

The Portage: Affirmations of Engagement

Here is a checklist summarizing key points from the partnership sections. These objectives clearly express, on one hand, the expectations that Indigenous collaborators can reasonably have, and on the other hand, affirmations of engagement that non-Indigenous collaborators can use throughout the journey.

1. «I» want to connect

Indigenous collaborators can expect...

- My willingness to learn, my humility, and openness.
- My continuous deepening of understanding about First Peoples and the diversity of their cultures.
- My ongoing exploration of the historical and current contexts of First Peoples and their communities.
- My continuous learning about surrounding Indigenous communities and the territory on which I live.

2. Connecting

Indigenous collaborators can expect...

- My ongoing efforts to understand community structures to direct my questions and requests to the right individuals.
- My efforts to seize opportunities for in-person and community meetings.
- My ongoing learning of communication approaches best suited for establishing collaborative relationships.
- My continuous deepening of knowledge about the nation and community to which they belong.
- My efforts to pronounce terms correctly and learn elements of their native language.

3. Getting to Know Each Other Better

Indigenous collaborators can expect...

- My reflective practice on my own cultural framework to understand significant cultural differences.
- My reflective practice on the environment I work in to understand significant differences in structure and organization.
- My efforts to seize opportunities for online or in-person training on Indigenous realities.
- My continuous learning and sensitivity to Indigenous cultural practices in every context (professional, community, etc.).
- My continuous deepening of understanding of the broad definition of a knowledge keeper or expert and the unique work of sharing and valuing their own culture.
- My preparatory work and ongoing efforts to understand how to welcome and support the participation of cultural experts, including considerations for logistics and compensation, in addition to welcoming spirit.
- My awareness of reflexes I may have in the presence of a cultural expert or Indigenous person (e.g., being mindful not to treat them as a delegate of their culture by asking all questions related to Indigenous realities).

4. Let's Work Together

Indigenous collaborators can expect...

- A collaborative approach before starting a project that involves them or a thorough, thoughtful, representative, and well-explained validation process with follow-ups.
- A co-constructed agreement that clearly defines roles and responsibilities.
- A project approach that incorporates Indigenous values and perspectives.
- Adherence to the initial agreement or a collective revisit of the agreement if obstacles arise.
- Flexibility and sensitivity to obstacles related to Indigenous community realities and daily life of Indigenous individuals.
- My ongoing reflective practice on the influence I may have in my work and personal life to make contexts more culturally meaningful.

5. «We» Become True Partners

Indigenous collaborators can expect...

- My continuous learning of inspiring practices.
- My commitment to being an ally in all spheres of my life and throughout my life.
- My commitment to maintaining sincere and authentic connections formed through trust and respect.