

DATA GOVERNANCE

NOVEMBER 2024



The Data Governance team is supported by the Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq (UNSM) and administers data related surveys and projects with Mi'kmaq First Nations in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland.



HOST ORGANIZATION: UNION OF NOVA SCOTIA MI'KMAQ

The Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq (UNSM) is a tribal council organization serving five of the thirteen Mi'kmaq communities in Nova Scotia: Membertou, Eskasoni, Potlotek, Wagmatcook and We'koma'q. Established in 1969, the UNSM provides a unified political voice for the Mi'kmaq people of Nova Scotia. The Data Governance team is managed under the Capacity Development department of UNSM.

COMMUNITIES WE SERVE

Nova Scotia First Nations:

- Bear River
- Annapolis Valley
- Glooscap
- Sipekne'katik
- Millbrook
- Pictou Landing
- Paqtnkek
- We'koqma'q
- Membetou
- Potlotek
- Eskasoni
- Wagmatcook

Newfoundland First Nations:

- Miawpukek
- Qalipu

The Data Governance team coordinates national level surveys, including the First Nations Regional Health Survey, the First Nations Regional Early Childhood, Education and Employment Survey, the First Nations Labour and Employment Development and the new First Nation Regional Social Survey.

WEBSITE: www.mawkim.com

DATA GOVERNANCE

Mi'kmaq Regional Data Center

The Mi'kmaq First Nations of Nova Scotia have been working towards the establishment of a Regional Data Centre to administer data collection and research based on community principles and priorities. These efforts are supported by FNIGC as well as a network of regional bodies across the country. By establishing a Regional Data Centre, First Nations communities and governments will have timely access to accurate, reliable, and quality data.

Data Sovereignty

Data sovereignty will create the governance capacity First Nations need to engage with other levels of government on an equal footing – in mutually beneficial ways – to help resolve common issues, better and faster. It is essential for these Regional Data Centres to be non-political. It is widely acknowledged that independence is necessary for a statistical agency (or data centre) to have credibility and trust, and to carry out its functions to provide an unhindered flow of reliable, useful, high-quality information to all rights holders, the public and policy makers, as we see fit.

New Developments: Rebranding and Website Revamp

This rebranding effort is part of a broader strategy to increase Mawkim's visibility and independence as we administer data-related projects.

The website will serve as a central hub for our work, offering secure and accessible data tools and resources for the communities and people served by our data center. The IT support and ongoing maintenance will ensure that our operations are scalable and secure, allowing us to adapt to future technological needs.

The Data Governance team held an RFP process in the summer of 2024 and selected RISE Results to support this project.

Upcoming Event: Mawkim Data Sovereignty Forum

Our Data Governance team, in collaboration with academic partners such as Dr. Billie-Jo Hardy (University of Toronto), and Amy Bombay (Carleton University), along with the First Nations Information Governance Centre, is excited to announce the **Mawkim Data Sovereignty Forum**.

Date: February 19th – 20th, 2025

Focus: This 1.5-day event will address Mi'kmaq Data Sovereignty and Research in the Atlantic region, engaging First Nations leadership and professionals from various sectors.

This forum represents an important opportunity for dialogue on how First Nations communities can exert greater control over their data and research. We encourage the participation of community members and leadership to contribute to these crucial discussions.

DATA GOVERNANCE



Robin Thompson (she/her)

Governance Manager | **Email:** rthompson@unsm.org

Robin (Cree Métis from Treaty 1 Territory) manages the Data Governance team within the UNSM Capacity Development department. With 20 years of senior management experience in Indigenous governance, Robin is a strong advocate for First Nation self-determination. In 2015 she was one of the ten participants chosen world-wide for the Indigenous Fellow Programme with the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights in Geneva Switzerland. Robin is a practicing lawyer and a Human Rights Commissioner for Nova Scotia.



Muin Ji'j (Bertram) Bernard Jr. (he/they)

Special Projects Coordinator | **Email:** bbernard@unsm.org

Muin Ji'j [moo-in geeg] (Eskasoni First Nation) coordinates various special data-related projects in the Atlantic Region and is a Saint Mary's University doctoral student in the Executive Doctorate of Business Administration program. In addition, he graduated from the Master of Business Administration and Bachelor of Business Administration program at Cape Breton University, and a Certificate in Leading People and Investing to Build Sustainable Communities from Harvard Business School.



Sean Campbell (he/him)

Data Analyst | **Email:** scampbell@unsm.org

Sean (Sipekne'katik First Nation) is responsible for data cleaning and analysis for on-reserve regional data sets, reports, and publications, including the First Nations Regional Health Survey (FNRHS), the First Nations Regional Labor and Employment Survey (FNLEDS), and the First Nations Regional Social Survey (FNRSS).



Shenayah Gould (she/her)

Projects Coordinator | **Email:** sgould@unsm.org

Shenayah [shen-aye-yuh] (Eskasoni First Nation) supports the preparation, deployment, monitoring, and dissemination of surveys administered by the IGDP team.



Camryn Sock (she/her)

Outreach Coordinator | **Email:** camrynsock@unsm.org

Camryn (Eskasoni First Nation) supports the team. Camryn's extensive experience in community development, both nationally and internationally, has fueled her passion for community and leadership. Camryn is deeply committed to youth advocacy, which strongly influences her work and beliefs.

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Melissa Webb

Policy Analyst | **Email:** mwebb@unsm.org

Melissa is an Inuk from Labrador and a Nunatsiavut Beneficiary member. Melissa holds an undergraduate degree in Psychology from Saint Mary's University in Halifax, as well as a Post-Graduate Certificate in Human Resources Management from the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton and a Post-Graduate Diploma in Quality Management from the Marine Institute in St. John's. She has been practicing in the field of Human Resources for the last 11 years in Construction, Mining, Indigenous Government, Military Operations Support and Aviation operating in various capacities ranging from roles as an HR Specialist, HR Manager to more recently HR Business Partner. She carries with her a deep understanding of the multiple and complex needs faced by Indigenous people and the advocacy work that is required to support those needs. Melissa is currently the Policy Analyst for the Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq and is driven by ensuring the Mi'kmaq people of Nova Scotia continues to have a right to own and govern their collective data and knowledge gifts as a self-determined, self-governing First Nations.



Kayla Doucette

Administrative Assistant | **Email:** kayladoucette@unsm.org

Kayla serves as the Administrative Assistant for the Governance team. She is from Membertou, N.S. She is a former student of both Saint Mary's University and NSCC. In addition to her professional role, she is a proud mother to a one-year-old daughter and the owner of two cats, Izzie and Callie.

During her time in Halifax, Kayla gained experience working as a barista at Starbucks and as an employee at Old Navy. In her free time, she enjoys swimming, visiting the park with her daughter and spending quality time with her family.

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REGIONAL HEALTH SURVEY (RHS) UPDATES



REGIONAL HEALTH SURVEY (RHS) PHASE 4 UPDATE

The Regional Health Survey (RHS) is currently in Phase 4, surveys are collected by fieldworkers who are community members; trained and supported by the Data Governance team.

Community Progress Update (As of November 13, 2024)

Completed or Nearing Completion: Among 20 Fieldworkers

We'koqma'q First Nation: 100% Complete
Eskasoni First Nation: 91%
Miawpukek First Nation: 82%
Wagmatcook First Nation: 80%

Ongoing Data Collection:

Paqtnkek First Nation: 45%
Potlotek First Nation: 50%
Membertou First Nation: 27%
Millbrook First Nation: 12%

Pending Community Engagement:

Sipekne'katik First Nation: Currently awaiting Band Council Resolution (BCR).
Bear River First Nation: Currently awaiting Band Council Resolution (BCR).
Annapolis Valley First Nation: Awaiting applicants for fieldwork.
Wasoqopa'q First Nation: Awaiting applicants for fieldwork.
Glooscap First Nation: Awaiting applicants for fieldwork.

Overall, We'koqma'q has successfully completed its survey efforts, while Eskasoni, Miawpukek and Wagmatcook are nearing completion.

REGIONAL SOCIAL SURVEY 2nd DRAFT

QUESTIONNAIRE: MRAC COMMITTEE REVIEW

The First Nations Regional Social Survey (RSS), led by the First Nations Information Governance Centre (FNIGC), focuses on understanding the well-being of First Nations children and caregivers living on reserve. This survey aims to gather data on social and economic indicators that will help shape programs and policies to support Mi'kmaq families.

On October 2nd and 3rd, our team collaborated with the Mi'kmaq Research Advisory Committee (MRAC) to review the second draft of the RSS questionnaire. This draft represents a crucial step in developing a survey that accurately reflects the needs and priorities of Mi'kmaq families. The feedback gathered during this review, combined with insights from other First Nations across Canada, will guide the creation of the final draft.

Why this project is important:

The RSS will provide valuable data on the social determinants of health for children and caregivers, helping us understand and address the challenges faced by Mi'kmaq families.

The data collected will support the development of programs and services that are tailored to the needs of our region, ensuring a better future for Mi'kmaq communities.

Next Steps:

Our next focus will be on regionalizing the survey to better serve Mi'kmaq families. The final draft will be reviewed by our committee, and the regionalization work will create a finalized version that is tailored specifically to our region. While the timeline for the final survey is still being determined, this work will be a key step in ensuring the data collected meets the needs of our communities.

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ETHICAL SPACE: GOVERNANCE DATA TEAM & THUNDERBIRD FOUNDATION'S EPIGENETICS TRAINING IN PICTOU LANDING

In collaboration with Thunderbird Partnership Foundation, University of Toronto and Carleton University, the Data Governance team completed a successful three-day training session in May 2024 titled, "Indigenous Knowledge and Epigenetics: Creating Ethical Space for Mi'kmaq-Led Genetic, Epigenetic, and Other Biological Research in Nova Scotia".

Next Steps:

Following this training session, community members expressed interest in organizing a cultural activity event within Pictou Landing First Nation. The Data Governance team, in collaboration with the Pictou Landing First Nation Community Advisory Committee and Chief and Council, will assist with planning this event. More details will be provided as the planning progresses.

The final phase of this project involves an in-person dialogue circle. This will be hosted at the Mawkim Data Sovereignty Forum. The goal is to bring together Pictou Landing First Nation community members to discuss health research priorities and establish research guidelines tailored to the community and the broader Mi'kmaq nation.

eral Government to exclude First Nations people living on reserve from three major population surveys.

FNIGC and the Data Governance team work together to administer regional data collection & research processes that embody the principles of OCAP: Ownership, Control, Access and Possession.



Our team is provided with funding and support from the national First Nation Information Governance Centre (FNIGC). FNIGC became an independent, incorporated non-profit entity on April 22, 2010. But their history can be traced back to 1996, when the Assembly of First Nations formed a National Steering Committee to design a new national First Nations health survey in response to a decision from the Fed-