

**Aboriginal Constitutions  
Dehcho Process Negotiations  
May 10-12, 2011, Ottawa**

- The Federal Inherent Right Policy requires that Aboriginal groups negotiating self-government develop and ratify internal constitutions.
- As self-government will be a component of a Dehcho Final Agreement, the Dehcho First Nations will be required to produce a constitution that is ratified by its members prior to the ratification of the Final Agreement.
- The purpose of the constitution is to ensure the Dehcho Government's political and financial accountability to its members.
- The constitution is not subject to federal approval, although it must be consistent with the terms of Final Agreement.

Elements of an Aboriginal Constitution

At a minimum, internal constitutions should set out a clear and transparent process for:

- Membership
- The selection of leaders<sup>1</sup>
- The exercise of law-making authorities (e.g. processes of law-making, procedures for notification and publication of laws)
- The accountability of leaders to their members (political and financial accountability; conflict of interest)
- Rights of appeal and redress
- Amendments to the internal constitutions; and
- Ratification procedures for the constitutions by members of the Aboriginal Group

Here are some examples of Aboriginal Constitutions available to the public:

Tlicho Constitution: [http://www.tlicho.ca/sites/tlicho/files/tlicho\\_constitution.pdf](http://www.tlicho.ca/sites/tlicho/files/tlicho_constitution.pdf)

Tsawwassen Constitution:  
<http://www.tsawwassenfirstnation.com/tfnlaws/laws/CONSTITUTION%20ACT.pdf>

Westbank Constitution:  
[http://www.wfn.ca/pdf/070719wfn\\_constitution\\_revision\\_final.pdf](http://www.wfn.ca/pdf/070719wfn_constitution_revision_final.pdf)

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<sup>1</sup> Note that the selection of leaders will be dependent upon which governance model is adopted