

Metis Settlements Appeals Tribunal

Three Year Business Plan

2008 - 2011

INTRODUCTION

The Metis Settlements Appeal Tribunal (MSAT) was established in 1990 under the *Metis Settlements Act* (the Act). MSAT's role under the Act is to provide practical mediation services and to make fair and binding decisions concerning membership, land and oil and gas disputes. MSAT also resolves other matters—such as conflicts of interest, policy reviews, and appeals of General Council elections—set out in Metis Settlements General Council Policies and local Settlement by-laws.

CORE BUSINESS

MSAT's core business is to:

- Receive appeals and run fair investigations
- Conduct mediations and hearings
- Facilitate agreements between parties and issue decisions
- Educate Settlement members, youth, and other stakeholders about MSAT's role

VISION

MSAT contributes to Metis Culture and identity under the *Alberta-Metis Settlements Accord*¹ by providing timely, fair, and effective dispute resolution services for Settlement members and other stakeholders.

MISSION

To resolve disputes through mediation, adjudication, and public education in order to promote good self-governance, certainty, respect, and responsibility as envisioned in the *Alberta-Metis Settlements Accord*.

¹ *The Accord*: Signed in 1989, the *Alberta-Metis Settlements Accord* ushered in a new era. The Accord called for joint action by Alberta and the Metis Settlements General Council to protect Settlement lands and to build viable and vibrant Metis communities with good local and collective governance systems. The Accord provided tools for developing a full body of Metis Settlement law through General Council Policies, local by-laws, and judicial (MSAT) decisions.

VALUES

MSAT operates in a manner that reflects the following values:

- Honesty
- Doing the right thing
- Making a difference
- Preserving Metis Culture and identity

SIGNIFICANT OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

- Clarifying roles and strengthening relationships while maintaining independence
- Building capacities while streamlining investigation, mediation, and hearing processes
- Connecting to stakeholders through good communications and decision-making

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1. Preserving and enhancing Metis Culture within our quasi-judicial² system by emphasizing:
 - Respect for the Accord and its legal framework
 - Fair, straightforward decisions and efficient processes
 - Mediation process that strengthen families, communities, partnerships and relationships
2. Becoming more accessible to our clients by:
 - Working to finalize MSAT's move to a new location that is easier for members and other stakeholder to get to and use
 - Attending community functions and engaging youth whenever appropriate
 - Increasing awareness of MSAT's mandate and options for dispute resolution

² *Quasi-judicial* means that MSAT's authority to conduct hearings, issue decisions, or offer mediation is limited to the areas set out in provincial legislation, General Council Policies and Settlement by-laws.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES / STRATEGIES

1. *Strengthening confidence and independence*: MSAT will be viewed as fair and effective.

Strategies

- a) MSAT's relationship with the Government of Alberta and General Council will be characterized by respect, honesty, timely reporting, and the shared goal of promoting good governance under the *Alberta-Metis Settlements Accord*.
- b) MSAT's decisions and processes will be seen as fair, straightforward, and credible.
- c) MSAT will continue to communicate its progress to stakeholders through the Metis Settlements Messenger, our website, Settlement tours, and other means.

2. *Enhancing capacity*: MSAT will build and utilize its resources responsibly.

Strategies

- a) MSAT will build a positive, professional, work environment where staff and Board members understand and carry-out shared goals and approaches.
- b) MSAT's policies and procedures for investigations and hearings have been updated and will be reviewed as required to continue promoting efficient, consistent, and effective operations.
- c) MSAT will continue to improve its capacity by strategically utilizing its base budget to meet strategic needs, and providing training to all Board and staff members on decision making and mediation processes.

3. *Maintaining Cultural integrity*: MSAT will consider and respect Settlement history and Metis values in fulfilling its mandate.

Strategies

- a) MSAT's Code of Ethics and Rules of Procedure have been updated. The Code and Rules will be reviewed as necessary to continue promoting Metis values and culture, including our commitment to the principles of impartiality, honesty, and integrity.
- b) Reports and decisions will be written in plain language. Oral Cree translations will be available when required.
- c) MSAT will talk with elders, youth, leaders and stakeholders about its mandate to resolve disputes and enhance progress under the Accord.