



## Guiding Principles for Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society (HSBRIS) and Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound Biosphere Region (AHSBR) Roundtable

HSBRIS recognizes that First Nations Peoples have lived in the territory encompassed by the AHSBR since time immemorial. HSBRIS honours the unique relationship of First Nations Peoples with these lands and waters and the deep-rooted, spiritual connection to nature that has informed their culture and way of life for thousands of years.

The Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society (HSBRIS) operates within the framework of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Man and the Biosphere Programme.

UNESCO Biosphere Reserves are regions in which people and organizations have committed to live and work in harmony with nature and with each other. Biosphere Reserves have a mandate to support research, learning, education and capacity-building in their regions and share two major commitments:

- To collaborate with Indigenous Peoples.
- To learn and demonstrate how to achieve balance between conserving natural ecosystems, biodiversity and cultural diversity, and sustainable economic development.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) sets out the individual and collective rights of Indigenous Peoples and emphasizes the importance of promoting and protecting their rights. UNESCO's engagement with Indigenous Peoples is framed by its mission to promote peace by encouraging intercultural dialogue and by reinforcing the role of sustainable development through education, the sciences, culture, and communication and information.

The AHSBR Roundtable is committed to pursuing its objectives in collaboration with First Nations while striving to understand First Nations cultural practices and co-creating a holistic approach that integrates First Nations societal norms. HSBRIS is committed to creating Ethical Space that has been defined as follows: *"The natural confluence of Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews and cultures. It is created through relationship building and shared governance. At a societal level, it is a vision of a future where these worldviews come together, and where both are valued equally."* (Ermine, W., 2007, "The ethical space of engagement," *Indigenous Law Journal*, 6:193-203).

**All HSBRIS Society and AHSBR partners are dedicated to following Guiding Principles in their work together.**

## Guiding Principles

We commit to working collaboratively and nurturing respectful relationships that:

1. **Inspire connection** with Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound and each other;
2. **Establish respectful processes** that include First Nations perspectives, methods of decision-making, cultural values and historical connections to the land;
3. **Develop trusting relationships** with AHSBR partners and support appropriate collaborative projects with all sectors within the region;
4. **Ensure First Nations perspectives are used in** framing discussions about the AHSBR;
5. **Value traditional knowledge** on an equal footing with other forms of expertise while protecting the confidentiality of culturally sensitive information;
6. **Promote the UNESCO mandate** and the goals of the AHSBR while recognizing and honouring the First Nations unique relationship with AHSBR lands;
7. **Explore and develop ways to enhance HSBRI's role** within the region while being thoughtful and respectful of all interests;
8. **Identify community engagement possibilities** as well as associated research and education that support the mandate of the UNESCO-designated AHSBR;
9. **Collaboratively identify funding sources** to undertake AHSBR-related initiatives, particularly those of interest to First Nations;
10. **Co-Create opportunities to engage, inform and educate** on topics such as Reconciliation, Indigenization and Decolonization, Conservation, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development.

This document is a living, evolving document that will be reviewed annually and updated as needed.