

The National Indigenous Economic Development Board

2020-2023 Strategic Plan



The National Indigenous Economic Development Board

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



On behalf of the National Indigenous Economic Development Board, I am pleased to present the Board's Strategic Plan for 2020-2023.

The Board believes that that Indigenous economic development offers huge potential to improve lives, fuel the Canadian economy, advance reconciliation and better equip a young workforce to gain employment and address gaps resulting from Canada's aging labour population.

The Board's [2019 Indigenous Economic Progress Report](#) showed that, while the economic situation for Indigenous peoples has improved overall, the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians remains large. In fact, Indigenous peoples in Canada are currently not on track to achieving parity with non-Indigenous Canadians any time soon.

Our Board strongly believes that the development of a new national Indigenous economic strategy is what is needed for Indigenous peoples to take their rightful place as full participants in the Canadian economy. Developed in partnership with Indigenous organizations, governments and communities, a coherent vision of economic success will benefit all Canadians.

The priorities of the Board, as set out in our 2020-2023 Strategic Plan, will allow us to provide governments with strategic advice on pivotal policy and program areas as they relate to Indigenous economic development. In order to achieve the Board's vision of economic equality between Indigenous peoples in Canada and other Canadians, concrete and sustainable efforts must be made immediately.

By repatriating and rebuilding Indigenous economies, we can restore self-determination and ensure a positive legacy of healthy and prosperous communities. We can do that by supporting business leaders and business development, increasing equity ownership, strengthening financial and business management capacity, and removing barriers to employment for Indigenous youth and adults.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Clarence Louie', written in a cursive style.

Chief Clarence Louie
Chairperson
National Indigenous Economic Development Board

BOARD MEMBERS



Chief Clarence Louie
Chairperson
Chief, Osoyoos Indian Band



Dawn Madahbee Leach
Vice-Chairperson
General Manager, Waubetek
Business Development
Corporation



Hilda Broomfield Letemplier
President/Chief Financial
Officer,
Pressure Pipe Steel Fabrication
Ltd.



Dr. Marie Delorme
Chief Executive Officer,
The Imagination Group of
Companies



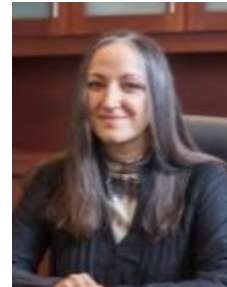
Ruth Williams
Vice Chairperson, First Nations
Market Housing Fund



Chief Terrance Paul
CEO, Membertou Development
Corporation



Maxime Vollant
Owner, Maxime Vollant
Consulting Services



Sandra Sutter
Manager, Aboriginal
Partnerships for PTW Group of
Companies



Victoria LaBillois
President, Wejipeg Excavation

HOW TO ACHIEVE CHANGE

The **National Indigenous Economic Development Board** is a Ministerial appointed board, established in 1990. It is mandated to provide strategic policy advice to the federal government on issues related to Indigenous economic development.

Comprised of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis business and community leaders from across Canada, the Board helps governments to respond to the unique needs and circumstances of Indigenous peoples in Canada. Given the multi-dimensional nature of economic development, the Board provides advice to multiple federal departments and agencies whose mandate and responsibilities aim to promote Indigenous economic and labour market participation.

The Board holds a **vision** of vibrant Indigenous economies, characterized by economic self-sufficiency and socio-economic equality with the rest of Canada.

Our **mission** is to provide advice and guidance to the federal government on issues related to Indigenous economic opportunities that enable the Indigenous peoples of Canada to have a voice in government policy.

The Board believes that Indigenous economic development is critical to the renewal of the nation-to-nation relationship between Canada and Indigenous peoples based on recognition of rights, respect, cooperation and partnership.

Information about the NIEDB can be found online at: <http://www.naedb-cndea.com>

A LOOK BACK

In 2012, the Board set out a ten-year target: **that Indigenous peoples should have economic opportunities and outcomes on par with other Canadians by 2022**. The Board's 2016-2019 Strategic Plan identified broad, long-term priorities to address the gaps that exist between First Nation, Inuit, and Métis and non-Indigenous people in Canada.

The Board's 2016-2019 Strategic Plan focused on five key priorities:

1. Enhancing Indigenous Community Readiness for Economic Opportunities
2. Access to Capital: Building Stable Revenues
3. Building the Economic Potential of Our Lands and Minimizing Environmental Impacts
4. Supporting Indigenous Businesses
5. Promoting the Importance of Indigenous Economic Development

The Board addressed each of the five key priorities through publishing reports, creating partnerships with Indigenous economic organizations and communities, both nationally and internationally, and continuing to provide advice to government on Indigenous economic development. Highlights from 2016-2019 which have helped shape the 2020-2023 Strategic Plan include:

Indigenous Economic Reconciliation Forums and Recommendations Report

The Board's 2016 report entitled [Reconciliation: Growing Canada's Economy by \\$27.7 Billion](#) served as the foundation for the *Expanding the Circle* series. The report concluded that the economic gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, and the marginalization of Indigenous peoples, cost the Canadian economy \$27.7 billion annually. As such, the Board partnered with the Public Policy Forum (PPF), the National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association (NACCA), and the former Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) to hold a three-part series of conferences entitled *Expanding the Circle: What Reconciliation and Inclusive Growth Can Mean for Indigenous Peoples and Canada*. These conferences were chronicled in the Board's 2019, *Expanding the Circle Recommendations Report*, which provided recommendations on four areas of focus: procurement, access to capital, capacity development and wealth sharing.

2019 Indigenous Economic Progress Report

In order to assess progress on the Board’s target of achieving economic parity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada, the Board identified through the 2012 *Aboriginal Economic Benchmarking Report*, a comprehensive set of indicators and established benchmarks to measure the social and economic well-being of First Nations, Inuit and Métis in Canada. In 2019, the Board published the *2019 Indigenous Economic Progress Report* that continues to measure progress against the initial benchmarks set in 2012. Additionally, the 2019 report presents the results of gender analysis and introduces two new NIEDB composite indices on Economic Development and Infrastructure. The report concludes that given the pace of improvements; **outcomes are not on track to meet the initial targets that the Board set out in the 2012 *Indigenous Economic Benchmarking Report*.**

Collaboration with the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

The OECD’s Linking Indigenous Communities with Regional Development Project is intended to provide policy recommendations for improving economic outcomes for Indigenous people by better linking them with regional development efforts. The Board’s Vice-chairperson, Ms. Dawn Madahbee Leach, is Canada’s Indigenous Champion for the project. The project is a good platform to exchange leading practices and experiences between Indigenous community leaders, policy makers and experts. The project also provides a diagnosis of the development potential of different Indigenous communities and recommends improvements regarding policies for Indigenous communities. The OECD’s *Linking Indigenous Communities with Regional Development* report was launched on July 17, 2019 in Geneva. The Canada Country Report is expected to be launched in January 2020.

“Our circle has been incomplete because it speaks to how Indigenous peoples have not been included, [and] at the same time, negatively impacted in much of the evolution of Canada. Expanding the Circle embodies the need for Canada’s society and economy to expand [and] to provide opportunities for more Indigenous communities to become prosperous, healthy, and culturally thriving.”

Jody Wilson Raybould, First Nation Forum, Expanding the Circle Series

KEY PRIORITIES

The Board is at an opportune time in the development of their strategic priorities for the next three years (2020-2023). Indigenous communities, organizations and business entities across Canada have been increasingly focused on rebuilding Nations, empowering Indigenous people, and discussing the importance of regaining control of economic affairs as part of self-determination. As we work on the advancement of economic reconciliation, the Board has identified the value in having a dialogue with key Indigenous organizations and leaders, in order to help develop a clear vision of an economic future that will continue to foster economic prosperity and enhance the quality of life for every Indigenous person.

The Board’s 2020-2023 Strategic Plan consists of four priority areas that will shape the Board’s engagement with Indigenous communities and organizations, as well as the advice to the federal government. Each priority builds upon the work within the 2016-2019 Strategic Plan; either as a continuation of major projects or work on addressing the key findings from partnerships and research. Within each priority we have developed goals to guide our work over the next three years. Each objective consists of targeted and strategic deliverables that aim to close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada.



Priority Area 1: Developing a National Indigenous Economic Strategy

The *2019 Economic Progress Report* concluded that there have been gains in some areas of Indigenous economic development and participation, such as the rapid growth of Indigenous entrepreneurs and rising college graduation rates. We also know that if we continue on the same path we are on today – based on existing policies and approaches – it is certain that we will not close the economic gap for generations to come. This is not acceptable and it is incumbent on all levels of government and Indigenous peoples to work together to reverse this path.

There are currently a number of successful models and organizations that exemplify the promotion of Indigenous economic participation. These include the legislated institutions found within the *First Nations Fiscal Management Act*, which provides First Nations with support and tools to strengthen First Nations economies, as well as the National Aboriginal Capital Corporation Association which supports a network of Aboriginal Financial Institutions that offer financing for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people. These are organizations with proven track records in their abilities to support Indigenous communities and businesses; however, the lack of sustained and across-the-board progress suggests that barriers to Indigenous economic development and participation remain. The persistent economic gap equally underscores the failure of government policies, such as the decade old Federal Framework for Aboriginal Economic Development. The Framework was introduced to ensure that Indigenous peoples significantly benefit from economic, job wealth creation opportunities; however it has not been as effective as initially intended.

In order to accelerate the pace of Indigenous economic development and participation, we need a change of direction, and a new trajectory. Achieving this goal requires steadfast commitment and effort from governments, industry, and most importantly, Indigenous communities and peoples themselves. How can we – the collective we, Indigenous peoples, governments, and industry/private sector – be sure which direction to follow? How do we - the collective we – ensure that everyone is on the same path and pulling in the same direction?

In answer to these questions, there is a growing consensus among Indigenous leadership, Indigenous organizations, and our Board that a new national Indigenous economic strategy is long overdue. Such a strategy will provide a coherent vision and guide future work in the coming decade, while designed in such a way to accommodate regional, local and cultural differences amongst Indigenous peoples, as well as enable place-based decision making.

As Indigenous peoples, we need to lead the development of this strategy so that we can articulate a vision for our future economic and community development. We need governments and non-Indigenous businesses – across all sectors of the economy – to engage so

that we can realize this strategy together. When we are all working towards this goal, we will realize a better life for Indigenous peoples, while addressing the legacy of past historical harms. This will move us further towards economic reconciliation

Such a strategy will provide a coherent vision and guide our efforts in the coming decade, and needs to be designed to reflect regional, local and cultural differences amongst our people, as well as to enable place-based decision making. To that end, as part of this three-year strategic plan, the Board will work in partnership with Indigenous leadership and Indigenous economic organizations to develop a 10-year national Indigenous economic strategy. In our capacity to provide strategic advice to federal government on Indigenous economic issues, the Board will present this strategy to the federal government for adoption and implementation in partnership with Indigenous peoples. The Board will also identify opportunities to promote the strategy amongst key economic actors, including the private sector, other levels of government, including provincial/territorial, municipal and Indigenous, foundations, and academia.

GOALS AND DELIVERABLES

Take an inclusive approach to the development of a new national Indigenous economic strategy.

Launch a process to work in partnership with Indigenous leadership and organizations to develop a 10-year national Indigenous economic strategy.

Obtain buy-in from governments and industry to implement and support the new strategy.

Present the strategy to the federal government, recommend its adoption, and continue to monitor and advise the government on its implementation as part of the next progress report.

Promote the strategy among other levels of government and the private sector to help ensure that as key economic actors, they are also doing their part to promote Indigenous economic development and participation.

Priority Area 2: Advancing Economic Reconciliation

Closing the socio-economic gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada could lead to a \$27.7 billion annual contribution to the Canadian Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The Board released a recommendations report based on a series of forums which explored economic reconciliation and inclusive growth in Canada—the *Expanding the Circle* series. This work was also informed by the *2019 Indigenous Economic Progress Report*, which found that economic outcomes have been improving overall for Indigenous peoples in Canada, but are not on track to meet 2022 targets of economic parity.

Even though each forum was unique, a common theme was that the **inclusion of Indigenous peoples in the Canadian economy is a needed investment in Canada’s future and not an expense**. While the recommendations report focuses specifically on economic reconciliation, it was clear from the sessions that there is an intersection among the many issues that impact Indigenous peoples and hinder Indigenous economic development. Findings from all three forums highlight the pivotal points for maximum progress and change, if the socio-economic gap is to be closed. As a result, the Board focused on four main areas: procurement, access to capital, capacity development and wealth sharing.

The Board will be hosting three follow-up forums on economic reconciliation in 2022. A follow-up report on economic reconciliation will also be released in 2023. This report will include data from the *2022 Indigenous Economic Progress Report*.



Top Right (from left to right): Cassidy Caron, Minister for Métis Youth, MYBC; Alex Hosfield, Co-President, Métis University Student’s Association; Mitchell Case, President, Métis Nation of Ontario Youth Council; Anette Trimbee, President, University of Winnipeg
Top Left (from left to right): Karen Mundine, CEO, Reconciliation Australia; Dr. Wilton Littlechild
Bottom (from left to right): Clint Davis, Partner and Managing Director, Acasta Capital Indigenous; Natan Obed, President, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami; Charlie Watt, President, Makivik Coporation ; Aluki Kotierk, President, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.; Johannes Lampe, President, Nunatsiavut Government

"I see economic reconciliation and reconciliation as a whole being achieved when our families are no longer at the negative end of the spectrum on all of the social determinants of health. Because that's where we are right now. If you look at healthcare, education, childcare, we're moving forward but we're still at that negative end of those spectrums and reconciliation means we'll be there when we aren't at that negative end of the spectrum."

Cassidy Caron, Métis Forum, Expanding the Circle Series

GOALS AND DELIVERABLES

Benchmarking economic reconciliation

Host three forums on economic reconciliation and inclusive growth in 2022.

Release follow-up report on economic reconciliation in 2023.

Promote and create awareness on the importance of restoring Indigenous economic well-being.

Ensure that economic reconciliation remains a priority for ministers and government officials from 2020-2023.

Research project to explore a holistic approach to health and the impact on economic well-being (Annex A provides additional details)

Priority Area 3: Regional Economic Development for Indigenous Peoples

In late 2017, the Board attended the launch of the first-ever Indigenous-specific study, [Linking Indigenous Communities with Regional Development](#), by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in Wendake, Quebec, Canada. This study looked at worldwide leading practices on engaging and linking Indigenous people to regional economic development. The report provides a number of findings and recommendations, from an international perspective, to improve policy, and is therefore relevant to the Board’s mandate to advise government on Indigenous economic issues.

One of the key findings from the study is that there is a need to explore how Indigenous groups access, protect and use land according to their own objectives, while still respecting the principle of self-determination. Indigenous peoples have a traditional understanding and relationship with land transcending economic value, and extending to Indigenous worldviews that includes spiritual, cultural and identity. As the reports states, “Right to land can increase autonomy, generate revenues and create economic opportunities, but it can also be used without any direct monetary benefit, for environmental conservation and cultural preservations.” True self-determination would allow communities to decide how they would utilize their traditional territories, as well as being a key participant in any development projects within their traditional territories.

There is a need to support the establishment of a common registry of Indigenous-owned businesses; and produce an annual state of the Indigenous economy to highlight progress and leading practices. Even though low population density and lack of transportation infrastructure are major factors that make entrepreneurship in rural Indigenous communities challenging, the tradable sector in these areas is an important competitive advantage. This includes primary industries like agriculture, mining, forestry, fishing and aquaculture and integrated services like energy production, services and manufacturing. Communities face major challenges to: attract investment; access finance; grow businesses; support female and rural entrepreneurs; increase skills training, mentorship and education; and the sustainability of business related (or Indigenous/Industry) partnerships. The Board plans to address these challenges by affirming the importance of land and supporting Indigenous entrepreneurship and community development.

“... ‘place’ is fundamental to Indigenous identity and shapes economic development and well-being outcomes for Indigenous peoples.”

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2019



From left to right: Frank Richter (NACCA); Victoria Labilois (NIEDB); Maxime Volland (NIEDB); Dr. Marie Delorme (NIEDB); Sandra Sutter (NIEDB); Shannin Metatawabin (NACCA); Dr. Tamara Krawchenko (Uvic); Bud Morris (Tewatohnh'saktha); Lianne Raderschall (OECD Secretariat); Ana Morenomonroy (OECD Secretariat); Vanessa Mountain (St'at'ilmc Trust); Evan Salter (B.C. Métis Financial Corporation of BC); Dawn Madahbee Leach (NIEDB); Mark Sevestre (NATO); Michele Young-Crook (NATO); Tabatha Bull (CCAB); Steven Morse (Métis Voyageur Development Fund); Emmanuel Bertrand-Gauvin (CDEPNQL); His Worship, Mayor Hezakiah Oshutapik (Pangnirtung, NU)

GOALS AND DELIVERABLES

Affirming the importance of land for Indigenous economic development

Undertake research and develop recommendations on how land can be managed in support of economic development.

Explore Indigenous land rights in relation to natural resource development projects; including frameworks for participation and consultation.

Supporting Indigenous entrepreneurship and community economic development

Adapt Indigenous procurement strategies to improve accessibility for Indigenous businesses; implement a supplier-oriented approach; simplify the amount of information needed; provide requests in plain language; break down larger requests for proposals (RFPs) into smaller contracts; and develop targeted training initiatives.

Increase the visibility of Indigenous economics and promote business development by supporting cultural sensitivity training; championing successes; promoting Indigenous-non-Indigenous business partnerships; sharing leading practices; and reducing barriers/increasing flexibility for Indigenous businesses to participate in programs and access finance.

Priority Area 4: Closing the Data Gap on Key Indigenous Economic Indicators

The Board believes that strengthening partnerships with academic institutions will yield multiple benefits, such as raising awareness across academia about research to address critical gaps in knowledge about barriers to Indigenous economic participation, particularly around community well-being. These partnerships will also allow the Board to engage with Indigenous scholars to identify and pursue mutually-beneficial research opportunities, and to promote and privilege Indigenous knowledge within research.

Through the Board’s partnership with the OECD in developing the study, [Linking Indigenous People to Regional Development](#), it was found that there is a need to improve data quality on Indigenous community well-being, businesses, entrepreneurship, and refined industry data. There is also a need to support the establishment of a common registry of Indigenous-owned businesses, as well as and produce an annual state of the Indigenous economy report, which will highlight progress and leading practices.

The Board’s *2019 Indigenous Economic Progress Report* identified areas that require further research in order to gain a complete and accurate picture of the Indigenous economy and a greater understanding of the factors contributing to differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous economic outcomes. The development of research deliverables provides further opportunities to partner with post-secondary institutions and Indigenous scholars, in order to advance Indigenous research and integration of Indigenous knowledge on economic development issues.



Top Right (from left to right): Sandra Sutter, Board Member; Dr. Marie Delorme, Board Member; Deborah Saucier, President of Vancouver Island University; Hilda Broomfield-Letemplier, Board Member
Top Left (from left to right): Max FineDay, Director of Canadian Roots Exchange
Bottom (from left to right): Hilda Broomfield-Letemplier, Dr. Marie Delorme, Sandra Sutter, Deborah Saucier, Max FineDay

GOALS AND DELIVERABLES

Partner with Post-Secondary Institutions and Indigenous scholars across Canada and Internationally

Creation of partnerships with Post-Secondary Institutions with established Indigenous academia to leverage and share knowledge and research resources, and to promote integration and privileging of Indigenous knowledge.

Research on leading practices for data collection and utilization within Indigenous communities and organizations.

Profile Indigenous Canada: Research on trends and addressing data needs

Enhanced data and statistics on Métis and Inuit economic indicators such as governance models in Métis and Inuit communities.

Research project to explore a holistic approach to health and the impact on economic well-being (Annex A provides additional details)

"Why can't that be an economic measure? The health of my people and their connection to who they are and their culture."

Max FineDay, Fifth Annual VIU Indigenous Speaker Series with CBC's Ideas is a Search for Freedom, Prosperity and #Landback for Indigenous Peoples

CONCLUSION

It is vital for all Canadians, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, that First Nations, Inuit and Métis people to fully participate in the economy and repatriate what had been historically significant contributions to Canada's economic prosperity. Indigenous peoples in Canada have taken great strides in participation of the Canadian economy, with an increase in ownership of businesses and in leadership roles, both within economic corporations and Indigenous communities.

Much work remains to be done to realize the Board's objective to achieve Indigenous economic outcomes that are on par with the rest of Canada. Through the Board's continued engagement with Indigenous communities, National Indigenous Organizations, Indigenous economic and financial organizations, Indigenous businesses and Indigenous peoples, we have heard similar narratives on the barriers that impact indigenous communities and the solutions that are needed in order to move forward with closing the socio-economic gap and creating prosperity for Indigenous peoples across Canada. These engagements have helped inform the four priority areas identified in this strategic plan, so that the Board's current and future advice to the government is focuses on issues that are top-of-mind for Indigenous communities. The Board remains committed to working with the federal government, Indigenous organizations and communities and all Canadians on advancing economic development and ensuring economic prosperity for Indigenous peoples in Canada.

ANNEX A

National Indigenous Economic Development Board

Considerations for the 2022 Progress Report: Areas of Future study

As we noted in the 2019 *Indigenous Economic Progress Report* – Indigenous populations face deeply rooted systemic barriers embedded in the Canadian economic landscape. In exploring these barriers, the report examined accepted economic indicators to measure the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians including income, employment and education.

For the 2019 report, the ability to characterize the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous was enhanced with the addition of the Infrastructure Index and a Gender-based analysis. As Dr. Frederic Wien, a member of the Expert Advisory Panel pointed out, these additions “recognize that what happens at the individual level is strongly influenced by what is available at the community level.(i.e. infrastructure) hence the importance of strengthening the collective as well as providing programs and services to individuals and families.” The ability to participate in economic activities is affected by both individual and community level factors impacting well-being. A greater understanding of “well-being” and its effects would strengthen the insights and subsequent recommendations of the 2022 Report.

Since the report’s inception, the Community Well-Being (CWB) index has been used as a means of assessing socio-economic well-being between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people across Canada. This index includes four components (education, labour force activity, income and housing), which are combined to provide each community with a well-being “score.” These scores are used to compare well-being across First Nations and Inuit communities with the well-being of non-Indigenous communities.

The limitations of the CWB were recently highlighted by the Office of the Auditor General, saying “a more holistic portrait of community well-being would be to place the CWB index within a broader dashboard of other important indicators such as health or language.” The current index also excludes measures specific to Indigenous communities such as traditional activities or cultural continuity. These along with other issues such as incarceration, mental/physical health, and rates of violence and suicide have been noted to impact a community’s ability to pursue economic development.

An individual or community grappling with issues of suicide, mental health, chronic illnesses or addictions, is incapable of achieving optimal outcomes in education, labour force participation or income. Failure to acknowledge the impact of these issues on economic development overlooks the challenges of an Indigenous company to recruit and retain healthy employees and the ability for those struggling with mental health issues to obtain an education and find quality employment.

These findings will help inform further research on the linkages between mental and physical health and economic wellbeing, as part of the Board’s 2020-2023 strategic plan.