



# *Buffalo Nations Grasslands Alliance*

GRASSLANDS FOR GENERATIONS

## **Checklist: Selecting Ideal Partners**

May 2023

Native-led organizations and Tribal programs often have many people asking to partner on proposals and projects. The intent of this checklist is to offer a guide for colleagues from Native-led organizations and Tribal programs to use when considering which partners to choose and which to let go.

This list was developed by the Buffalo Nations Grasslands Alliance (BNGA), and we thank the advisors from Native nations in the Northern Great Plains who contributed to its development in April 2023.

### **Questions to ask about a potential partner:**

- Do I trust them?
- Do they share our vision, values, and priorities for the proposed work?
- Have they developed a relationship with us before trying to start a project?
- Are they committed to a long-term relationship with our organization, program, or Native nation? (For example, committed beyond a 1 – 2 year project cycle)
- Do they have something I need? (For example, technical expertise, a network they will connect us with)
- Do they have the ability to adapt to changing and unforeseen circumstances, project delays, etc.?
  - Are they patient?
  - Do they have the staff capacity and the right staff available to show up for the promised work?
- Do they communicate openly, transparently, consistently, and clearly?
  - Are they up front with their motivations, plans, contracts, budgets, MOU's, etc.?



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- Do they show respect for Indigenous lifeways?
- Do they understand and respect Tribal laws, rules, regulations, and policies?
- Do they consistently give appropriate funding, credit, and acknowledgment to Native people and Native-led organizations that offer their time, skills, and knowledge to partnerships?
- If they proposed any charges for their work, are those charges fair?
- Are they open to setting realistic goals together?
- Do they avoid tokenism and paternalistic behaviors?
  - Do they respect the intelligence, experience, and expertise of individual Tribal members?
  - Do they recognize that one person cannot speak on behalf of all Tribes or Indigenous people?
  - Do they avoid micromanaging?
  - Do they avoid trying to be the voice of Native interests to the general public, when Native nations have their own voices?
- Do they seek to integrate different types of knowledge (traditional ecological knowledge and other forms of scientific knowledge and ways of knowing)?
- Have we checked with other Native-led organizations to determine whether or not this potential partner has experience with and a good reputation for working in Indian Country?

*We invite your comments and suggestions. Please share your suggestions with Shaun Grassel, BNGA's CEO at: [sgrassel@bngrasslandsalliance.org](mailto:sgrassel@bngrasslandsalliance.org).*