmaw community aware of and generally supportive of the tourism initiative? (How do we know? How would we demonstrate this?)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Do you encourage and welcome Mi'kmaw community input and feedback on the cultural experience?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Does the tourism experience impact the community's culture and economy in a positive way?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Are there cultural tourism contacts in the community, and designated Elders and Knowledge Keepers to provide direction and guidance to tourism operators (Mi'kmaw or non-Mi'kmaw individuals or entities)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>

How does the community benefit? (i.e., jobs, suppliers, support other business in the region, etc.)

How do you reduce negative impacts on daily life for the community and environment? (i.e., visitor codes of conduct, clear signage, environmentally friendly practices etc.)



Cultural Integrity:

Have Mi'kmaw visual symbols and design elements been incorporated into the experience? Have they been developed by Mi'kmaw artists / crafts people? Have the Mi'kmaw artists/crafts people been adequately compensated for the use of their art?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Is there a component of the experience that reflects the resilience of the Mi'kmaq?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Have Elders and Knowledge Keepers approved the experience, story, culture that is being shared with visitors?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>

Types of Authentic Experiences:

Authentic experiences can take many forms and incorporate many different media and cultural teachings. They may include artistic expression found in songs, dances, stories, art and crafts, or outdoor activities. They can include animals, plants, medicines, lands and waters. What kind of experience(s) do you offer?

Community Celebration <i>Example: Summer Solstice Mawiomi</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Storytelling <i>Example: Monthly Storytelling Circle featuring a community Elder</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Learning Circles <i>Example: Learning Circle with a focus on Mi'kmaq Centralization Policy</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Cultural Performances <i>Example: Kojua Demonstration</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Outdoor Adventures <i>Example: Culture Camp featuring how to dry fish</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Cultural displays or exhibits <i>Example: Quillbox exhibit</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Traditional Foods <i>Example: Cooking class featuring eel</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Arts/Crafts Workshops <i>Example: Beading workshop</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Interactive discussions between the host and visitors <i>Example: Questions and Answers with a Mi'kmaw fisher</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Cultural Demonstrations <i>Example: How to play Waltes</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
The opportunity to understand and appreciate the contemporary community experience. <i>Example: Tour of the community</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
On site/near site options for cultural-themed accommodation <i>Example: Cottage by the ocean with Mi'kmaw decor</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>



Pricing:

Are ceremonial fees charged and collected in a respectful manner?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Are Elders and Knowledge Keepers adequately compensated for the knowledge and value they bring to the experience?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>

Do you support your community by:

Buying Mi'kmaw?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Hiring Mi'kmaw?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>



APPENDIX B: SPIRIT OF THE MI'KMAQ

The *Spirit of the Mi'kmaq* logo and branding strategy was originally developed to identify minimum criteria to qualify Mi'kmaq businesses to use the brand for their market-ready product or service. The goal was to bring together various Mi'kmaq cultural tourism products and experiences within Nova Scotia and to unite them under one common brand.

The brand would serve as a high standard of expectation for the providers of these products and experiences, and as a guarantee of quality and authenticity for consumers. It would also serve as a promotional tool for broad-based tourism communications and marketing, and as a powerful symbol of our Nation's commitment to helping visitors discover the spirit of the Mi'kmaq and share in our deep connection to our ancestral lands.

We are interested in hearing from cultural tourism businesses, artisans, and community members about their thoughts on a Mi'kmaq logo and branding strategy. This includes ideas for developing a process for defining culturally authentic products and experiences, a certification process, and a co-operative body to regulate this.

