

# **The National Indigenous Economic Development Board**

## **2019 Indigenous Economic Progress Report**

### **Recommendations Revisited**



**The National Indigenous Economic Development Board (NIEDB)**

NIEDB Secretariat

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## Message from the Chairperson

On behalf of the National Indigenous Economic Development Board (NIEDB), I'm pleased to share the following report detailing Government of Canada actions in relation to the recommendations contained within the 2019 edition of the *Indigenous Economic Progress Report*<sup>1</sup>.

For more than 30 years, the NIEDB been mandated to provide strategic policy advice to the federal government on Indigenous economic development. To support this advice, the NIEDB has produced a series of economic progress reports to measure the economic state of Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

The series of Indigenous economic progress reports we have published presents a thorough, in-depth analysis of the economic realities of Indigenous Peoples in the country. Using 13 measures, it assesses three core indicators (employment, income, and community well-being), as well as a number of the underlying indicators of economic success (entrepreneurship and business development, infrastructure, education, and governance, along with lands and resources).

The 2019 report is the second progress report by the NIEDB since the foundational *Aboriginal Economic Benchmarking Report*<sup>2</sup> was published in 2012, and it set bold targets on which to track the economic progress of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples in Canada – targets which are not being met.

In 2022, federal departments and agencies were asked by the NIEDB to review the recommendations in the 2019 Indigenous Economic Progress Report, and to report on any actions which may have served to advance specific recommendations since the report was issued. The results of this exercise are contained here and give us a clear picture of federal initiatives taken regarding these recommendations.

Sincerely,



Dawn Madahbee Leach

Chairperson, National Indigenous Economic Development Board



<sup>1</sup> <http://www.naedb-cndea.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/NIEDB-2019-Indigenous-Economic-Progress-Report.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.naedb-cndea.com/reports/the-aboriginal-economic-benchmarking-report.pdf>

## About the Board

Established in 1990, the National Indigenous Economic Development Board (NIEDB) is a non-partisan, national organization mandated to advise the Government of Canada on Indigenous economic development. Comprised of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis community and business leaders from across the country, the National Board plays an important role in helping the federal government develop and reform policies to better respond to the unique needs of Indigenous communities. The NIEDB is a vital link between policy makers, federal departments, and Indigenous and non-Indigenous business and community leaders.

## Members

From 2019 to the end of 2021, the National Board has evolved into a full roster of 13 members from regions across Canada. Each member has contributed valuable business, community, operational, and strategic expertise to the National Board's work.

### **Dawn Madahbee Leach**

Chairperson, Ontario

<http://www.naedb-cndea.com/en/the-board/dawn-madahbee/>

### **Victoria LaBillois**

Vice-Chairperson, Quebec

<http://www.naedb-cndea.com/en/the-board/victoria-labillois/>

### **Chief Terrance Paul**

Member-at-Large, Nova Scotia

<http://www.naedb-cndea.com/en/the-board/chief-terrance-paul/>

### **Hilda Broomfield Letemplier**

Member, Newfoundland and Labrador

<http://www.naedb-cndea.com/en/the-board/hilda-broomfield-letemplier/>

### **Dr. Marie Delorme**

Member, Alberta

<http://www.naedb-cndea.com/en/the-board/dr-marie-delorme/>

### **Ruth Williams**

Member, British Columbia

<http://www.naedb-cndea.com/en/the-board/ruth-williams/>

### **Sandra Sutter**

Member, Alberta

<http://www.naedb-cndea.com/en/the-board/sandra-sutter/>

### **Maxime Vollant**

Member, Quebec

<http://www.naedb-cndea.com/en/the-board/maxime-vollant/>

### **Andy Moorhouse**

Member, Quebec

<http://www.naedb-cndea.com/en/the-board/andy-moorhouse-2/>

### **Michael Bonshor, CPA, CMA**

Member, British Columbia

<http://www.naedb-cndea.com/en/the-board/michael-bonshor/>

### **Danielle Levine, MA, MBA**

Member, British Columbia

<http://www.naedb-cndea.com/en/the-board/danielle-levine/>

### **Dana Soonias**

Member, Saskatchewan

<http://www.naedb-cndea.com/en/the-board/dana-soonias/>

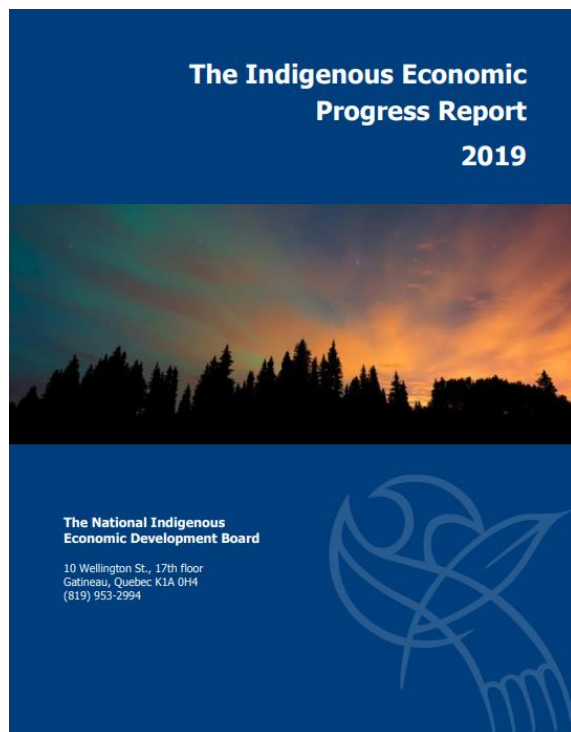
### **Bob Dickson**

Member, Ontario

<http://www.naedb-cndea.com/en/the-board/bob-dickson/>



## 2019 Indigenous Economic Progress Report



NIEDB Indigenous Economic Progress Report 2019 - Cover Page

Released on June 10, 2019, the 2019 *Indigenous Economic Progress Report* concludes that while the overall economic outcomes for Indigenous Peoples are improving in Canada, this is only to varying and sometimes small degrees. Given the pace of improvements, outcomes were not on track to meet the 2022 targets of economic parity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous population throughout the country.

This report presents a thorough, in-depth analysis of the economic realities of Indigenous Peoples in Canada. Using 13 measures, it assesses three core indicators: employment, income, and community well-being. Using 19 additional measures, it also examines five underlying indicators of economic success: education, entrepreneurship and business development, governance, lands and resources, and infrastructure.

Eleven new measures were introduced to this report, such as workforce representation, enhanced income and educational attainment measures, crowding and condition of housing, and community financial

certification. It also presents the results of gender analysis and introduces two new composite indices on economic development and infrastructure.

The Progress Report has four purposes:

1. To present comparative information on the evolution of the economic outcomes of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people compared to the benchmarks set in 2012;
2. To identify variations in the evolution of economic outcomes among Indigenous identity groups (First Nations, Inuit, and Métis) and, where possible, between First Nations on and off reserve, compared to benchmarks set in 2012;
3. To measure the progress made toward meeting the 2022 objectives set by the NIEDB for Indigenous peoples to have comparable outcomes to those of non-Indigenous Canadians;
4. To inform federal policy and program direction.



## 2019 IEPR Recommendations Revisited Overview

The growth of the Indigenous economy requires a multi-faceted approach that addresses the barriers outlined in the 2019 *Indigenous Economic Progress Report*, and utilizes innovative measures from prosperous and self-governing communities. Fostering sovereignty, supporting Indigenous institutions of governance and community leadership, safeguarding and honouring Indigenous culture and identity, and investing in youth and education are all strong drivers of Indigenous economic development.

Canada needs to take concrete steps towards closing the socio-economic gaps between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous population.

This report goes into more detail regarding the 2019 recommendations, and shares the response of federal departments and agencies on how they have addressed them. The NIEDB was pleased with the breadth and scope of the responses received, however there is still much work to be done. These responses have been edited for length, pertinence, and clarity.

Each section also discusses potential research opportunities, as well as linkages to the National Indigenous Economic Strategy<sup>3</sup> (NIES). Released in June 2022, the NIES was brought forward by more than 20 national Indigenous economic organizations, including the NIEDB, in collaboration with the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB), the National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association (NACCA), Indigenous Works, the Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers (Cando) and others.

The NIES is an Indigenous-led strategy intended to guide all levels of government, Indigenous entities and communities, small and medium-sized enterprises, and non-Indigenous organizations and institutions. It is built upon four Strategic Pathways (People, Land, Infrastructure and Finance), and includes specific “Calls to Economic Prosperity” that can be supported by all Canadians, governments, businesses, and institutions to realize economic parity for all Indigenous Peoples. The Strategy also provides Indigenous economic development practitioners and policy makers with a coherent vision designed to guide efforts in the coming decade.

The National Board is hopeful the “Calls to Economic Prosperity” in this strategy will be adopted by all levels of government in the country, along with corporate Canada, all economic institutions, and the Canadian public to serve as a guide globally for supporting Indigenous economic inclusion.

Where appropriate, in addition to the NIES, this report also makes linkages between the input contained herein and the following recent reports:

- OECD: Linking Indigenous Communities with Regional Development in Canada<sup>4</sup> (2020)
- First Nations Financial Management Board’s RoadMap Project<sup>5</sup> (2022)

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) report provides actionable recommendations for all levels of governments in Canada to work in partnership with Indigenous Peoples in order to develop vibrant Indigenous economies. It contributes to the work program of the

<sup>3</sup> [https://niestrategy.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/NIES\\_English\\_FullStrategy\\_2.pdf](https://niestrategy.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/NIES_English_FullStrategy_2.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.oecd.org/publications/linking-indigenous-communities-with-regional-development-in-canada-fa0f60c6-en.htm>

<sup>5</sup> <https://fnfmb.com/en/leadership/roadmap>



OECD on regional and rural development and was approved by the Regional Development Policy Committee (RDPC) on November 19, 2019.

Additionally, the First Nations Financial Management Board's (FMB) RoadMap Project is a practical pathway to Indigenous economic reconciliation, consistent with the *United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP). Informed by discussions with First Nations across Canada, the RoadMap offers realistic and impactful options to empower First Nations governments in moving past the failed one-size-fits-all approach of the colonial system. The RoadMap is about creating new, optional paths for First Nations as they move from managing poverty to generating wealth. It's an Indigenous-led plan for achieving economic prosperity and self-determination for First Nations, while reducing risk for Canada.



## 2019 IEPR Recommendations Overview



### EMPLOYMENT

**EMP1:** Ensure community workforce plans are informed by local employment needs of businesses so students can target education plans accordingly



### INCOME

**INC1:** Increase training and internship opportunities for employees to increase their earning potential in higher income occupations  
**INC2:** Continue showcasing Indigenous success, mentorship, and leadership to students



### COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

**CWB1:** Co-develop a broad dashboard of well-being outcomes to reflect mutually agreed-upon metrics (health, culture, environment, language)



### EDUCATION

**EDU1:** Improve on-reserve education systems  
**EDU2:** Prioritize health and cultural supports in community-based education  
**EDU3:** Develop bridging programs to help students wanting to upgrade from college to university  
**EDU4:** Invest in distance education programs  
**EDU5:** Expand and continue scholarship funding



### ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

**EDBD1:** Provide access to business services and skills training and raise awareness of funding supports and programs  
**EDBD2:** Examine potential supports for First Nations on reserve businesses  
**EDBD3:** Fund Aboriginal Financial Institutions to ensure entrepreneurs are able to access capital



### GOVERNANCE

**GOV1:** Support governance and financial management training and certification  
**GOV2:** Examine needs and opportunities aimed at urban Indigenous populations



### LANDS AND RESOURCES

**LR1:** Increase resources to the Additions to Reserve program to expedite applications



### INFRASTRUCTURE

**INF1:** Lift all drinking water advisories  
**INF2:** Continue and expand investment in housing  
**INF3:** Bring high-speed broadband and mobile services to Indigenous communities  
**INF4:** Update Infrastructure Index every two years



### GENDER

**GEN1:** Develop or adjust policy and programs to improve employment/ income outcomes for women  
**GEN2:** Develop policy and strategies to improve educational outcomes for men and women

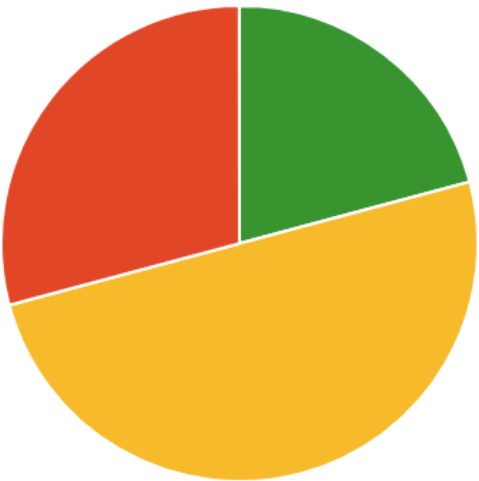


### YOUTH

**YTH1:** Promote Indigenous entrepreneurship amongst youth  
**YTH2:** Create urban Indigenous healing and employment hubs and an alumni fund  
**YTH3:** Include community considerations and perspectives in youth program development

2019 Indigenous Economic Progress Report (IEPR) Recommendations Progress

Throughout the report, the 2019 recommendations are rated based on the level of progress made. Good progress has been made on the recommendations rated green, some progress has been made on those rated yellow, and more needs to be done on those rated red. The following graph illustrates which recommendations fall into each category of progress.



Good progress    Some progress    More needs to be done

EDU2

EDBD1

EDBD2

INF1

GEN1

INC1

INC2

CWB1

EDU1

EDU4

EDBD3

GOV1

LR1

INF2

GEN2

YTH1

YTH3

EMP1

EDU3

EDU5

GOV2

INF3

INF4

YTH2



## Employment

**Ensure community workforce plans are informed by local employment needs of businesses so students can target education plans accordingly**

- EMP1 Findings suggest that while all Indigenous groups demonstrate higher unemployment rates than non-Indigenous groups, rates are strongly influenced by educational attainment rates, remote/on reserve community location, and gender inequity. Support for programs that match workers to locally available and education-qualified opportunities can be informed by and serve to inform community workforce plans. ***Community workforce plans would predict future employment needs in the community and address concerns voiced by Indigenous businesses regarding talent acquisition by having them engage with plan development.*** Further, through the anticipation of future local community need, students can have greater assurances of being able to find local employment and target educational plans accordingly while businesses can identify priority hiring targets to encourage local economic development.

**MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE TO IMPLEMENT THIS RECOMMENDATION**

### 2019 IEPR FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The 2019 IEPR found that despite marginal improvements, a significant gap remains in the employment rates between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous population. This gap is most pronounced for First Nations on reserve, where the employment rate is 24.2 percentage points lower than for non-Indigenous Canadians. Métis continue to have a higher employment rate than other identity groups. While Inuit employment rates are significantly lower than non-Indigenous employment rates, Inuit were the only group who did not experience a decline in employment rate from 2006 to 2016.

Further, the labour force participation rate for the Indigenous population decreased and the gap with the non-Indigenous population has not changed since 2006. First Nations on reserve continue to experience the lowest labour force participation rate. While the gap for First Nations on reserve increased, the gap for Inuit labour force participation decreased. Métis continue to have higher labour force participation rates than all other groups.

The gap in unemployment rates between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations remained largely unchanged between 2006 and 2016. The unemployment rates remain highest for First Nations on reserve with approximately one in four unemployed, and Inuit with approximately one in five unemployed. The lowest unemployment rate among Indigenous identity groups is observed for Métis; this rate is still higher than the non-Indigenous rate.

The 2019 IEPR concludes that during the period of 2006 to 2016, Canada experienced decreased employment rates and increases in unemployment rates for all identity groups. Inuit rates demonstrated unique findings of an increase in the labour force participation rate, indicating a growing work force. First Nations (both on and off reserve) and Métis experienced changes similar to non-Indigenous Canadians, but their effects were amplified. This demonstrates an increased vulnerability to job market fluctuations that will need to be addressed to close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians. Also, addressing these vulnerabilities will serve to strengthen and prepare Indigenous labour

markets for future predicted labour challenges and opportunities due to factors such as increased automation and the uncoupling of the workplace and work force.

## NIEDB COMMENTARY

There are questions regarding whether programs such as Employment and Social Development Canada's (ESDC) Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) and Skills and Partnership Fund (SPF) are adequate to meet needs, or whether additional funding and outreach are required. The same may be true of Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), Indian Oil and Gas Canada (IOGC), Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) and Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) programs. Other departments, such as Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC), Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC), Infrastructure Canada, Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED), Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC), and Shared Services Canada (SSC) should consider standing up similar programs.

The Regional Development Agencies should also look at supporting local and regional programs specific to community workforce plans that “match workers to locally available and education-qualified opportunities” and should also be active in the “anticipation of future local community needs.”

The number of different programs active in this area highlights the need for good Navigator Positions across government – all of which need to be aware of actions in other government departments and must communicate with each other regularly.

In 2022, in response to requests from Indigenous communities seeking access to support for economic development opportunities, ISC launched a Navigator Position to help Indigenous entrepreneurs find programs that apply to their situation. The Navigator Unit provides guidance to Indigenous individuals, businesses, organizations, and communities in their search for economic development programs and services available within the federal government. Additionally, it will identify gaps between available programs and services and the actual needs of Indigenous stakeholders in order to minimize the barriers to economic development.

For these positions to be a success, it is imperative that:

- Indigenous Peoples are included in every step of the process and implementation from the start;
- the process includes a one-window website, operated, and managed by an Indigenous firm with Indigenous participants included in beta-testing;
- a focus be brought to federal procurement policies and procedures;
- the cultural competency of navigators be ensured;
- the navigator function cooperates and collaborates with existing Indigenous institutions, such as NACCA'S Indigenous Business Hub and;
- potential linkages and partnerships with provincial and territorial programming be explored from the outset.

In terms of next steps, additional information should be available to all – including what programs exist, how much funding is available, details regarding criteria for decision-making, and how priorities are set.

As an example of this issue, the OECD report contains a case study regarding the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke, which indicates that a key development problem on the reserve is an increasing mismatch between workforce skills and opportunities for both on- and off-reserve employment. In addition, low skill workers have unrealistic wage expectations based on legacy jobs in steel and tobacco that will not return. This example highlights the importance of good community workforce planning.

The 2020 OECD Report highlighted responses from the 2017 Aboriginal Peoples Survey, which found a shortage of jobs was the most commonly reported barrier to employment. Beyond this, there are differences revealed by age and gender. For example, younger Inuit were more likely to report not knowing where to look for work and not knowing what kind of job to look for than those of core working age. A lack of work experience was another commonly reported barrier to employment among Inuit surveyed. This highlights the importance of labour market training and assistance and job training/work experience.

The OECD Report also summarized some of the findings of the First Nations Information Governance Centre's 2010 follow up survey focusing on community well-being. In relation to employment, this survey indicated that Band employment predominates, and 8 out of 10 jobs involve working for the First Nations band. The majority of residents who complete college and university (60%), however, did not return to work in the community.

The FMB RoadMap project built on this fact by observing that First Nation economies take place in an extremely unbalanced economic environment where the public sector has become much bigger than the private sector. The underdeveloped private sector means limited employment opportunities for members in areas other than Band administration or government business enterprises. Specialists or individuals with higher levels of education will be forced to go elsewhere, sapping the nation's propensity towards economic innovation and diversification.<sup>6</sup>

## **SUMMARY OF INPUTS FROM FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES**

- Indigenous Services Canada's (ISC) Income Assistance, First Nation Youth Employment Support (IAFNYES) program, and First Nations and Inuit Youth Employment Strategy (FNIYES) continue to identify and support initiatives that provide training and employment opportunities for First Nations and Inuit youth.
- Indian Oil and Gas Canada's (IOGC) Indian Resource Council (IRC) has been training First Nations peoples in Alberta, resulting in positive employment, entrepreneurship, and education outcomes.
- Employment and Social Development Canada's (ESDC) Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) program has served over 111,000 clients and provided employment and educational opportunities.
- At Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), the Indigenous Commercial Fisheries programs have contributed to the employment of over 3,330 Indigenous Peoples and the Fisheries Management Programs have contributed to the employment of over 1,600 Indigenous people.
- Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) has worked on attracting Indigenous youth to the mining sector through the Mining Industry Human Resources Council and the creation of a National Youth Mining Career Awareness Strategy and National Career Ambassador Program..

For complete federal input, see page 75.

## **RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY**

Review of Government of Canada community workforce and training programming specific to Indigenous Peoples (adequacy of funding and reach to meet needs, recommendations to streamline and rationalize policies and procedures).

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<sup>6</sup> FMB Roadmap Project: Chapter 4, page 30



#### **RELATED NIES CALLS TO ECONOMIC PROSPERITY:**

19. Conduct labour force planning.
20. Develop labour market strategies.
21. Create workforce engagement strategies.
22. Strengthen supports for organizations that focus on Indigenous skills, employment, and business training.
23. Conduct meaningful data and conduct assessments on the efficacy of existing programs in relation to the skills development of Indigenous Peoples.



## Income

**Increase training and internship opportunities for employees to increase their earning potential in higher income occupations**

**Continue showcasing Indigenous success, mentorship, and leadership to students**

### 2019 IEPR FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The 2019 IEPR found that from 2005 to 2015, the gap in average income between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations aged 15 years and older remained; however, all incomes increased, and the gaps narrowed. High growth rates also influenced improvements in reducing income differences.

First Nations had the lowest average incomes of all identity groups with First Nations on reserve having less than half the average income of non-Indigenous Canadians in both 2005 and 2015. Métis are the highest income earners among the three identity groups, followed by Inuit and First Nations living off reserve.

The median income for the overall Indigenous population increased by 52% from 2005 to 2015. In comparison, the median income for the non-Indigenous population only increased by 33% for the same period. Despite this increase, the median income for the Indigenous population was about three quarters that of the non-Indigenous population in 2015.

The median income was lowest for First Nations on reserve and highest for Métis among Indigenous groups in 2015. Gaps narrowed for all identity groups.

The proportion of income received from government transfers increased in 2015 only for First Nations on reserve and the overall non-Indigenous population. The overall gap is narrowing, as the proportion of income received from government transfers increased for the non-Indigenous population and decreased for the overall Indigenous population.

The Métis population had the lowest proportion of income received from government transfers while First Nations on reserve had the highest. The share of income received from government transfers also increased the most for First Nations on reserve, and this was the only group to have a widening gap with the non-Indigenous population.

While some improvements in the gaps have occurred, an average of one in three Indigenous compared to one in five non-Indigenous individuals continue to obtain their main source of income from government transfers.

From 2005 to 2015, the proportion of the Indigenous population that relied on government transfers fell by 0.6 percentage points while that of the non-Indigenous population increased by 0.4 percentage points. As a result, the gap between the two decreased by 1 percentage point.

Increased proportions of populations relying on government transfers occurred in two identity groups – Inuit experienced the highest increase, followed by First Nations on reserve. Both of these groups also saw an increase in the gap with the non-Indigenous population.

Indigenous Peoples are differently represented than non-Indigenous people within occupational and industry categories. First Nations and Inuit have the lowest representation in the high-income and the highest representation in the low-income occupational categories.

All three Indigenous identity groups have higher representation than non-Indigenous in the high-income industry categories. In particular, Inuit have representation in these high-income industry categories at rates three times higher than non-Indigenous Canadians.

Employment income between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people exhibits a wide range, with First Nations earning the lowest median incomes and Inuit having the highest median incomes of all identity groups within the same occupational categories.

On an industry level, non-Indigenous people have the highest median incomes in almost all categories, even those in which Indigenous Peoples have high representation. Inuit demonstrate the lowest median incomes for thirteen of the twenty industry categories.

Indigenous Peoples have lower median employment income with lower educational levels yet equal or higher median employment income with higher levels of education.

Using the Gini Index, which measures income distribution across a population, it was found that Inuit and Métis populations demonstrate lower Gini Index values than those of non-Indigenous populations, indicating greater income equality within these populations. The Gini Index value for First Nations is higher than for all other populations, indicating greater income inequality. The Gini coefficient values have not significantly changed between 2005 and 2015.

For First Nations on reserve, 81.9% of the population is in the bottom half of the distribution of total income for all Canadians while 67.9% of First Nations off reserve are in the bottom half of the distribution of total income for all Canadians. Corresponding values for Inuit and Métis are 59.8% and 52.9%, respectively. Pronounced income inequality is demonstrated between non-Indigenous and most Indigenous populations.

The 2019 IEPR concludes that the narrowing yet persistent gap in income between non-Indigenous and Indigenous Peoples may in part be due to the concentration of Indigenous Peoples in lower-paying occupational categories, even though they may be highly represented in some high-income industries. The income differences shown between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people support these findings, however lower income within similar occupational categories may also be suggestive of more substantial barriers affecting workplace equity. Given these findings, it may be highly beneficial towards closing income gaps to focus efforts on supports for Indigenous Peoples to pursue employment in the high-income occupations, such as management and natural and applied sciences, and to ensure wage equality is addressed. With existing strong representation in high-income industries and demonstrated high incomes for those with the educational qualifications to pursue these occupations, gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians could more rapidly be closed.



### ***Income Recommendation #1***

#### **Increase training and internship opportunities for employees to increase their earning potential in higher income occupations**

- INC1 As Indigenous groups are already working in high wage industries (but in the lowest-income jobs within those industries), the opportunity to amplify educational payoffs is great. Through ***an increase in training and internship opportunities*** for Indigenous employees in the industries that they are already working in, Indigenous employees could more efficiently move into higher occupational levels and increase their earning potential. Further to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action #92, the education of non-Indigenous management into the benefits of greater Indigenous representation in high-income occupations would serve to encourage training and professional development opportunities.

#### **SOME PROGRESS ON THIS RECOMMENDATION**

### **NIEDB COMMENTARY**

NIEDB research indicates that if Indigenous Peoples were given the same access to economic opportunities available to other Canadians, the resulting increase in employment would result in an additional \$6.9 billion per year in employment income and approximately 135,000 newly employed Indigenous Peoples<sup>7</sup>.

In 2018, the Royal Bank of Canada found that Canada's education system, training programs, and labour market initiatives are inadequately designed to help Canadian youth navigate the new skills economy.<sup>8</sup>

In *Skills Next—Mapping the Landscape: Indigenous Skills Training and Jobs in Canada*, the Public Policy Forum suggested that Indigenous businesses be involved in the formation of policies and programs to mitigate the impact of disruption through supporting business innovation, facilitating continued learning, and reassessing the link between occupations and skills to ensure Indigenous Peoples have opportunities to participate in automated and digital workforces of the future<sup>9</sup>.

Progress has been made in relation to training opportunities, but more needs to be done on the core issue of internship opportunities.

Programming specific to the provision of internship opportunities should be pursued, in particular through ISC, ISED, ESDC, and the Regional Development Agencies.

<sup>7</sup> National Indigenous Economic Development Board, *Reconciliation: Moving Canada Forward by \$27.7 Billion*, 2016.

<sup>8</sup> RBC, *Humans Wanted: How Canadian Youth Can Thrive in the Age of Disruption*, 2018

<sup>9</sup> Public Policy Forum, *Skills Next—Mapping the Landscape: Indigenous Skills Training and Jobs in Canada*, June 2020

## SUMMARY OF INPUTS FROM FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

- The Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) provides support to Indigenous organizations like the Joint Economic Development Initiative (JEDI), the Mi'kMaw Economic Benefits Association (MEBO), and Ulnooweg, which results in workforce development opportunities for Indigenous Peoples.
- The Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency (CanNor) supports the accessibility of training opportunities for Nunavut Inuit employees to increase their earning potential in higher income roles within the public sector through Pilimmaksaivik (the Federal Centre of Excellence for Inuit Employment in Nunavut).
- Pacific Economic Development Canada (PacifiCan) provided the Namgis Business Development Corporation with \$252,000 in funding under the Jobs and Growth fund to support the community-owned driving school to deliver certified driver's training to Indigenous community members.
- ISC's Economic Development Officers in communities across Canada are being provided additional supports from Budget 2022 to enhance their 'on the job' capacity.
- Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) developed an Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Strategy (IRRS), based on the recommendations of 2020 Many Voices One Mind Report.
- Export Development Canada (EDC) supports Indigenous businesses pursuing economic self-reliance and growth by exporting in a way that respects Indigenous history, traditions, and culture.
- Indigenous people who are employed can access training opportunities to increase their skills and move into higher occupational and income levels through ESDC's ISET and SPF programs.
- In response to a gap identified by the 2019 Indigenous Program Review, DFO introduced the Indigenous Training and Skills Development (ITSD) project, which coordinates Indigenous training and skills development in the fisheries and oceans sectors.
- NRCan's Science and Technology Internship Program (STIP – Green Jobs) updated the call-for-proposals to expand its existing pool of delivery organizations and include smaller, regional, and Indigenous-focused delivery organizations.
- NRCan's Indigenous Off-Diesel Initiative currently supports 14 remote Indigenous communities/regions across Canada with funding and resources for clean energy training, community engagement, and clean energy projects.
- NRCan's Office of Energy Efficiency launched the Canada Greener Homes Grant initiative in 2021 to support innovative projects that recruit, train, and mentor new energy advisors across Canada.

For complete federal input, see page 78.

### RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY

How could federal departments and agencies (ISC, ISED, ESDC, RDAs, etc.) implement programming specific to providing internship opportunities?

### RELATED NIES CALLS TO ECONOMIC PROSPERITY:

2. Develop mentorship programs

22. Strengthen supports for organizations that focus on Indigenous skills, employment, and business training.
30. Engage Indigenous Advisors to help Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations evaluate workplace practices and strategies, measure and monitor workplace inclusion strategies, provide inclusive workplace training, and undertake systems review of strategies.
31. All public and private employers adopt the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action No. 57 (educate public servants on Indigenous history) and No. 92 (corporate sector adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples).





## ***Income Recommendation #2***

### **Continue showcasing Indigenous success, mentorship, and leadership to students**

- INC2 As Indigenous employees exceed median employment income levels with higher levels of education, this is even greater incentive to develop policies and programs to support Indigenous students towards higher levels of education. ***Continued showcasing of examples of Indigenous success, mentorship, and leadership*** should be encouraged to enable students to envision the role of education in their future success.

### **SOME PROGRESS ON THIS RECOMMENDATION**

#### **NIEDB COMMENTARY**

Increased support to Indspire, the CCAB awards, Order of Canada, Indigenous Voices Awards, REVEAL Indigenous Art Awards, National Indigenous Peoples Day, and National Indigenous History Month should be considered.

Government Navigator Positions currently under development should maintain a list of post-secondary scholarships and bursaries available across the country.

#### **SUMMARY OF INPUTS FROM FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES**

- Through Pilimmaksaivik (the Federal Centre of Excellence for Inuit Employment in Nunavut), the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency (CanNor) supports the Ilipallianiq Education Support Fund, which provides funding Inuit pursuing post-secondary studies that correlate with Government of Canada positions in Nunavut.
- Through ISC's On-Reserve Income Assistance program, case management and pre-employment supports were introduced to better support income assistance clients.
- EDC has provided mentorship to Indigenous entrepreneurs, created new National Lead positions for Indigenous Exporters, and put in place funding for a 2023 Indigenous student bursary.
- ESDC supports Indigenous people completing higher levels of education through the Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) program.
- ESDC is currently supporting several projects seeking to promote mentorship for youth and this is anticipated to be a key funding priority in the next YESS Call for Proposals.
- NRCan's STIP – Green Jobs program signed a two-year agreement with Indigenous Clean Energy to deliver Generation Power, an Indigenous youth clean energy and career training program, developed by and for Indigenous youth (35 participants served in 2021-22).
- NRCan's Office of Energy Efficiency launched the Canada Greener Homes Grant initiative in 2021, which includes funding to support innovative projects that recruit, train, and mentor new energy advisors.

For complete federal input, see page 82.

#### **RELATED NIES CALLS TO ECONOMIC PROSPERITY:**

2. Develop mentorship programs.

## Community Well-Being

**Co-develop a broad dashboard of well-being outcomes to reflect mutually agreed-upon metrics (health, culture, environment, language)**

- CWB1 The Community Well-Being Index was identified by the Auditor General as lacking comprehensiveness in focusing primarily on economic indicators, not sufficiently utilizing First Nations data, and not meaningfully engaging with First Nations to consider Indigenous meanings of community well-being. ***Health, the environment, language, and culture are aspects that are being considered for future study and the Department has committed to working with Indigenous organizations to co-develop a broad dashboard of well-being outcomes to reflect mutually agreed upon metrics.*** Although the integration of new metrics will make historical comparisons of the CWB problematic, the more thorough assessment of community well-being for Indigenous communities will add considerable value. Consulting with all Indigenous groups will ensure diverse lived experiences are considered. We look forward to these improvements in measuring outcomes of community well-being for the 2022 Report.

### SOME PROGRESS ON THIS RECOMMENDATION

## 2019 IEPR FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Community Well-Being Index values provide confirmation that while many of the indicators used in the calculation of the Index have improved, their improvement across all communities continue to maintain the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. First Nations communities continue to exhibit a gap of 19 points, while Inuit communities exhibit a gap in excess of 16 points.

First Nations communities in the Prairies demonstrate CWB values of approximately 10 points below First Nations communities in other regions, increasing the gap to an excess of 25 points from non-Indigenous communities in corresponding provinces.

## NIEDB COMMENTARY

The NIEDB is interested in learning more in relation to the user experience study, the design challenge, and the National Outcome-Based Framework, and to providing advice and guidance to those officials leading such processes.

The NIES found that the Community Well-Being Index, while a useful tool, is limited in terms of indicators and should be extended to cover issues such as housing, infrastructure, training, and health.<sup>10</sup> Additionally, any policy or program that seeks to improve the well-being of Indigenous Peoples needs to ascertain how Indigenous Peoples wish to define success in a local development context, based on the principles of reconciliation and self-determination.<sup>11</sup>

In this context, it is also important to realize that First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples across Canada are among the most exposed and sensitive to the consequences of climate change. Unprecedented

<sup>10</sup> National Indigenous Economic Strategy, 2020, page 40.

<sup>11</sup> National Indigenous Economic Strategy, 2020, page 43.

climate impacts exacerbate existing challenges and health stressors, including wildfires, permafrost thaw, changing wildlife patterns, diminishing access to traditional food sources, and flooding. Each of these affect the social and economic well-being of Indigenous Peoples in Canada.<sup>12</sup>

The FMB RoadMap project also speaks to the measurement of well-being, stating that additional fiscal resources are necessary for “measuring of community well-being outcome metrics over time – metrics that reflect Indigenous cultural values.”<sup>13</sup> The FMB also contends that community economic development planning will “solidify the foundation and principles of a First Nation and create a translatable, transferable, sustained approach to community well-being. It will outline the economic direction that the First Nation will take to unlock its economic potential, aligned with that Nation’s values, goals, culture, and prospects.”<sup>14</sup>

The OECD Report echoes this, stating that Indigenous community well-being data can be improved “by expanding the range of indicators available and developing user-friendly data portals designed for local decision makers.”<sup>15</sup>

## SUMMARY OF INPUTS FROM FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

- ISC has undertaken a user experience survey to better understand barriers to and preferences with regard to reporting and launched a design challenge to obtain Indigenous market solutions for a future-looking tool with which to develop solutions.
- ISC is working with First Nations partners to co-develop a National Outcome-Based Framework to accompany the Community Well-Being Index.

For complete federal input, see page 84.

## RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY

From FMB RoadMap:

- Does geographic remoteness affect the socioeconomic well-being of Indigenous communities? If so, do the existing transfer-revenue formulas reflect any socioeconomic disparities due to geography?
- Does access to financing for First Nations governments result in higher community well-being outcomes? Does the source of financing influence this relationship?

Is adequate community infrastructure a pre-condition to economic development and community well-being?

<sup>12</sup> Canada, Environment and Climate Change Canada, *A Healthy Environment and A Healthy Economy: Canada’s Strengthened Climate Plan to Create Jobs and Support People, Communities and the Planet*, 2020.

<sup>13</sup> FMB RoadMap, Chapter 5, page 29.

<sup>14</sup> FMB RoadMap, Chapter 4, page 33.

<sup>15</sup> OECD Report, page 18.

## Education

**Improve on-reserve education systems**

**Prioritize health and cultural supports in community-based education**

**Develop bridging programs to help students wanting to upgrade from college to university**

**Invest in distance education programs**

**Expand and continue scholarship funding**

### 2019 IEPR FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

High school completion rates improved for all Indigenous identity groups by at least 6.0 percentage points between 2006 to 2016. As well, the gap with the non-Indigenous population decreased for all identity groups. Despite this, Indigenous high school rates continue to be substantially lower than that of the non-Indigenous population.

Among the Indigenous identity groups, Métis have the highest high school completion rate followed by First Nations off reserve. First Nations on reserve and Inuit continue to have high school completion rates that are in excess of 30 percentage points lower than non-Indigenous rates.

The proportion of Indigenous peoples with a college/trades education was slightly higher than for the non-Indigenous population in 2015, increasing the gap by 2.2 percentage points from the 2006 benchmark. First Nations on reserve demonstrate the lowest completion rates followed by Inuit. Métis and First Nations off reserve demonstrate the highest rates and the greatest growth.

Data suggests that deficit gaps are narrowing between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations in high school completion. In all Indigenous identity groups, more individuals are completing college, trades or apprenticeship degrees or diplomas than non-Indigenous individuals, and that lead is increasing. Even among the identity groups with lower completion rates, the gap is small (approximately 5%). A persistent gap remains and is widening between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations in university completion rates. This finding is significant in light of information discussed earlier regarding Core Indicator #2: Income. Given that Indigenous populations are more highly represented in high income industry categories but low-income occupational categories, higher levels of education would help to promote Indigenous workers into the higher occupational categories in the industries where they are already represented. Strategies to further support Indigenous educational attainment at higher levels would serve to capitalize on this existing representation and accelerate the reduction of income gaps.



## Education Recommendation #1

### Improve on-reserve education systems

- EDU1      The Board would like to stress the importance of *improving educational opportunities for the Indigenous population, especially First Nations on reserve*. In this regard, a well-funded education system is essential and the development of strong basic skills (literacy and numeracy) in the early grades should be a top priority.

#### SOME PROGRESS ON THIS RECOMMENDATION

### NIEDB COMMENTARY

The NIEDB recognizes that while additional funds have been made available to Indigenous education programming, Indigenous K-12 students remain underfunded in comparison with children attending off-reserve schools.

In 2020, the AFN examined progress on the TRC Calls to Action, and in relation to education, indicated:

- Moderate progress has been made in this area and most notably, the ongoing efforts towards the completion of Call to Action #11. Future budget announcements must continue to commit further funding as there is still a persistent backlog of First Nations students seeking a post-secondary education. Further progress on Action #8 is possible if the government reduces funding discrepancies between on- and off-reserve First Nations.
- Going forward, additional attention should be given to the education of Indigenous Peoples in financial literacy and capacity.

The OECD report highlights the potential that sectoral self-government agreements specific to education hold. For example, under the Mi'kmaq Education Partnership, the members of Mi'kmaq Kina'matnewey (a coalition of twelve First Nations) control and deliver education to their citizens. There are presently 11 band run schools in Nova Scotia, and more than half the teachers are Mi'kmaq. Educational attainments rates have been growing and Atlantic Canada now has the highest rate of aboriginal students attending university in Canada.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, the Anishnabek Nation (Union of Ontario Indians) has the Anishinabek Educational Institute.<sup>17</sup>

In discussing the potential creation of an Indigenous Economic Council (IEC), the FMB RoadMap indicates a key component of the work of this council would be in bringing forward an Educational Plan:

- As part of the Community Economic Development Plan, the IEC can support First Nations in developing a long-term educational plan for community members. As capacity and systems progress and gain complexity, new positions in a myriad of fields will be required to sustain growth. These positions will include administrative roles, like senior management, human resources, communications, governance, and finance, as well as specialized roles, such as engineers, technicians, biologists, geologists, lawyers, and more. The IEC member organizations will support First Nations with leading practices and options for aligning the human capital

<sup>16</sup> OECD Report, page 311

<sup>17</sup> OECD Report, page 58

needs of the community with the educational offerings they provide. Furthermore, the IEC and participating First Nations and organizations could collaborate with interested academic institutions to co-develop curricula to address the growing Indigenous economy, which would be a new resource for personnel, capacity, and innovation. The greater number of new roles and specializations will also increase average income for First Nations' citizens, narrowing the income gap and leading to healthier and safer communities.<sup>18</sup>

## **SUMMARY OF INPUTS FROM FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES**

- ISC launched a new funding approach for their Elementary and Secondary Education Program to provide First Nations administered schools on-reserve with predictable, sustainable, and transparent funding.
- Regional education agreements (REAs) were introduced by ISC to support First Nations self-determination through culturally appropriate education programming.
- Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada's (CIRNAC) Treaty and Aboriginal Government Sector has worked with negotiating groups to advance sectoral governance agreements related to education to enable Indigenous governments to manage the jurisdiction of education and meet the needs of their communities.
- NRCan's Office of Energy Efficiency launched the Canada Greener Homes Grant initiative to fund innovative projects that recruit, train, and mentor new energy advisors across Canada.

For complete federal input, see page 85.

## **RELATED NIES CALLS TO ECONOMIC PROSPERITY:**

1. Create a financial literacy and business curriculum for youth and adults.
16. Enact legislation for equal funding for Indigenous K-12 education.
17. Direct Federal funding to Indigenous enrolment in post-secondary STEM disciplines.
18. Partner with organizations focused on Indigenous STEM programs.
62. Conduct research on access to education in remote Indigenous communities, develop a plan to address connectivity deficiencies.

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<sup>18</sup> FMB RoadMap, Chapter 4, page 34



## Education Recommendation #2

### Prioritize health and cultural supports in community-based education

- EDU2      ***Supports for community-based education must recognize the challenges faced by Indigenous students who must leave the community to attend high school and prioritize their physical and mental health, as well as cultural supports*** both where they attend high school and within the community to ensure ongoing student success.

#### GOOD PROGRESS ON THIS RECOMMENDATION

#### NIEDB COMMENTARY

The NIEDB recognizes government efforts in this area made since 2019, prompted by the tragic events experienced by Indigenous youth in Thunder Bay, which hosts Indigenous secondary and post-secondary students from across northern Ontario. Seven First Nations teens died there between 2000 and 2011. Each of the youth were in Thunder Bay, away from their small, mostly fly-in communities, separated from their parents and friends, in order to obtain a high school education. Five of the students were found in Thunder Bay rivers, while two students died in their boarding homes.

There are several federal programs which explicitly mention wrap around services, including ISED's Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) and Youth Employment and Skills Strategy (YESS) programs, and ISC's Inuit and Métis Nation PSE Strategies. Such programming should continue to be supported, and ISC's First Nations PSE Strategy should more explicitly address the issue of wrap around services for Indigenous students who need to leave their home communities for education.

There should be an increased role for Elders in providing such support. As the NIES indicates, "Elders traditionally hold crucial roles in supporting both formal and informal education in Indigenous communities. They impart tradition, knowledge, culture, values, and lessons using orality and role modelling traditional practices. Elders are the carriers and emblems of communally generated and mediated knowledge."<sup>19</sup>

The NIES also quotes a 2018 OECD report entitled *Indigenous Employment and Skills Strategies in Canada*, which indicates that "many non-Indigenous urban service-delivery organizations do not necessarily provide culturally sensitive services to Indigenous Peoples. Furthermore, information on where and how to access programs and services is sometimes not readily available to urban Indigenous Peoples. This situation can be especially challenging for Indigenous Peoples who are moving from their community into an urban area. Programs have the greatest chance of success when delivered in a culturally sensitive manner."<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> NIES, page 46

<sup>20</sup> NIES, page 42

Finally, the Government Navigator Positions currently under development should develop a list of local and regional supports available for Indigenous high school and post-secondary students, particularly those who must leave their home communities.

### **SUMMARY OF INPUTS FROM FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES**

- Both of ISC's Inuit and Métis Nation PSE Strategies offer mentorship, Elder guidance, cultural support, and navigation services. Under the First Nations PSE Strategy, the Post-Secondary Partnerships Program supports First Nations-established post-secondary education institutions and First Nations community-based programming. The School Space Accommodation Standard was also revised in 2021 to include space for Culture, Language, and Knowledge Keepers and outside learning areas.
- Farm Credit Canada offers the Indigenous Student Empowerment Fund, which is open to Indigenous students attending one of four Saskatchewan post-secondary institutions. The Canada Student Financial Assistance (CSFA) Program provides all eligible students seeking to pursue post-secondary education with non-repayable grants and needs-based loans.
- ESDC's Supports for Student Learning Program (SSLP) funds after school programming to help students from Indigenous and other historically underserved communities complete high school and transition to post-secondary education.

For complete federal input, see page 87.

### **RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY**

Review of Government of Canada programming for wrap around services for Indigenous students who need to leave their home communities for education (adequacy of funding to meet need, recommendations to streamline and rationalize policies and procedures).

### **RELATED NIES CALLS TO ECONOMIC PROSPERITY:**

63. Provide safe and culturally appropriate educational options for Indigenous students in urban communities.



### **Education Recommendation #3**

#### **Develop bridging programs to help students wanting to upgrade from college to university**

- EDU3      Given the high levels of college/trades completion, ***bridging programs to support students who wish to upgrade these certifications*** towards university degrees would fast track higher levels of education and employment opportunities. Such programs currently exist in some colleges to give credit for 1-2-year programs towards university degree requirements and expansion would further assist Indigenous students towards the attainment of higher education levels.

#### **MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE TO IMPLEMENT THIS RECOMMENDATION**

### **NIEDB COMMENTARY**

While more Indigenous youth than ever before are completing college and earning certification in the trades, there is a gap in service for bridging programs for students wishing to upgrade college / trade certification towards university degrees. The NIES indicates budget support for Indigenous youth qualifying for post-secondary education has been capped, leaving many without an opportunity to continue their education beyond secondary school.<sup>21</sup>

Government departments should commit increased funding to existing programs and address the service gap relating to the need for bridging / upgrade programs.

### **SUMMARY OF INPUTS FROM FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES**

- ISC continues to support the Post-Secondary Partnership Program (PSPP), which supports the transition to post-secondary settings and meeting entry requirements to post-secondary.
- ISC's Income Assistance and First Nations and Inuit Youth Employment Strategy pilot, which ended in 2022, supported on-reserve First Nations youth who were receiving Income Assistance to transition to the workforce or return to school.
- ESDC's Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) service providers help Indigenous students access bridging programs that fast track their achievement of higher education and employment opportunities.

For complete federal input, see page 89.

### **RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY**

Research into this identified service gap to identify barriers to implementing bridging / upgrade programs and to pinpoint potential solutions.

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<sup>21</sup> NIES, page 42

#### **Education Recommendation #4**

##### **Invest in distance education programs**

- EDU4 Universities in each of the 3 Northern territories would support students in reducing the high costs and long distances currently required to attend university and increase the availability of a highly educated talent pool in the North. Yukon College is transitioning to Yukon University in 2020, Aurora College in the Northwest Territories is examining the feasibility of transitioning to Northern Canada Polytechnic University, and Arctic College in Nunavut is following recommendations to continue partnering with southern universities rather than pursue a university in Nunavut. In the interim, ***investment in distance education programs to assist remote students with obtaining higher levels of education would remove some barriers of expense and distance.***

#### **SOME PROGRESS ON THIS RECOMMENDATION**

#### **NIEDB COMMENTARY**

The NIEDB recognizes action in the North on higher education, in particular in relation to the establishment of Yukon University and transformation of Aurora College into a polytechnic institution.

More is required in relation to investment in distance education programs.

The NIEDB calls upon partners within the Arctic and Northern Policy Framework to consider transitioning Nunavut Arctic College to university status. The NIES indicates “Inuit have the lowest levels of post-secondary education, largely attributable to the lack of post-secondary institutions in Inuit Nunangat. At the same time, Inuit youth also face specific challenges in attaining quality high school education in isolated and remote communities, especially in sciences and mathematics.”<sup>22</sup>

#### **SUMMARY OF INPUTS FROM FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES**

- CanNor has supported the three territorial post-secondary education institutions through its Northern Adult Basic Education Program (NABEP), which serves mostly Indigenous students.
- ISC’s Post-Secondary Partnerships Program (PSPP) supports First Nations-established post-secondary institutions and First Nations community-based programming.
- CIRNAC has led 4 major initiatives supporting tertiary education in the Arctic and North – two of which relate to the establishment of Yukon University and transformation of Aurora College into a polytechnic institution.
- ESDC’s Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) program provides wrap around services to help address barriers in online education and training.
- NRCan’s Geological Survey of Canada’s GEM (Geo-Mapping for Energy and Minerals) GeoNorth Program provides grants to academia and Northern & Indigenous organizations to design tools that build capacity for use of geoscience.

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<sup>22</sup> NIES, page 49

For complete federal input, see page 90.

#### **RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY**

Understand what is needed for successful distance education programs and the barriers that currently exist to investment in that area.



### ***Education Recommendation #5***

#### **Expand and continue scholarship funding**

- EDU5      ***Ongoing and expanded scholarship funding*** for Indigenous students pursuing post-secondary education would reduce financial barriers and encourage higher educational attainment rates.

**MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE TO IMPLEMENT THIS RECOMMENDATION**

#### **NIEDB COMMENTARY**

The NIEDB strongly supports the work of Indspire in recognizing and rewarding talent. Increased federal support for scholarships for Indigenous students through Indspire is recommended.

Government Navigator Positions currently under development should maintain a list of post-secondary scholarships and bursaries available across the country, including at the provincial and local levels.

#### **SUMMARY OF INPUTS FROM FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES**

- ISC supports distinctions-based post-secondary education strategies for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis that provide funding to students and institutions.
- ESDC has a relationship with Indspire, which provides scholarships, bursaries, and mentorship supports for Indigenous students.

For complete federal input, see page 92.





## **Entrepreneurship and Business Development**

**Provide access to business services and skills training and raise awareness of funding supports and programs**

**Examine potential supports for First Nations on reserve businesses**

**Fund Aboriginal Financial Institutions to ensure entrepreneurs are able to access capital**

### **2019 IEPR FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

Self-employment among Indigenous individuals rose from 6.8% to 7.4% from 2006 to 2016.

Seasonal work may have a larger impact on self-employment/entrepreneurship as higher rates of self-employment are registered when it is not surveyed within a single fixed week.

Inuit are two to three times more likely to pursue handicraft and harvesting work for income than other Indigenous identity groups.

Profitability of Indigenous businesses has increased with 76% indicating they have registered a profit in 2015 up from 61% in 2010.

Revenue growth is more likely to be reported by Indigenous businesses that are incorporated and have employees.

A considerable deterrent for incorporation of Indigenous business on reserve is Section 87 of the *Indian Act* which prevents corporations from being eligible for tax exemptions. This factor likely has a strong influence on the findings of only 14% of businesses on reserve being incorporated.



### ***Entrepreneurship and Business Development Recommendation #1***

**Provide access to business services and skills training and raise awareness of funding supports and programs**

- EDBD1 Research by CCAB suggests that barriers for business development include a lack of knowledge of where and how to apply for financing, as well as types of funding available and eligibility. ***Enhanced, more specific, and greater availability of business services along with communications to increase awareness of application programs and support would benefit entrepreneurs seeking capital financing.*** Additionally, access to skills training for new business owners would assist with the development of business management skills to support business success.

#### **GOOD PROGRESS ON THIS RECOMMENDATION**

### **NIEDB COMMENTARY**

NIEDB recognizes real progress made in relation to the provision of increased support to Indigenous businesses across a significant number of federal departments. The sheer number of options available means it will be important for Government Navigator Positions to maintain a good program inventory.

To truly make a difference to the lives of Indigenous Peoples, however, a major overhaul of the way government addresses Indigenous economic development is required.

Funding for Indigenous economic development should be increased to no less than 10% of total spending on Indigenous Peoples, in part to make up for past funding shortfalls, but also in recognition of the fact that each dollar spent on Indigenous economic and business development has the potential to leverage important community and social benefits, as well as enhance regional economies across Canada.

Programs offered by Indigenous Services Canada such as the Lands and Economic Development Services Program and Community Opportunity Readiness are consistently oversubscribed and underfunded. Substantially increasing the funding available to such programs for disbursement to Indigenous communities, while at the same time examining their terms and conditions, would go a long way to achieving the 10% goal referenced above.

The responsibility for delivery of such programming should be in the hands of Indigenous-led institutions. Indigenous owned and led institutions can act as centres of excellence for the promotion of leading practices, case studies, tools, templates, and advice to build Indigenous capacity.

Significant investment is necessary for the establishment of Indigenous-led institutions at the national level focused on lands, infrastructure, procurement, statistics, education, and in the various economic sectors. The NIEDB recognizes progress in this area.

Regional Development Agencies should examine internal policies and priorities with the goal of achieving the following:

- more rigorous training and hiring criteria for RDA agents who engage with Indigenous communities;
- increased career supports for youth and young entrepreneurs;
- use the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a framework for reconciliation; and,
- examine systemic barriers to economic development internal to the RDAs and examine organizational evolution in the current social context.

All government departments, including the RDAs, should share the National Indigenous Economic Strategy internally across their organizations, advise the National Board on how organizations can assist in carrying out the Calls to Economic Prosperity, and advise the National Board on which specific Calls to Action will be undertaken.

### **SUMMARY OF INPUTS FROM FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES**

- Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) support entrepreneurship and business development through a range of national programs that are often regionally tailored, and region-specific programs that are intended to address the unique challenges and opportunities of each region.
- ISC supported a project with the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB) on a virtual Export Training Program (ETP) to promote Indigenous business development.
- ISC launched the Navigator position in 2022 to help Indigenous entrepreneurs find programs related to their needs.
- Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) has an Indigenous Pathfinder Service to provide support for Indigenous people looking for advice or a referral to initiate or expand operations in the sector.
- Farm Credit Canada has ensured that its financing products apply and are accessible to Indigenous agriculture and food proponents.
- AAFC's AgriDiversity Program helps under-represented groups in agriculture, including Indigenous Peoples, to fully participate in the sector by addressing common issues and barriers.
- ESDC's Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) Program provides training to support self-employment based on community and individual needs.
- EDC has a variety of initiatives to include Indigenous business in their programs and metrics.
- DFO offers the Indigenous Commercial Fisheries Programs to support business development and planning for Indigenous groups and communities in the fisheries and oceans sectors.
- Global Affairs Canada's (GAC) Trade Commissioner Service (TCS) provides enhanced support to Indigenous-owned businesses interested in exporting to international markets.
- Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED) is funding the CCAB to provide services through the Canada Digital Adoption Program – Grow Your Business Online Stream.
- ISED is funding the Indigenous Tourism Industry Association to support the recovery of Indigenous tourism after the COVID-19 pandemic.
- NRCan is collaborating with the Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers (Cando) since 2020 to develop mining webinars.
- NRCan's Indigenous Forestry Initiative (IFI) provides financial support to Indigenous-led economic development projects in the forestry sector.
- NRCan's Polar Continental Shelf Program has seen a significant increase in the number of contracts awarded to Inuit firms.

For complete federal input, see page 93.

#### RELATED NIES CALLS TO ECONOMIC PROSPERITY:

4. Create information and gateway platforms to navigate the range of resources and services for entrepreneurs.
14. Business schools in Canada require all business students to take a course on Indigenous Peoples and the economy, which includes the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal Rights, Indigenous Law, Aboriginal – Crown Relations, and skills-based training in intercultural competencies, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.
22. Strengthen supports for organizations that focus on Indigenous skills, employment, and business training.
23. Conduct meaningful data and conduct assessments on the efficacy of existing programs in relation to the skills development of Indigenous Peoples.
66. Provide Indigenous communities and organizations with the first opportunity to take over decommissioned government physical assets; and provide skills training and support for ongoing operations and maintenance.



## ***Entrepreneurship and Business Development Recommendation #2***

### **Examine potential supports for First Nations on reserve businesses**

- EDBD2      Given the legislation on reserve which disallows tax exemption and therefore discourages incorporation, and information to suggest incorporation is associated with revenue generation, ***further consideration of how First Nations on reserve businesses could be better supported should be examined.***

#### **GOOD PROGRESS ON THIS RECOMMENDATION**

### **NIEDB COMMENTARY**

Funding for Indigenous economic development should be increased to no less than 10% of total spending on Indigenous Peoples, in part to make up for past funding shortfalls, but also in recognition of the fact that each dollar spent on Indigenous economic and business development has the potential to leverage important community and social benefits, as well as enhance regional economies across Canada.

Programs offered by Indigenous Services Canada such as the Lands and Economic Development Services Program and Community Opportunity Readiness are consistently oversubscribed and underfunded. Substantially increasing the funding available to such programs for disbursement to Indigenous communities, while at the same time examining their terms and conditions, would go a long way to achieving the 10% goal referenced above.

The responsibility for delivery of such programming should be in the hands of Indigenous-led institutions. Indigenous owned and led institutions can act as centres of excellence for the promotion of leading practices, case studies, tools, templates, and advice to build Indigenous capacity.

Significant investment is necessary for the establishment of Indigenous-led institutions at the national level focused on lands, infrastructure, procurement, statistics, education, and in the various economic sectors. The NIEDB recognizes progress in this area.

### **SUMMARY OF INPUTS FROM FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES**

- CanNor, Canadian Economic Development for Quebec Regions (CED), and the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario (FedNor) offer programs and initiatives to enable Indigenous people to access funding.
- The Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario) has identified barriers faced by Indigenous applications in accessing their programming.
- Many non-Indigenous Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDCs) have prioritized Indigenous economic development and relationships with First Nations in their coverage area.
- ISC's Initiative to Modernize Federal Requirements on First Nations Decision Making received Ministerial approval in 2021, which is linked to economic development on-reserve and reconciliation.
- ISC's First Nations and Inuit Youth Employment Strategy (FNIYES) supports employers to hire and retain youth aged 15 to 30 who are First Nations living on reserve or Inuit living outside of their land-claim areas to gain work experience.

- ISED is exploring ways to make accessing and affording entrepreneurship easier.

For complete federal input, see page 103.

#### **RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY**

Research into whether additional funding is offsetting taxes for incorporated businesses on reserve to determine the real impact of funding for Indigenous entrepreneurship in addressing this issue.





### *Entrepreneurship and Business Development Recommendation #3*

#### **Fund Aboriginal Financial Institutions to ensure entrepreneurs are able to access capital**

- EDBD3      Access to capital remains a barrier to economic development. ***It is essential that the Aboriginal Financial Institutions are funded*** to ensure Indigenous entrepreneurs, often less likely to acquire financing from personal home equity or other sources, are able to obtain financing.

#### **SOME PROGRESS ON THIS RECOMMENDATION**

#### **NIEDB COMMENTARY**

The challenges facing Indigenous business are many, but perhaps most pressing is access to equity and capital. This is particularly true for First Nations entrepreneurs on reserve, who face challenges in using such land as collateral for a loan.

Back in 1996, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples recognized the complexity of Indigenous economic development and the need for a variety of approaches. RCAP articulated the need for Indigenous economic development institutions and noted that the deliberate economic exclusion of Indigenous Peoples from their traditional land and resource base must be corrected.

RCAP also stated that Indigenous economic development must be linked to the broader regional and national economies, and that economic development cannot be considered separately from other factors that have a direct bearing on socio-economic outcomes, such as education, health, cultural identities, and infrastructure and services for communities and families.

In 2016, the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business identified access to capital as the most significant barrier to business growth, as ranked by entrepreneurs, and found that Indigenous businesses rely to a much higher relative degree on personal savings to finance their businesses.

The NIES lists Finance as a Strategic Pathway, with a Vision that states “Indigenous Peoples and communities have the financial capital to achieve economic and social prosperity on their own terms.” The greatest impediment to economic and business development on-reserve continues to be the Indian Act, which regulates almost every aspect of community life on-reserve for nearly 600,000 registered Indians.

The NIEDB supports the Indigenous-led innovations that have been developed to address this issue, notably the national network of Indigenous Financial Institutions (IFIs) and the institutions created under the First Nations Fiscal Management Act (FNFMA), in particular, the First Nations Finance Authority (FNFA). Additional steps can be taken to further expand on their success and develop a more complete framework to address the persistent barriers that Indigenous governments, businesses, and individuals face in accessing capital and financial services.

Support for Indigenous Financial Institutions (IFIs) should be increased, as these entities are key to supporting the growth of Indigenous economies across Canada. While IFIs take on more risk than conventional commercial lenders, annual loan losses averaged only 2.1% in 2019-20. The current loan limits of \$250,000 for IFIs should be lifted immediately. The limit does not realistically cover even the

cost of a commercial building or major piece of equipment. In addition, more competitive, market-determined borrowing rates should be implemented.

#### **SUMMARY OF INPUTS FROM FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES**

- ACOA, CED, PacifiCan, Prairies Economic Development Canada (PrairiesCan), FedDev Ontario, and FedNor provide operating support to financial institutions and Community Futures organizations in their regions.
- ISC's Aboriginal Entrepreneurship Program (AEP) moved to a distinctions-based delivery model to reserve funding for the Métis.
- Budget 2019 announced the creation of the Indigenous Growth Fund (IGF) to provide access to capital for Indigenous businesses.
- AAFC's Farm Credit Canada has undertaken measures to ensure its products are accessible to Indigenous agriculture and food proponents.
- EDC has committed funding to the National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association's (NACCA) Indigenous Growth Fund and partnered with them on various programs.
- DFO's Indigenous Commercial Fisheries Programs have partnered with Indigenous financial institutions to provide services to Indigenous groups and communities.
- NRCan is developing a national benefits-sharing framework to increase Indigenous access to capital.

For complete federal input, see page 105.

#### **RELATED NIES CALLS TO ECONOMIC PROSPERITY:**

5. Ensure that Indigenous Entrepreneurs have access to capital and enabling programs to fully participate in the Canadian economy.
84. Reform government policy and legislation to remove all barriers to Indigenous access to capital.
92. Restore and strengthen funding to build the capacity of Aboriginal Financial Institutions to meet the demand for loans and for the distribution of stimulus funds.
93. Create an Indigenous Business Development Bank or intermediary for Indigenous finance.



## Governance

### Support governance and financial management training and certification

#### Examine needs and opportunities aimed at urban Indigenous populations

### 2019 IEPR FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The 2019 report illustrated systems of governance in First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities.

In relation to the number of First Nations with property assessment and taxation bylaws, there has been a decrease in the number of First Nations that implemented property taxation under Section 83 of the Indian Act from 56 in 2014, to 41 in 2018.

There was an increase in the number of First Nations that implemented property taxation under the FNFMA from 68 in 2014, to 113 in 2018.

Overall, there was a 24% increase in the number of First Nations communities with property taxation bylaws between 2014 and 2018.

In relation to First Nations Financial Management Certification, communities who are participating in the FNFMA further obtain opportunities to build capacity through services such as the Financial Management System Certification. The number of First Nation communities who have become certified by the FNFMB increased from 34 in 2014, to 101 in 2018.

The 2019 report concluded that strong governance systems contribute to a community's ability to take advantage of economic opportunities. In Inuit Nunangat, strong governance systems and national representation through Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami support regional development corporations which in turn reinvest in Inuit communities. Métis governance through the Métis National Council is structured to ensure regional representation while providing a unified voice for national and international policy development, negotiation, and representation. For First Nations, the Assembly of First Nations is the national representative body comprised of a National Chief and ten Regional Chiefs providing governance and national representation for 634 First Nations. Successful community governance is supported by transparent financial management and proficiency in revenue creation. There has been an increase in the number of First Nations that are creating tax revenues for their communities either through the First Nations Land Management Act or Section 83 of the Indian Act. First Nation communities have opportunities to participate in programs through the First Nations Financial Management Act, such as the Financial Management Certification, to help build their financial management capacity. These positive trends within First Nations are demonstrative of increased governance capacity that will serve as the required foundation for harnessing economic development opportunities.



## ***Governance Recommendation #1***

### **Support governance and financial management training and certification**

- GOV1 Strong governance and transparent financial management have led to robust economic development opportunities for Indigenous communities across Canada. The availability of tax revenues to support local development is initiated by the development of property taxation bylaws and supported by skilled and transparent community Financial Management Certification. ***Ongoing and expanded support for Indigenous communities wishing to pursue these opportunities*** will further ready communities to direct their own economic development opportunities.

### **SOME PROGRESS ON THIS RECOMMENDATION**

#### **NIEDB COMMENTARY**

NIEDB recognizes actions to increase the number of First Nations taking advantage of self-government processes and the FNFMA.

More needs to be done to incentivize such action at the local, regional, and national levels.

The NIEDB supports the development of the new Infrastructure Institute, and recognizes this work responds directly to the following Call to Economic Prosperity:

59. Create an Indigenous-led Institute for Physical Infrastructure that collects and disseminates information on leading practices and provides advisory services.

Other issues to consider in the creation of this Institute:

- neighbouring communities are interconnected, and off-reserve linkages are important in the consideration of infrastructure creation, particularly connectivity, water, and housing
- the need for cooperation and inter-operability between FNFMA institutions
- recognition that all approaches must be distinctions-based, recognizing the unique needs of Métis and Inuit communities
- the need for technical expertise at the regional level

#### **SUMMARY OF INPUTS FROM FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES**

- ACOA is collaborating with the First Nations Financial Management Board (FNFMB) to develop services and programs for Indigenous people and communities.
- CanNor has updated its approach to funding and supporting Indigenous economic development.
- FedNor continues to support First Nations communities with Comprehensive Community Planning (CCP).
- The Indian Oil and Gas Act and Indian Oil and Gas Regulations will give greater control to First Nations over oil and gas activity on their lands.
- The Alberta Region has a partnership with the Alberta chapter of the Aboriginal Financial Officer's Association (AFOA) to provide training in financial management and management skills.

- CIRNAC's First Nations Fiscal Management Act has allowed 39 communities to achieve a Financial Management Systems Certification.
- CIRNAC and ISC are proceeding with establishing a new national Infrastructure Institute under the Act.
- EDC has collaborated with financial institutions that focus on supporting Indigenous businesses and Cando to provide sponsorship funding, export education webinars, and export knowledge articles.

For complete federal input, see page 108.

## **RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY**

Research into potential incentives that could be developed to encourage action to support First Nations self-governance.

## **RELATED NIES CALLS TO ECONOMIC PROSPERITY:**

83. Indigenous Peoples participate in resource revenue sharing.
86. Governments enact policies and legislation prioritizing Indigenous Peoples as equity partners in all major projects.
90. Research and action the mechanisms that will stimulate Indigenous economic prosperity.
91. Implement tax incentives for private sector and social investors.



## ***Governance Recommendation #2***

### **Examine needs and opportunities aimed at urban Indigenous populations**

- GOV2 Due to an increase in Indigenous populations off reserve/out of territory, the NIEDB recommends the ***examination of needs and opportunities aimed at the more than 50% of Indigenous peoples living in urban populations.***

#### **MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE TO IMPLEMENT THIS RECOMMENDATION**

### **NIEDB COMMENTARY**

NIEDB is interested in participating in the Program Evaluation of the Urban Program for Indigenous Peoples. The evaluation of Urban Programming for Indigenous Peoples will begin in September 2023.<sup>23</sup>

The National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC) has long been underfunded, and provincial and territorial governments should also be funding their essential services.

A network of over 100 Friendship Centres and Provincial/Territorial Associations, the NAFC represents Canada's most significant national network of self-determined Indigenous owned and operated civil society community hubs offering programs, services and supports to urban Indigenous people.

The NAFC takes a holistic view on Indigenous economic development, arguing that a variety of structural barriers such as housing, gender-based discrimination, and remoteness must be taken into account when supporting individuals' engagement with the economy.

Already delivering ESDC Investment and Readiness Program funding, the organization is looking to leverage its established national network to deliver economic development programming as well. Given the role that Friendship Centres hold in urban Indigenous communities, they are positioned to be a key player in the social finance ecosystem as it relates to growing an urban Indigenous economy.

The NAFC's 2021 Pre-Budget Submission made the following recommendations:

- That the Government of Canada renew and enhance the sunseting Friendship Centre funding at a minimum of \$60 million per year for at least the next 10 years.
- That the Government of Canada allocate a minimum of \$16 million per year for at least the next 10 years to enhance services for urban Indigenous children and youth.
- That the Government of Canada provide \$18 million for at least the next 10 years towards urban Indigenous data and research capacity for Friendship Centres.

Many non-Indigenous urban service-delivery organizations do not necessarily provide culturally sensitive services to Indigenous Peoples. Furthermore, information on where and how to access programs and services is sometimes not readily available to urban Indigenous Peoples. This situation can be especially challenging for Indigenous Peoples who are moving from their community into an urban area. Programs have the greatest chance of success when delivered in a culturally sensitive manner.

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1666179748156/1666179794481>



## SUMMARY OF INPUTS FROM FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

- ACOA and FedDev Ontario have provided social and cultural programming and economic development opportunities.
- ISC's Individual Affairs Branch has partnered with Indigenous organizations across Canada to empower them to help with status card applications, which are necessary to accessing programs, services, and benefits.
- ESDC is working to advance childcare by making Indigenous-specific investments in First Nations, Métis, and Inuit early learning and childcare priorities.

For complete federal input, see page 111.

### RELATED NIES CALLS TO ECONOMIC PROSPERITY:

44. Identify Indigenous land claim bases on or near urban, commercial centres as settlement for loss of economic use.
63. Provide safe and culturally appropriate educational options for Indigenous students in urban communities.
68. Fully fund rural, remote, and urban Indigenous community training to maintain, operate, and protect current and new physical and technological infrastructure.



## Lands and Resources

### Increase resources to the Additions to Reserve program to expedite applications

- LR1 The Additions to Reserve process provides a mechanism to address outstanding land transfers but is currently backlogged by approximately 1,300 active applications of which eighty percent of all files represent a legal obligation for the Crown which must be addressed. ***There is a need to increase resources to the Additions to Reserve program to expedite applications***, however there wasn't any funding announced in the 2019/2020 Federal Budget that was specific to the ATR program. The NIEDB recommends that future Federal Budgets announce funding to enhance and expedite the administration of the ATR program

#### SOME PROGRESS ON THIS RECOMMENDATION

### 2019 IEPR FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The Indigenous land base continues to grow through land claim settlements and additions to reserve, thus creating new economic development options. Control by Indigenous Peoples over their land base constitutes a significant success factor for maximizing benefits from economic opportunities such as mining development and agriculture, and for commercial and residential development. A positive correlation between greater control over lands and resources and higher socio-economic outcomes was one of the most important findings of the 2012 Aboriginal Economic Benchmarking Report.

There was an increase in communities who obtained ratified stand-alone Self-Government Agreements (SGAs) from 3 in 2014 to 16 in 2018. There are now 100 communities involved in ratified self-government agreements compared to the 96 communities in 2014 (Comprehensive Land Claim Agreements and SGAs). Through the comprehensive land claim agreements, Inuit across the four regions have been granted title to roughly 35% of Canada's landmass and 50% of its coastline.

There have been 269 Addition to Reserve Files approved since 2015 accounting for 4 million acres (16187.4 square km) to be added to reserve lands. A majority of the Addition to Reserve files approved have been in Manitoba and Saskatchewan due to the increased amount of Treaty Land Entitlements and pre-reserve designations.

The 2019 report concluded that access to land and freedom to manage it is extremely important for Indigenous Peoples to receive maximum benefits from economic development opportunities. More First Nations communities are starting to participate in legislation such as the First Nations Land Management Act that will assist communities in building capacity to best develop their land. Many more First Nations and Métis communities are in the process of attaining comprehensive land claim agreements and self-government agreements with the intent to have full governing authority over their lands, creating more opportunity to establish partnerships with other governments and the private sector. There is opportunity for First Nations to expand their land base through programs such as the Additions to Reserves. These programs are essential towards providing communities with more opportunities to leverage ownership of land towards Indigenous economic development projects.

## NIEDB COMMENTARY

The Additions to Reserve process remains lengthy and cumbersome. The NIEDB recommends the creation of a First Nations-led Institution responsible for Additions to Reserves (ATRs) to address the conflict of interest presently inherent in the process. The current policy invites confrontation rather than reconciliation as it does not respond to First Nations' visions for a stronger land base, cultural recovery, traditional or treaty territories, and economically valuable lands. The current policy is also disconnected from regional planning, regional environmental or climate change considerations, and regional infrastructure development and renewal.

Raising the profile of ATRs is also fundamental to reconciliation. ATRs are real drivers of economic development, particularly in the urban context.

The NIEDB applauds efforts to improve the related Specific Claims process by adopting a more collaborative approach with First Nations during claims assessment and increasing the efficiency of the process and supports these changes.

A reformed specific claims process is starting with a focus on the establishment of an independent Centre for the Resolution of Specific Claims charged with registering and tracking until they are resolved. It will also provide funding and funding guidelines for First Nation's participation throughout the process.

In addition, it is envisioned the Centre will facilitate negotiations by providing assistance to parties and creating a resource hub for research and claim development. Mediation services will also be available to facilitate the resolution of claims.

Examples of success in the resolution of specific claims should be better publicized.

## SUMMARY OF INPUTS FROM FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

- Budget 2021 provided ISC with access to approximately \$32.2 million to accelerate work on existing additions to reserve requests.
- Budget 2021 provided CIRNAC with \$10.8 million to redesign the Additions to Reserve Policy.
- ISC launched the new National Additions to Reserve Tracking System (NATS) which provides a project management system to streamline the Additions to Reserve process.
- An Indian Land Registry Team Leader position was created in ISC's Quebec Region to manage and expedite land transfers.

For complete federal input, see page 113.

## RELATED NIES CALLS TO ECONOMIC PROSPERITY:

36. Change place names to reflect Indigenous traditional names and the Indigenous world views. Create maps that reflect historical Indigenous place names.
38. Document Indigenous Peoples' relationship to the land, and mandate that it inform Indigenous-led education of policy makers, industry, and all Canadians.
40. Undertake a study to quantify the natural resource capital loss and loss of use that has occurred as a result of colonization.

- 41. Establish Indigenous institutions focused on building Indigenous capacity to address land sovereignty.
- 44. Identify Indigenous land claim bases on or near urban, commercial centres as settlement for loss of economic use.
- 46. Create an Indigenous Centre of Excellence for Land Management to which current government programming is devolved. This Centre will develop and manage an Indigenous Lands Registry.



## Infrastructure

**Lift all drinking water advisories**

**Continue and expand investment in housing**

**Bring high-speed broadband and mobile services to Indigenous communities**

**Update Infrastructure Index every two years**

### 2019 IEPR FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The 2019 report identified infrastructure and infrastructure related services as critical factors for economic development, and examined the status of water, housing, education, transportation, health, connectivity, and energy supply facilities.

Clean, safe water is now available in more communities, as 82 long-term drinking water advisories were lifted between November 2015 and December 31, 2018. Fifty-eight long-term drinking water advisories remain, with ongoing efforts and commitments to lift all advisories by March 2021.

As of December 31st, 2018, there are a total of 568 First Nations communities benefitting from the 1,576 housing projects. 946 projects have been completed and 630 are still ongoing. For the total Indigenous population in Canada, 19.4% reported living in a dwelling in need of major repairs in comparison to 6% for the non-Indigenous population. Approximately one in four Inuit and four in ten First Nations (26.2% and 44.2%, respectively) lived in a dwelling in need of major repairs. Close to one fifth (18.3%) of the Indigenous population lived in housing that was considered overcrowded.

Fifteen new schools have been built and 31 schools have been renovated or upgraded so more children have access to local education.

One hundred seventy-six projects were completed to help design, replace, expand, or renovate health facilities as well as facilities hosting Aboriginal Head Start on Reserve (AHSOR) programming.

As of December 31st, 2018, there are a total of twenty connectivity projects, twelve of which have been completed. With 60% completion, there are a total of two-hundred and forty-seven First Nations communities benefitting.

There are a total of sixty-eight energy projects, thirty-nine of which have been completed. There are a total of seventy-six First Nations communities benefitting.

There are a total of eighty-one roads and bridges projects, fifty-eight of which have been completed. With 72% completion, there are a total of sixty-nine First Nations communities benefitting.

The 2019 report concluded that reliable infrastructure for Indigenous Peoples is a foundation for improving quality of life and socioeconomic outcomes in other key priority areas. Gaps in this area remain significant. Despite recent historical investments in Indigenous infrastructure through Budget 2016 and 2017, there is still much work to be done on reserve as well as in Inuit and Métis communities. Although there has been a significant amount of funding dedicated to addressing infrastructure, there is still a large gap that remains across all three identity groups when comparing to non-Indigenous communities. The infrastructure gaps are further articulated in the following chapter on the infrastructure index. Major repairs and new builds are required in housing, water and wastewater, roads, energy systems, and broadband connectivity. Overcrowding, due to a shortage of available housing, is one of the most critical needs, which has immediate ripple effects on illnesses like tuberculosis, as well as on education attendance and performance, family well-being, and economic

development. Access to clean drinking water is also a critical issue. The Government of Canada is on track with its commitment to end all long-term drinking water advisories on public systems on reserve by March 2021, with 78 having been lifted to date. As of March 22, 2018, there were 78 long-term drinking water advisories in effect, on public systems on reserve, some of which have been in effect for more than 20 years.

It is important to note that these aren't just statistics and snapshots of infrastructure projects. They highlight healthy, safe, and prosperous First Nations communities. Behind the numbers are real lives being changed for the better with many others in need. For many First Nations communities, transformational change is needed to ensure basic infrastructure needs are met, and existing infrastructure is repaired and improved. These snapshots reflect how these changes are revitalizing a nation-to-nation relationship between First Nations and Canada.





## **Infrastructure Recommendation #1**

### **Lift all drinking water advisories**

- INF1 Although indications suggest that all drinking water advisories will be lifted by 2022, *it is essential that this timeline not be disrupted*, and risk management protocols are developed to ensure all DWAs are lifted as soon as possible. Further, ongoing financial commitments must be assured to maintain infrastructure, human resources, and testing protocols.

### **GOOD PROGRESS ON THIS RECOMMENDATION**

#### **NIEDB COMMENTARY**

The NIEDB recognizes the extraordinary efforts undertaken by the Government of Canada to achieve the goal of lifting all drinking water advisories by 2022.

136 long-term drinking water advisories have been lifted since November 2015.

Nonetheless, as of October 2022, there are 31 long-term drinking water advisories in effect in 27 communities.

Additional support should be given to the Circuit Rider Training Program.

The Government should ensure that workers on reserve require salaries that meet or exceed industry standards. Otherwise, it will remain a challenge to retain local water operators.

#### **SUMMARY OF INPUTS FROM FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES**

- Approximately 42% of remaining long-term drinking water advisories were expected to be lifted by the end of March 2023. ISC is actively tracking progress on resolving all drinking water advisories as well as the ongoing projects to support the lifting of drinking water advisories and is working to provide sustainable investment, expand delivery systems, build capacity of and retain local water operators, and support monitoring and testing for drinking water systems.
- Budget 2022 committed \$398 million over two years to support community infrastructure on reserve.

For complete federal input, see page 114.

#### **RELATED NIES CALLS TO ECONOMIC PROSPERITY:**

64. Eliminate the boil-water advisories in all Indigenous communities by upgrading physical infrastructure and developing capacity and skills of community members to manage water systems.

## Infrastructure Recommendation #2

### Continue and expand investment in housing

- INF2      Housing remains an ongoing issue that affects all aspects of socio-economic life in Indigenous communities. ***Although significant investments have been made, ongoing investments are required to ensure homes are repaired and new homes are built to keep pace with growing communities.*** The newly introduced Indigenous Homes Innovation Initiative will hopefully encourage new building methods, materials, architecture, or engineering to serve Indigenous families and the environments they live in.

#### SOME PROGRESS ON THIS RECOMMENDATION

### NIEDB COMMENTARY

Despite significant federal investments, Indigenous housing remains in crisis.

A recent study by the Canadian Council for Public-Private Partnerships states that experts estimate the infrastructure deficit across First Nations in Canada to be at least \$25 billion and possibly even higher than \$30 billion.

In 2022, specific to First Nations, the AFN reported that:

- Approximately 60% of First Nations housing is in need of minor or major repairs, with 10% needing complete replacement.
- Overcrowding is also a problem, with approximately 30% of homes being used by multi-generational occupants. This means that an estimated 133,770 housing units are required to address overcrowding, migration, and population growth and approximately 80,000 housing units require major renovations, repairs and almost 14,000 units need replacement.
- There is a need for a \$44 billion federal investment to address current housing needs and an additional \$16 billion to accommodate population growth to 2040 to address the housing crisis created by decades of federal neglect and underfunding.

The NIEDB recognizes that distinctions-based work is underway with Indigenous partners on long-term solutions that will set the terms of transformative change in federal Indigenous housing policy.

Greater efforts should be taken to transfer housing service to Indigenous control at the local level, and via an Indigenous Infrastructure Institute at the national level.

### SUMMARY OF INPUTS FROM FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

- ISC works in partnership with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) by supporting housing projects including new builds, retrofits, and renovations.
- Through the Indigenous Homes Innovation Initiative, the Government of Canada is also investing in new, creative approaches to Indigenous housing.

- CMHC offers funding and financing options that support Indigenous and northern housing needs through the National Housing Strategy, the National Co-Investment Fund, and the Rapid Housing Initiative.
- Budget 2022 proposed \$300 million over five years to co-develop and launch an Urban, Rural, and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy under CMHC.
- CIRNAC offers funding to support Indigenous and northern housing needs using a distinctions-based approach.

For complete federal input, see page 117.

**RELATED NIES CALLS TO ECONOMIC PROSPERITY:**

69. Ensure Indigenous Peoples have access to sustainable housing and home ownership.



### **Infrastructure Recommendation #3**

#### **Bring high-speed broadband and mobile services to Indigenous communities**

- INF3 This report has demonstrated that connectivity in Northern and remote communities is significantly below levels for all other communities, including remote non-Indigenous communities. Connectivity impacts virtually every aspect of our lives, and predictions for the future of work include an increasing reliance on connectivity and economic progress divided along lines of access to a global economy based on connectivity. **Increasing speed and data capacity to all Indigenous communities** is essential to social and economic development. Forecasting community need to be ahead of current demand and in consideration of housing realities will ensure connectivity is less likely to be outdated before it becomes a reality.

#### **MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE TO IMPLEMENT THIS RECOMMENDATION**

#### **NIEDB COMMENTARY**

NIEDB research and expertise supports the proposition that sound and robust connectivity is among the key building blocks of a healthy modern economy and that, without adequate connectivity, development of Indigenous economies is detrimentally impacted. Additionally, a significant infrastructure gap exists between non-Indigenous and Indigenous communities in this regard, and Indigenous communities and Peoples find themselves on the wrong side of this “digital divide.”

Canadian experiences throughout the pandemic and, more recently, with the Rogers Communications system failure on July 8, 2022, have demonstrated the centrality of reliable telecommunications and its underlying infrastructure to our modern society and economy.

There remains a need for additional data on the digital divide between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, particularly in remote and rural northern Indigenous communities, as digital equity for Indigenous communities in Canada is crucial to a prosperous and self-sustainable economy. There is not a clear enough understanding of Indigenous connectivity on a community-by-community basis. Research should be undertaken for First Nations, Inuit Nunangat, and Métis communities across Canada.

There is a need for stronger partnerships between governments (federal, provincial, and municipal), Indigenous communities and service providers. Additionally, telecommunications companies and Indigenous communities need strong relationships, even if connecting to that community is not profitable.

Telecommunications companies should increase their engagement with Indigenous communities and organizations when making decisions, as well as prioritize Indigenous participation in their supply chains and executive ranks. Telecommunications companies in the private sector also have a role to play in reconciliation and should therefore offset costs for Indigenous communities who have invested in telecommunications infrastructure.

A national Indigenous Telecommunications Strategy is needed in collaboration with ISED and CRTC commitments to reach 100% community connectivity.

Increased government investment, and construction and ownership of Information and Communications Infrastructure (ICI) in the Far North, should be considered.

The federal government should seek opportunities to enhance Indigenous community connectivity and fund mutually beneficial projects, utilizing Indigenous businesses when possible. It should also build technological capacity through employment and training of Indigenous Peoples and businesses.

Multiple legislation and policy changes should be made in the short term to improve connectivity outcomes for Indigenous communities. First, legislation should ensure that government and telecommunications firms are required to provide 100% connectivity, including with last mile connections. The funding opportunities under the Universal Broadband Fund should also be expanded to include cellular projects. Lastly, government infrastructure funding to Indigenous communities should include provisions for ICI within all housing, water, and transportation projects to enable economies of scale and better community outcomes.

### **SUMMARY OF INPUTS FROM FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES**

- FedNor supports the Information Communication Technology Network (ICTN) in Northern Ontario by providing support to three not-for-profit organizations to help entrepreneurs leverage technology to improve their operations.
- ACOA has supported an Atlantic Indigenous Economic Development Integrated Research Program study, focused on broadband access within Indigenous communities.
- CanNor has provided funding towards the Kivalliq Hydro-Fibre Link Project to establish a hydro-electric and fibre-optic link between Manitoba and the Kivalliq region of Nunavut.
- PrairiesCan has worked directly with ISED's Universal Broadband Fund advocating for regional funding, and specifically for rural and remote Indigenous communities.
- NRCan's Office of Energy Efficiency launched the Canada Greener Homes Grant initiative in 2021 with a mandate to provide grants to improve home energy efficiency.
- NRCan's Office of Energy Efficiency has launched the Toward Net-Zero Homes and Communities program, which supports the push toward net-zero emissions in the residential sector.

For complete federal input, see page 120.

### **RELATED NIES CALLS TO ECONOMIC PROSPERITY:**

60. Prioritize provision of broadband services in rural and remote communities; set aside telecommunications spectrum for Indigenous communities, and report annually on progress in meeting connectivity goals.
62. Conduct research on access to education in remote Indigenous communities, develop a plan to address connectivity deficiencies.
75. Create a national Indigenous-led organization focused on technological infrastructure
80. Enable federal and provincial co-funding and industry partnerships to provide broadband services to Indigenous communities in rural and remote areas; prioritize Indigenous participation; provide dedicated Indigenous funding for all major infrastructure programs and projects, including Indigenous ownership.

#### **Infrastructure Recommendation #4**

##### **Update Infrastructure Index every two years**

- INF4      The Infrastructure Index Report captures the current infrastructure picture for remote Indigenous communities in Canada. ***Updating the index every two years to measure progress in reducing the Indigenous infrastructure gap would be useful.***

#### **MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE TO IMPLEMENT THIS RECOMMENDATION**

#### **NIEDB COMMENTARY**

Recognizing that community infrastructure within Indigenous communities remains a national crisis, the NIEDB is undertaking research with the Community Infrastructure Branch, ISC, into:

- Economic benefits of social infrastructure investments in First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities, such as job creation and Gross Domestic Product (GDP); and,
- Recommendations on how to maximize the economic benefits (e.g. GDP, job and wealth creation) of social infrastructure investments in First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities.

This research will be used to highlight the importance of investments in infrastructure and identify key impacts of such investments of common indicators, such as GDP, or improvements as measured by the Community Well-Being (CWB) Index. ISC is also seeking recommendations on how it could maximize the economic benefits of infrastructure projects within First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities (i.e., limit economic leakage).

This research will produce a set of key recommendations on maximizing economic benefits related to infrastructure investments in First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities.

#### **SUMMARY OF INPUTS FROM FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES**

- CED delivers the Canadian Community Revitalization Fund (CCRF), which supports NPOs, municipalities, and other local organizations in urban and rural areas.
- FedNor supports major development projects and business development initiatives.
- PrairiesCan, CanNor, and the government of Manitoba are supporting upgrades, operation, and maintenance of the Hudson Bay Railway in Northern Manitoba.
- PacifiCan also administers the Canada Community Revitalization Fund, with impacts across Canada.
- Statistics Canada will update the current Remoteness Index using 2021 Census data.
- CIRNAC is amending the First Nations Fiscal Management Act to establish a national Infrastructure Institute.
- The final intake of AAFC's Local Food Infrastructure Fund (LFIF) targets Indigenous groups and groups located in small or rural communities.
- ISED's National Broadband Internet Service Availability Map provides information to enable all Canadians to understand progress on connecting 100% of Canadians by 2030.
- NRCan's Geological Survey of Canada's GEM (Geo-Mapping for Energy and Minerals)-GeoNorth Program contributes to climate-resilient Northern infrastructure, environmental stewardship



practices and climate change adaptation strategies with new geoscientific research, knowledge, and data.

For complete federal input, see page 124.

### **RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY**

What are the commonalities between Indigenous communities with successful community infrastructure projects? Also, a review of Government of Canada community infrastructure programming specific to Indigenous communities (adequacy of funding and reach to meet needs, recommendations to streamline and rationalize policies and procedures) is needed.

### **RELATED NIES CALLS TO ECONOMIC PROSPERITY:**

- 58. Strengthen engagement with provinces to coordinate investments and realize economies of scale in the provision of infrastructure and services.
- 59. Create an Indigenous-led Institute for Physical Infrastructure that collects and disseminates information on leading practices and provides advisory services.
- 67. Prioritize government funding to infrastructure projects with Indigenous equity participation and/or support, potentially through corporate tax incentives.
- 82. Conduct research and develop case studies focused on successful Indigenous community projects.



## Gender

**Develop or adjust policy and programs to improve employment/income outcomes for women**

**Develop policy and strategies to improve educational outcomes for men and women**

### 2019 IEPR FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The 2019 report addressed gender-based socio-economic outcomes and discussed Gender-Based Analysis. The purpose of the chapter was to track socio-economic disparities among Indigenous women and men to identify barriers to economic growth across, and within, identity groups.

Employment rates are typically higher amongst men than women, however, this gender gap is smaller amongst the overall Indigenous population than the non-Indigenous population. Inuit and First Nations women on reserve have higher employment rates than their male counterparts. The employment rates of Métis men and women are higher than those of non-Indigenous men and women.

Labour force participation rates are higher among men than women, but this gender gap is smaller among Indigenous populations. The gender gap in participation rates decreased between 2006 and 2016 for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations. The gap between the overall participation rates of Indigenous and non-Indigenous women is smaller than that between Indigenous and non-Indigenous men.

Unemployment rates are higher for men than women across all identity groups and the non-Indigenous population. Increases in unemployment rates between 2006 and 2016 were attributable to increases amongst men, whereas women's unemployment rates either minimally decreased or remained the same. Other than a slight increase amongst the non-Indigenous population, Inuit women were the only group of women to experience increases in unemployment rates.

Generally, median incomes are higher among men than women, although this gap is smaller among the Indigenous population than it is among the non-Indigenous population. The income gap is smaller between Indigenous and non-Indigenous women than it is between Indigenous and non-Indigenous men. Between 2005 and 2015, the gap between the median incomes of Indigenous and non-Indigenous men decreased more than the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous women. The median income of First Nations on reserve and Inuit women is higher than that of their male counterparts.

The proportion of income received through government transfers is higher for women than men, and this gender gap is larger for the overall Indigenous population than for the non-Indigenous population. The gap between the proportion of income for Indigenous and non-Indigenous women is larger than that between Indigenous and non-Indigenous men. First Nations on reserve was the only identity group to experience an increase in the proportion of income received through government transfers between 2005 and 2015, however, this was largely attributable to an increase of 2.1 percentage points amongst women.

In 2015, the gender gap in the proportion of individuals whose main source of income was from government transfers was approximately the same for Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations. First Nations on reserve and Inuit were the only two identity groups to experience an increase in the proportion, which was more attributable to increases for First Nations women on reserve and Inuit men. Approximately one half of First Nations women on reserve reported government transfers as their main source of income.

In general, men earn more than women in the same occupations and industries, compounding the wage gap existing between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations. Amongst Inuit, the gender wage gap is reversed in many industry and occupational categories.

High school completion rates are higher for women than men, and this gender gap is larger among Indigenous populations. Between 2006 and 2016, high school completion rates increased for all identity groups and the non-Indigenous population. Within groups, completion rates increased for men and women at approximately the same rate. An exception to this trend was found within First Nations on reserve and Inuit populations, wherein the completion rates of women increased more than those of their male counterparts.

College/trades completion rates are approximately the same for men and women within the overall Indigenous population, and slightly higher for men than women among the non-Indigenous population. Between 2006 and 2016, college/trades completion rates increased more among women than men, and this trend was more pronounced among the overall Indigenous population than the non-Indigenous population. In 2016, Inuit had the widest gender gap in completion rates, albeit slight.

Women typically have higher university completion rates than men, and this gender gap is wider within Indigenous populations than within the non-Indigenous population. Between 2006 and 2016, university completion rates increased more for women than men. During this time period, university completion rates among First Nations and Inuit men remained stagnant.

The 2019 report concluded that gender-based analysis provides a fruitful lens through which to identify and understand gaps and disparities in employment, income, and education, as well as changes in these indicators since 2005/2006. Two trends pertaining to employment and income stand out in particular: first, greater parity within Indigenous populations between men and women than within the non-Indigenous population; and second, greater parity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous women than between Indigenous and non-Indigenous men. This parity is a major strength in working towards closing socioeconomic gaps, ultimately contributing to more inclusive economic development.

Supporting both men and women is crucial to creating the workforce needed to support economic development. Although data reveals greater parity between Indigenous men and women in the areas of employment and median income, it affirmed that gender-based gaps persist—for example, disparities between the incomes of men and women working in the same occupations and industries. Furthermore, it draws attention to additional gender gaps, for example, in educational outcomes among Indigenous men versus women. Despite lower educational outcomes, however, the incomes of men continue to be higher than those of women within the same occupations and industries, suggesting the presence of gender-based barriers and wage disparities in the workforce. If addressed—including among the non-Indigenous population where many of these gaps are even larger—the closing of gender gaps could in turn contribute to the closing of socio-economic gaps overall, and ultimately, to more inclusive economic growth.



### ***Gender Recommendation #1***

#### **Develop or adjust policy and programs to improve employment/income outcomes for women**

- GEN1 Findings indicate that although men have lower educational outcomes than women, they nevertheless earn more than women in the same occupations and industries. In order to understand the sources of these gaps (e.g. family care work responsibilities), a study could be conducted on the particular barriers experienced by Indigenous women in advancing in these occupations and industries with results used to ***inform policy and programs to improve educational outcomes in men and employment/income outcomes in women.***

#### **GOOD PROGRESS ON THIS RECOMMENDATION**

### **NIEDB COMMENTARY**

The NIEDB supports the increased use of GBA+ analysis throughout the federal system, including in relation to Cabinet documentation and Treasury Board Submissions, particularly as the “plus” in GBA+ has resulted in increased attention to Indigenous issues.

There is a need to implement strategies and innovative options to increase equity positions and the involvement of Indigenous women in business and decision-making positions in both the public and private sectors.

Increased attention should be given to the education of Indigenous women as borrowers in financial literacy and capacity.

The studies supported by WAGE meet the spirit and intent of this recommendation, and the NIEDB supports the research agenda outlined by WAGE.

WAGE Study Overview (also pertinent for GEN2): The achievements, experiences and labour market outcomes of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit women with bachelor’s degrees or higher:

- Postsecondary education is associated with better labour market outcomes, including higher employment rates and earnings. The educational attainment among Canadians has increased significantly in the last two decades, especially among women.
- Notably, Indigenous women have also made significant gains in every level of the educational system. However, the disparities in educational attainment between Indigenous people and the non-Indigenous population persist.
- This study examines the educational attainment and labour market outcomes of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit women with a bachelor’s degree or higher, primarily between the ages of 25 to 64, using data from the 2006 and 2016 Censuses of Population, the 2017 Aboriginal Peoples Survey and the 2018 National Graduates Survey. Comparisons are made across Indigenous identity groups, and between the sexes, as well as to the non-Indigenous population.
- In 2016, half (52%) of Indigenous women aged 25 to 64 had a postsecondary qualification, including the 14% of Indigenous women with a bachelor’s degree or higher. By contrast, 46% of Indigenous men obtained postsecondary qualifications including 8% who graduated with a bachelor’s degree or higher. However, the educational attainment at the postsecondary level of

non-Indigenous women (67% any postsecondary and 32% bachelor's degree or more) and men (64% and 27%, respectively) remained higher.

- The educational attainment of Indigenous women has increased over time. By 2016, 14% of Indigenous women aged 25 to 64 had attained a bachelor's degree or higher, which is up from 9% a decade earlier in 2006. The proportion of Indigenous men with at least a bachelor's degree also grew but to a lesser extent (6% in 2006 and 8% in 2016). Furthermore, gains in advanced degrees, particularly those at the master's level, were greater for Indigenous women compared to Indigenous men.
- Among Indigenous women aged 25 to 64 with a bachelor's degree or higher, the most common funding source was government student loans (43%). When funding sources were compared across different levels of education, those with lower levels of postsecondary education tended to report having obtained funding from fewer sources than graduates with more advanced degrees.
- Results are consistent with existing research showing that higher education is associated with higher rates of employment, especially for Indigenous women. The majority (92%) of Indigenous women with a bachelor's degree or higher were employed in 2018, significantly higher than the corresponding proportion for Indigenous women with postsecondary qualifications below the bachelor's level (78%). As for Indigenous male postsecondary graduates, rates of employment did not differ significantly by level of study.
- About two-thirds (66%) of Indigenous women reported their job or business was closely related to their 2015 program, regardless of whether their post-secondary qualification was at, above or below bachelor's level. For men (Indigenous or not) as well as for non-Indigenous women, degree level was positively associated with finding employment more closely related to their field of study.

## **SUMMARY OF INPUTS FROM FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES**

- CanNor uses gender-based analysis plus (GBA+) for the development of the Agency's programs and policy initiatives.
- CanNor administers the Women's Entrepreneurship Strategy Ecosystem Fund to support women's economic empowerment.
- FedDev Ontario also supported Indigenous women entrepreneurs through the Women's Entrepreneurship Strategy Ecosystem Fund.
- ESDC's Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) Program provides wrap around supports to address barriers that clients, particularly Indigenous women, may face when participation in training.
- NRCan's Canadian Minerals and Metals Plan is undertaking a research project to understand the state of Indigenous women in the mining sector.
- Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE) funded a study with Statistics Canada on the achievements, experiences, and labour market outcomes of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit women.
- WAGE worked with Statistics Canada to study the socioeconomic conditions of Indigenous women and girls living in rural and remote communities, as well as the educational attainment of women living in rural remote communities.

For complete federal input, see page 127.

**RELATED NIES CALLS TO ECONOMIC PROSPERITY:**

10. Create Youth, Women, Elder, and LGBTQ2S+ permanent forums.





## Gender Recommendation #2

### Develop policy and strategies to improve educational outcomes for men and women

- GEN2 Indigenous men and women demonstrate different educational outcomes. ***Policies and strategies directed towards increasing high school, college/trades, and university completion rates among Indigenous peoples could address the unique barriers experienced differently by men and women*** and could be targeted for program and policy development accordingly (e.g. childcare).

#### SOME PROGRESS ON THIS RECOMMENDATION

### NIEDB COMMENTARY

While more Indigenous youth than ever before are completing college and earning certification in the trade, there is a gap in service for bridging programs for students wishing to upgrade college / trade certification towards university degrees. The NIES indicates budget support for Indigenous youth qualifying for post-secondary education has been capped, leaving many without an opportunity to continue their education beyond secondary school.<sup>24</sup>

Government departments should commit increased funding to existing programs and address the service gap relating to the need for bridging / upgrade programs.

The NIEDB recognizes action in the North on higher education, in particular in relation to the establishment of Yukon University and transformation of Aurora College into a polytechnic institution.

More is required in relation to investment in distance education programs.

There are several federal programs which explicitly mention wrap around services, including ISED's Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) and Youth Employment and Skills Strategy (YESS) programs, and ISC's Inuit and Métis Nation PSE Strategies. Such programming should continue to be supported, and ISC's First Nations PSE Strategy should more explicitly address the issue of wrap around services for Indigenous students who need to leave their home communities for education.

There should be an increased role for Elders in providing such support. As the NIES indicates, "Elders traditionally hold crucial roles in supporting both formal and informal education in Indigenous communities. They impart tradition, knowledge, culture, values, and lessons using orality and role modelling traditional practices. Elders are the carriers and emblems of communally generated and mediated knowledge."<sup>25</sup>

Finally, the Government Navigator Positions currently under development should develop a list of local and regional supports available for Indigenous high school and post-secondary students, particularly those who must leave their home communities.

<sup>24</sup> NIES, page 42

<sup>25</sup> NIES, page 46

## SUMMARY OF INPUTS FROM FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

- CanNor collected information as part of its Northern Adult Basic Education Program (NABEP) on gender-parity in course offerings and enrolment numbers.
- ISC supports Strategies for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Nation Post-Secondary Education which encourage Indigenous educational attainment.
- Indigenous men and women can be supported to complete high school, college diplomas, trade certificates, and university degrees through ISC's ISET Program.
- NRCan's Sistering Indigenous and Western Science (SINEWS) is a paid mentorship program intended to increase the representation and participation of women in science-related disciplines and research.
- NRCan's Office of Energy Efficiency launched the Canada Greener Homes Grant initiative which supports Indigenous recruits, including Indigenous women, and provides additional funding for upskilling, equipment purchases, and childcare.

For complete federal input, see page 129.



## Youth

**Promote Indigenous entrepreneurship amongst youth**

**Create urban Indigenous healing and employment hubs and an alumni fund**

**Include community considerations and perspectives in youth program development**

### 2019 IEPR FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The 2019 report stressed that Indigenous youth represent the fastest growing source of labour in the country and will continue to do so well into the future. Additionally, Indigenous youth have long been under-represented in the labour market and have had lower levels of educational attainment.

Across all Identity groups there has been improvement in high school graduation rates but still less than 50% of First Nation on reserve and Inuit youth attain a high school degree. There is only a small improvement in the Indigenous youth's college/trade attainment levels. The gap has closed between non-Indigenous youth primarily because fewer non-Indigenous youth are earning trade or college degrees. The gap in the proportion of university completion between non-Indigenous youth and Indigenous youth widened by 1.2 percentage points primarily due to an increase in the percentage of the non-Indigenous youth population who have attained a university education.

In 2016, Indigenous youth, other than Métis youth, showed little progress in their employment outcomes (employment rate, labour participation rate and unemployment rate) compared to non-Indigenous youth. Inuit Youth are making progress in that their labour participation and employment rates have increased. First Nations youth on reserve faced the largest gap in their employment outcomes with those of their non-Indigenous counterparts; outcomes were consistent with the 2005 levels. Average income levels for Indigenous youth are improving across all Identity groups from 2005, with the exception of First Nations on reserve.

Indigenous youth perceptions regarding their skills may exceed assessment findings, preventing an understanding of needed areas of improvement to compete for educational and employment opportunities. The Youth Employment Panel recommends investments in educational infrastructure, increased investment in youth entrepreneurship and the creation of urban Indigenous healing and employment hubs, to support Indigenous youth in finding and keeping jobs.

The 2019 report concluded that our focus on youth shows that education completion results are generally improving from 2006, and also that of those students who drop out, a large percentage may end up returning to school to complete their education at a later date. This should mean improved employment prospects in the future for Indigenous youth as there is a close relationship between educational attainment and employment prospects. Regarding employment, it is once again Métis youth who are faring better than other youth (Indigenous and non-Indigenous), whereas First Nations youth on reserve are experiencing significantly worse employment indicators than other identity groups. Income levels have improved for all youth, but once again it is Métis youth who are outpacing all other groups, even earning a higher average income than non-Indigenous youth. Perhaps with greater employment support, investment and mentorship, the other identity groups can follow the Métis youth's lead and close these gaps between themselves and non-Indigenous youth.

### **Youth Recommendation #1**

#### **Promote Indigenous entrepreneurship amongst youth**

- YTH1 ***Entrepreneurship should be promoted and supported as a valid career option for youth*** through the mentorship and showcasing of Indigenous business leaders and ventures. Government-funded Indigenous youth entrepreneurship/start-up financing should also include essential business services training and coaching/mentorship services.

#### **SOME PROGRESS ON THIS RECOMMENDATION**

#### **NIEDB COMMENTARY**

The NIEDB recognizes the work of the federal government in supporting Indigenous entrepreneurship.

In addition, the NIEDB applauds the work of the Martin Family Institute (MFI), in particular the Aboriginal Youth Entrepreneurship Program (AYEP) and the Indigenous Entrepreneurship Course (IEC), and recognizes their efforts to seek out the expertise of Elders, educators, and families to co-develop programming.

The Martin Family Initiative's entrepreneurship programs support Indigenous student success in high school, the workplace, post-secondary studies, and in daily life. MFI introduces young people and adults to the world of business through mentorship opportunities and resources that reflect their diverse lived experiences. Beyond the business skills gained in MFI's entrepreneurship courses, students gain a strong sense of self-confidence and motivation to share their unique perspectives with the world.

More should be done to expand the reach of this programming.

#### **SUMMARY OF INPUTS FROM FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES**

- AOCA's Regional Economic Growth through Innovation (REGI) program has implemented new guidelines that put an emphasis on youth and women entrepreneurs.
- CanNor has funded projects promoting entrepreneurship to Indigenous youth and creating youth mentorship and financing opportunities through various investments.
- CED provides annual core operational funding to Youth Employment Services (YES) that helps young Quebec entrepreneurs, including Indigenous entrepreneurs, to start and grow small businesses and find jobs.
- FedNor provided \$1.9 million over six years in support of the Head Start in Business program, which engages youth between the ages of 5 and 29 in experiential learning activities that center on entrepreneurship.
- Budget 2019 proposed funding for Futurpreneur Canada, to support the next generation of Indigenous entrepreneurs.
- An Indigenous youth-led pilot program was launched in 2019 to advance reconciliation, self-determination, co-development, and strengthening and rebuilding the Crown-Indigenous relationship with Indigenous youth.
- AAFC's Youth Employment and Skills Program (YESP) funds employment opportunities for youth in the agriculture and agri-food sector to help them increase their work experience and learn new skills to improve their employability in the agricultural field.

- EDC funded sponsorships for the 2021 and 2022 Cando Economic Development Youth Summits and participated on the judging panel for Indigenous youth business case competitions.
- NRCan works with Cando on their annual Economic Development Youth Summit, which promotes community economic development to youth.

For complete federal input, see page 131.

## **RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY**

How should the MFI's programming be expanded? Who should be targeted in the early stages of expansion?

### **RELATED NIES CALLS TO ECONOMIC PROSPERITY:**

1. Create a financial literacy and business curriculum for youth and adults.
2. Develop mentorship programs.
3. Foster a national network of Indigenous Chambers of Commerce.
4. Create information and gateway platforms to navigate the range of resources and services for entrepreneurs.
5. Ensure that Indigenous Entrepreneurs have access to capital and enabling programs to fully participate in the Canadian economy.
11. Educate Indigenous youth on all aspects of Indigenous economic issues and approaches.
22. Strengthen supports for organizations that focus on Indigenous skills, employment, and business training.



## Youth Recommendation #2

### Create urban Indigenous healing and employment hubs and an alumni fund

- YTH2 We specifically recommend that the **Government create urban Indigenous healing and employment hubs**; invest in basic education infrastructure; develop distance education training; **create an alumni fund to enable mentorship**; and invest in Indigenous scholarship funding to support post-secondary education.

#### MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE TO IMPLEMENT THIS RECOMMENDATION

### NIEDB COMMENTARY

The NIEDB recognizes that while additional funds have been made available to Indigenous education programming, Indigenous K-12 students remain underfunded in comparison with children attending off-reserve schools.

In 2020, the AFN examined progress on the TRC Calls to Action, and in relation to education, indicated:

- Moderate progress has been made in this area. Most notably, the ongoing efforts towards the completion of Call to Action #11. Future budget announcements must continue to commit further funding as there is still a persistent backlog of First Nations students seeking a post-secondary education. Further progress on Action #8 is possible if the government reduces funding discrepancies between on- and off-reserve First Nations.
- Going forward, additional attention should be given to the education of Indigenous Peoples in financial literacy and capacity.

The OECD report highlights the potential that sectoral self-government agreements specific to education hold. For example, under the Mi'kmaq Education Partnership, the members of Mi'kmaq Kina'matnewey (a coalition of twelve First Nations) control and deliver education to their citizens. There are presently 11 band run schools in Nova Scotia, and more than half the teachers are Mi'kmaq. Educational attainments rates have been growing and Atlantic Canada now has the highest rate of aboriginal students attending university in Canada.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, the Anishnabek Nation (Union of Ontario Indians) has the Anishinabek Educational Institute.<sup>27</sup>

In discussing the potential creation of an Indigenous Economic Council (IEC), the FMB RoadMap indicates that a key component of the work of this council would be in bringing forward an Educational Plan:

- As part of the Community Economic Development Plan, the IEC can support First Nations in developing a long-term educational plan for community members. As capacity and systems progress and gain complexity, new positions in a myriad of fields will be required to sustain growth. These positions will include administrative roles, like senior management, human resources, communications, governance, and finance, as well as specialized roles, such as engineers, technicians, biologists, geologists, lawyers, and more. The IEC member organizations

<sup>26</sup> OECD Report, page 311

<sup>27</sup> OECD Report, page 58



will support First Nations with leading practices and options for aligning the human capital needs of the community with the educational offerings they provide. Furthermore, the IEC and participating First Nations and organizations could collaborate with interested academic institutions to co-develop curricula to address the growing Indigenous economy, which would be a new resource for personnel, capacity, and innovation. The greater number of new roles and specializations will also increase average income for First Nations' citizens, narrowing the income gap and leading to healthier and safer communities.<sup>28</sup>

There are several federal programs which explicitly mention wrap around services, including ISED's Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) and Youth Employment and Skills Strategy (YESS) programs, and ISC's Inuit and Métis Nation PSE Strategies. Such programming should continue to be supported, and ISC's First Nations PSE Strategy should more explicitly address the issue of wrap around services for Indigenous students who need to leave their home communities for education.

There should be an increased role for Elders in providing such support. As the NIES indicates, "Elders traditionally hold crucial roles in supporting both formal and informal education in Indigenous communities. They impart tradition, knowledge, culture, values, and lessons using orality and role modelling traditional practices. Elders are the carriers and emblems of communally generated and mediated knowledge."<sup>29</sup>

The NIEDB recognizes action in the North on higher education, in particular in relation to the establishment of Yukon University and transformation of Aurora College into a polytechnic institution.

More is required in relation to investment in distance education programs.

NIEDB calls upon partners within the Arctic and Northern Policy Framework to consider transitioning Nunavut Arctic College to university status. The NIES indicates "Inuit have the lowest levels of post-secondary education, largely attributable to the lack of post-secondary institutions in Inuit Nunangat. At the same time, Inuit youth also face specific challenges in attaining quality high school education in isolated and remote communities, especially in sciences and mathematics."<sup>30</sup>

The NIEDB strongly supports the work of Indspire in recognizing and rewarding talent. Increased federal support for scholarships for Indigenous students through Indspire is recommended.

Government Navigator Positions currently under development should maintain a list of post-secondary scholarships and bursaries available across the country, including at the provincial and local levels.

## **SUMMARY OF INPUTS FROM FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES**

ACOA supported the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Society in their project to gather baseline data to understand who identifies as urban Indigenous youth, their career goals, and their workplace preparedness needs.

Budget 2021 announced funding to re-establish and revitalize Indigenous cultural spaces through the Cultural Spaces in Indigenous Communities Program.

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<sup>28</sup> FMB RoadMap, Chapter 4, page 34

<sup>29</sup> NIES, page 46

<sup>30</sup> NIES, page 49

EDC has approved funding for Indigenous student scholarships in 2023.

ESDC's Youth Employment and Skills Strategy (YESS) is designed to maximize opportunities for Indigenous youth, including through culturally specific supports and services. ESDC also funded several Indigenous Hubs through the 2019 Call for Proposals, including Native Friendship Centers, Indigenous Child and Family Services organizations, Indigenous employment hubs and Indigenous traditional healing societies, among other non-profits.

For complete federal input, see page 134.



### Youth Recommendation #3

#### Include community considerations and perspectives in youth program development

- YTH3      Given this strong influence of parents and family on education outcomes - it is important to ***consider family and community when creating programs that promote education and employment skills for youth***. Community inclusion in the development of programming will be essential.

#### SOME PROGRESS ON THIS RECOMMENDATION

#### NIEDB COMMENTARY

In discussing the potential creation of an Indigenous Economic Council (IEC), the FMB RoadMap indicates a key component of the work of this council would be in bringing forward an Educational Plan:

- As part of the Community Economic Development Plan, the IEC can support First Nations in developing a long-term educational plan for community members. As capacity and systems progress and gain complexity, new positions in a myriad of fields will be required to sustain growth. These positions will include administrative roles, like senior management, human resources, communications, governance, and finance, as well as specialized roles, such as engineers, technicians, biologists, geologists, lawyers, and more. The IEC member organizations will support First Nations with leading practices and options for aligning the human capital needs of the community with the educational offerings they provide. Furthermore, the IEC and participating First Nations and organizations could collaborate with interested academic institutions to co-develop curricula to address the growing Indigenous economy, which would be a new resource for personnel, capacity, and innovation. The greater number of new roles and specializations will also increase average income for First Nations' citizens, narrowing the income gap and leading to healthier and safer communities.<sup>31</sup>

There should be an increased role for Elders in providing support to Indigenous students. As the NIES indicates, "Elders traditionally hold crucial roles in supporting both formal and informal education in Indigenous communities. They impart tradition, knowledge, culture, values, and lessons using orality and role modelling traditional practices. Elders are the carriers and emblems of communally generated and mediated knowledge."<sup>32</sup>

#### SUMMARY OF INPUTS FROM FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

- The Pan-Territorial Growth Strategy (PTGS) is guiding CanNor's investments through 2024, including investments in post-secondary education employment readiness and skills development initiatives.
- FedNor's Youth Internship Program supports regional businesses in attracting and employing recent graduates.
- The First Nations and Inuit Youth Employment Strategy (FNIYES)'s Skills Link Stream offers funding for training (such as life-skills training) and can also include travel and childcare.

<sup>31</sup> FMB RoadMap, Chapter 4, page 34

<sup>32</sup> NIES, page 46

- ESDC's 2019 Youth Employment and Skills Strategy (YESS) Call for Proposals provided funding to several Indigenous-led family and community groups, including Native Friendship Centers, national Indigenous organizations, tribal councils, individual First Nations, Indigenous community councils and various non-profits serving urban-Indigenous youth.

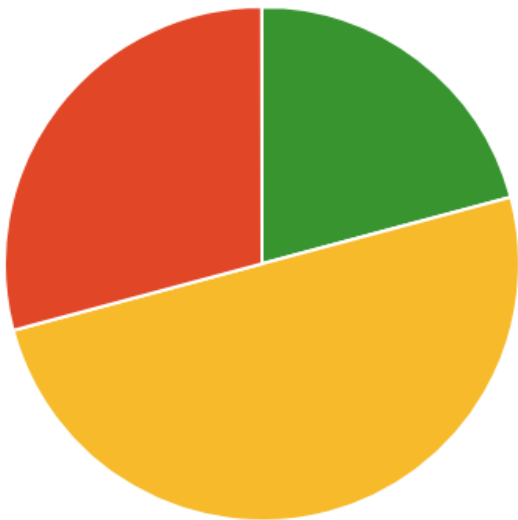
For complete federal input, see page 136.



# Government of Canada Responses to Each Recommendation

This section outlines the response of federal departments and agencies to the request to report any actions which may have served to advance these recommendations since the 2019 report was issued. The Board received responses from federal departments, agencies, and crown corporations across various areas of government. These responses have been edited for length, pertinence, and clarity.

## IEPR Recommendations Progress



Good progress    Some progress    More needs to be done

EDU2  
EDBD1  
EDBD2  
INF1  
GEN1

INC1  
INC2  
CWB1  
EDU1  
EDU4  
EDBD3  
GOV1  
LR1  
INF2  
GEN2  
YTH1  
YTH3

EMP1  
EDU3  
EDU5  
GOV2  
INF3  
INF4  
YTH2

## IEPR Recommendations Overview



### EMPLOYMENT

**EMP1:** Ensure community workforce plans are informed by local employment needs of businesses so students can target education plans accordingly



### INCOME

**INC1:** Increase training and internship opportunities for employees to increase their earning potential in higher income occupations  
**INC2:** Continue showcasing Indigenous success, mentorship, and leadership to students



### COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

**CWB1:** Co-develop a broad dashboard of well-being outcomes to reflect mutually agreed-upon metrics (health, culture, environment, language)



### EDUCATION

**EDU1:** Improve on-reserve education systems  
**EDU2:** Prioritize health and cultural supports in community-based education  
**EDU3:** Develop bridging programs to help students wanting to upgrade from college to university  
**EDU4:** Invest in distance education programs  
**EDU5:** Expand and continue scholarship funding



### ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

**EDBD1:** Provide access to business services and skills training and raise awareness of funding supports and programs  
**EDBD2:** Examine potential supports for First Nations on reserve businesses  
**EDBD3:** Fund Aboriginal Financial Institutions to ensure entrepreneurs are able to access capital



### GOVERNANCE

**GOV1:** Support governance and financial management training and certification  
**GOV2:** Examine needs and opportunities aimed at urban Indigenous populations



### LANDS AND RESOURCES

**LR1:** Increase resources to the Additions to Reserve program to expedite applications



### INFRASTRUCTURE

**INF1:** Lift all drinking water advisories  
**INF2:** Continue and expand investment in housing  
**INF3:** Bring high-speed broadband and mobile services to Indigenous communities  
**INF4:** Update Infrastructure Index every two years



### GENDER

**GEN1:** Develop or adjust policy and programs to improve employment/ income outcomes for women  
**GEN2:** Develop policy and strategies to improve educational outcomes for men and women



### YOUTH

**YTH1:** Promote Indigenous entrepreneurship amongst youth  
**YTH2:** Create urban Indigenous healing and employment hubs and an alumni fund  
**YTH3:** Include community considerations and perspectives in youth program development



## Employment

**Ensure community workforce plans are informed by local employment needs of businesses so students can target education plans accordingly**

- EMP1 Findings suggest that while all Indigenous groups demonstrate higher unemployment rates than non-Indigenous groups, rates are strongly influenced by educational attainment rates, remote/on reserve community location, and gender inequity. Support for programs that match workers to locally available and education-qualified opportunities can be informed by, and serve to inform community workforce plans. ***Community workforce plans would predict future employment needs in the community and address concerns voiced by Indigenous businesses regarding talent acquisition by having them engage with plan development.*** Further, through the anticipation of future local community need, students can have greater assurances of being able to find local employment and target educational plans accordingly while businesses can identify priority hiring targets to encourage local economic development.

**MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE TO IMPLEMENT THIS RECOMMENDATION**

### Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)

The Income Assistance and First Nation Youth Employment Support (IAFNYES) program collaborates with economic development initiatives to identify training and employment opportunities.

The First Nations and Inuit Youth Employment Strategy (FNIYES) continues to support initiatives that provide employment opportunities to First Nations and Inuit youth along with valuable work experience that enhance career options. Supports employers to hire and retain youth aged 15-30 who are First Nations living on reserve or Inuit living outside of their land-claim areas to gain work experience.

### Indian Oil and Gas Canada (IOGC)

The Indian Resource Council (IRC), in partnership with First Nations, trained over 250 First Nations people from 42 First Nations in Alberta, resulting in 78% of them going into employment directly after attending the Wellsite Abandonment and Reclamation Program, with an additional 13% starting their own companies. The remaining students have gone on to post-secondary schooling or trades schools.

The IRC is currently working with First Nations and the Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) delivery organizations to train an additional 180 First Nations people.

### Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC)

ESDC has two complementary programs specifically designed to respond to local, regional, and national needs and increase Indigenous employment.

The Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) Program was launched in 2019 and funded at \$2 billion over five years and \$408.2 million ongoing. The Program supports a network of over 110 Indigenous service providers with over 650 points of service across the country.

This is a distinctions-based labour market program designed to support First Nations, Inuit, Métis, and Urban/Non-affiliated Indigenous people, who determine their own skills and training priorities, based on the needs and direction of their communities. The goal of this program is to help reduce the skills gap by 50% and the employment gap by 25% between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people over ten years.

Between the 2019 launch and March 2022, over 111,000 clients were served, with over 43,500 finding employment and over 15,000 returning to school.

The Skills and Partnership Fund (SPF), launched in 2010 and funded at \$50 million per year ongoing, supports collaboration between Indigenous organizations and employers to increase Indigenous employment at the local, regional, and national level.

A national engagement process was held in 2021 with Indigenous partners to inform the future of the program, and identified five priority sectors (Green Economy, Information and Communications Technology, Infrastructure, Blue Economy, Indigenous Public Sector). To date, SPF has served over 46,700 Indigenous clients, with over 19,000 finding employment and over 2,850 returning to school following participation.

ESDC's Indigenous Labour Market Information (LMI) Survey and Skills Inventory tests processes and tools that support First Nations in collecting, using, and maintaining their labour market information; helps First Nations to develop community workforce profiles to better understand and plan for their members' job and training needs; connects First Nations members (on and off-reserve) with local employers directly or with relevant jobs and training; and engaging with local employers to address skills shortages, vacancies, and other hiring barriers. As of May of 2022, there were 19 Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Program service delivery organizations and 68 First Nations communities participating in the Pilot.

### **Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO)**

The three Indigenous Commercial Fisheries programs (Atlantic, Pacific, and Northern) provide grants and contributions to Indigenous communities to access commercial fisheries and build capacity to fish and to operate commercial fishing enterprises. These programs contribute to the employment of over 3,330 Indigenous people and contribute to the Indigenous commercial fisheries and aquaculture production sector (annual gross revenues of over \$265 million and growing).

Collaborative Fisheries Management Programs (including the Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy, Aboriginal Fisheries Guardians, Aboriginal Aquatic Resource Management Program, and Aboriginal Fund for Species at Risk) help Indigenous groups develop and retain scientific, technical and enforcement capacity to enable participation in the collaborative management of fisheries, oceans, and habitat. These programs contribute to the employment of over 1,600 Indigenous people, working as biologists, fisheries managers, technicians, and designated Aboriginal Fishery Guardians.

In partnership with the National Indigenous Fisheries Institute (NIFI), DFO conducted the Indigenous Program Review (IPR) from 2017 to 2019; this produced over 140 recommendations shaped by the experiences and expertise of Indigenous Peoples, communities, and groups. In response to the IPR, a multi-year action plan for the renewal and expansion of DFO's Indigenous programs includes increasing community employment opportunities in value-added businesses, management, and new fisheries through training.

### **Natural Resources Canada (NRCan)**

Since 2020, NRCan's Canadian Minerals and Metals Plan (CMMP) Secretariat has provided grant funding to the Mining Industry Human Resources Council to support research and activities aimed towards attracting more diverse youth, including Indigenous youth, to the mining sector. This has included the creation of a National Youth Mining Career Awareness Strategy, as well as a National Career Ambassador Program.

NRCan's Office of Energy Efficiency launched the Canada Greener Homes Grant initiative in 2021, which includes funding to support innovative projects that recruit, train, and mentor new energy advisors across Canada to increase the diversity and representation of the existing energy advisor workforce and help support job creation in the growing green economy. While the call is now closed for the general public, Indigenous governments and organizations are encouraged to apply on an ongoing basis (as funding allows). This funding will help build local capacity, improve access to Indigenous energy advisors in rural, northern, and remote communities, and reduce barriers to participation in the energy efficiency workforce.

NRCan's Science and Technology Internship Program (STIP – Green Jobs), partner of the Youth Employment and Skills Strategy led by ESDC, provides funding to qualified employers to hire and mentor youth (aged 15 to 30) in the natural resources sector, including in energy, forest, mining, earth sciences, and clean technology. This funding de-risks the hiring of youth for employers and, with typically 80% of youth participants finding full-time employment at the end of the internship, it contributes to building a pool of qualified talent in the natural resources sector.

STIP works with third-party delivery organizations, including smaller, regional, and Indigenous-focused organizations to increase participation of Indigenous youth across Canada. STIP has addressed several barriers to participation, including removal of the post-secondary requirement, adding funding for pre-employment training and mentorship, and increasing funding for youth living in northern and remote communities to account for the higher cost of living. In addition, STIP allows 100% stacking which contributes to an increase in participation of Indigenous employers and communities. These program actions have supported youth to remain in their communities and receive specific job-related training and work experience.



## Income

Increase training and internship opportunities for employees to increase their earning potential in higher income occupations

Continue showcasing Indigenous success, mentorship, and leadership to students

### *Income Recommendation #1*

Increase training and internship opportunities for employees to increase their earning potential in higher income occupations

- INC1 As Indigenous groups are already working in high wage industries (but in the lowest-income jobs within those industries), the opportunity to amplify educational payoffs is great. Through ***an increase in training and internship opportunities*** for Indigenous employees in the industries that they are already working in, Indigenous employees could more efficiently move into higher occupational levels and increase their earning potential. Further to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action #92, the education of non-Indigenous management into the benefits of greater Indigenous representation in high-income occupations would serve to encourage training and professional development opportunities.

## SOME PROGRESS ON THIS RECOMMENDATION

### Regional Development Agencies (RDAs)

The Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) provides support to Indigenous organizations like Joint Economic Development Initiative (JEDI), the Mi'kMaw Economic Benefits Association (MEBO), and Ulnooweg, which results in workforce development opportunities for Indigenous Peoples.

The Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency (CanNor) supports the accessibility of training opportunities for Nunavut Inuit employees to increase their earning potential in higher income roles within the public sector through Pilimmaksaivik (the Federal Centre of Excellence for Inuit Employment in Nunavut). Pilimmaksaivik is responsible for coordinating a whole-of-government approach to building a representative federal public service in Nunavut, across all occupational groups and levels.

Pilimmaksaivik works toward this by reducing barriers for recruitment, coordination, and delivery of training to support the talent management and advancement of Inuit in the government of Canada positions located in Nunavut and supports for wellness and retention activities.

Pilimmaksaivik oversees the Ilipallianiq Education Support Fund, which is currently providing funding to six Inuit pursuing post-secondary studies that correlate with Government of Canada positions in Nunavut, as well as Sivuliqtiurnmut Ilinniarniq, a leadership training initiative that prepares Inuit employees to take on supervisory or manager-level employment. Since 2017, two cohorts have graduated from the latter program with a third cohort on track to launch this fiscal year.

PacifiCan provided the Namgis Business Development Corporation with \$252,000 in funding under the Jobs and Growth fund to support the community-owned driving school to deliver certified driver's training to Indigenous community members, thus enabling them to work. Many adults living on reserve in this region do not have a standard driving license, causing a significant barrier to employment.

### **Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)**

Economic Development Officers in communities across Canada are being provided additional supports resulting from Budget 2022 to enhance their 'on the job' capacity. This could include return to post-secondary education for certifications, among other initiatives.

### **Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC)**

ECCC developed an Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Strategy (IRRS), based on the recommendations of 2020's Many Voices One Mind Report. The IRRS includes commitments to better manage Indigenous talent and to promote Indigenous advancement within the Executive Group. Such commitments include the implementation of a new Indigenous Director Development Program, an executive development program with second language proficiency, mentoring and coaching elements aimed at increasing the representation rate of Indigenous Peoples at the executive level.

### **Export Development Canada (EDC)**

EDC is dedicated to supporting Indigenous business pursuing economic self-reliance and growth through exporting. Guided by respect for Indigenous history, traditions and culture, EDC removes barriers to growth so that your business can thrive on the world stage while creating jobs and prosperity in your community. Recent actions include:

- EDC sponsorships for 2021 and 2022 Cando Economic development Youth Summits, and judging CANDO business case competitions;
- Investing in education and awareness of EDC employees through Indigenous education webinars;
- Establishing the Indigenous Employee Resource Group whose mandate includes providing advice and guidance to EDC management, and EDC policies;
- Developing an employee guideline on working and engaging with Indigenous business clients and organizations;
- Various EDC teams assigning dedicated leads to support EDC's Indigenous business strategy (includes EDC's Marketing, Communications, trade knowledge and financial product teams);
- Regional EDC champions being named to lead Indigenous business development and develop in-house knowledge and expertise in working with Indigenous companies with the objective to build up an experienced group of account managers and financial underwriters familiar with Indigenous businesses;
- Posting intern opportunities with Indigenous student associations at Carleton University, University of Ottawa, and Algonquin College (two Indigenous interns were hired in 2020/2021).

### **Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC)**

Through ESDC's labour market programs, Indigenous people who are employed can access training opportunities to increase their skills and move into higher occupational and income levels.

The Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) Program supports Indigenous clients with customized, culturally appropriate wrap around services that will help address barriers to employment and increase their employability. This includes job supports such as skills training and upgrading and job retention counselling.



The Skills and Partnership Fund (SPF) is designed to complement the ISET Program by being a strategic partnership and project-based fund that focuses on training Indigenous Peoples for specific, higher skilled jobs that align with emerging labour market needs and government priorities.

### **Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO)**

The 2019 Indigenous Program Review (IPR) identified a capacity development and training gap. In response, DFO presented an Indigenous Training and Skills Development (ITSD) proposal to the Strategic Partnership Initiative (SPI) in February 2022, and with approval from Indigenous Service Canada's Director General Investment Committee, the project was approved for 3 years of funding.

The ITSD is currently in its first pilot year of the initiative and will support a co-developed, co-designed and co-delivered approach to coordinate Indigenous training and skills development in the fisheries and oceans sectors. The National Indigenous Fisheries Institute (NIFI) will host the ITSD Hub for the 3-year implementation period, and the Hub will offer training coordination and development services across the collaborative and commercial programs.

### **Natural Resources Canada (NRCan)**

In 2020-21, NRCan's Science and Technology Internship Program (STIP – Green Jobs), updated the call-for-proposals to be more inclusive in order to expand its existing pool of delivery organizations and include smaller, regional and Indigenous-focused delivery organizations. STIP was successful and signed two-year agreements with two Indigenous-focused organizations that serve 100% Indigenous youth, resulting in an increase of Indigenous youth participation from 6% in FY2018-19 to 17% in FY2021-22. STIP also allows for 100% stacking, making it easier to work with Indigenous employers and communities. Another highlight of this program in 2021-23 is the higher wage subsidy available for Indigenous and northern youth to reflect the higher cost of living. Lastly, delivery organizations, such as Indigenous Clean Energy, work with employers to promote hiring local talent and provide employers with inclusive workplace training, while meeting with the STIP team regularly to ensure that employment equity targets are being met.

The Indigenous Off-Diesel Initiative currently supports 14 remote Indigenous communities/regions across Canada with funding and resources for clean energy training, community engagement and clean energy projects. An additional ten communities will join the initiative in 2023. All 24 participants complete the Indigenous Clean Energy Social Enterprise's 20/20 Catalysts program, an intensive Indigenous clean energy capacity building and clean energy training program. The Initiative contributes to the development of clean energy jobs in local communities.

NRCan's Office of Energy Efficiency launched the Canada Greener Homes Grant initiative in 2021, which includes funding to support innovative projects that recruit, train and mentor new energy advisors across Canada to increase the diversity and representation of the existing energy advisor workforce and help support job creation in the growing green economy. While the call is now closed for the general public, Indigenous governments and organizations are encouraged to apply on an ongoing basis (as funding allows). This funding will help build local capacity, improve access to Indigenous energy advisors in rural, northern, and remote communities, and reduce barriers to participation in the energy efficiency workforce.

In 2019-22, NRCan's Office of Energy Efficiency also supported four Indigenous communities through its "Financial assistance for commercial and institutional buildings" program, including support for training and salaries of energy managers to implement the ISO 50001 Energy Management Systems



Standard, leading to reduced energy costs and environmental impacts.



## ***Income Recommendation #2***

### **Continue showcasing Indigenous success, mentorship, and leadership to students**

- INC2 As Indigenous employees exceed median employment income levels with higher levels of education, this is even greater incentive to develop policies and programs to support Indigenous students towards higher levels of education. ***Continued showcasing of examples of Indigenous success, mentorship and leadership*** should be encouraged to enable students to envision the role of education in their future success.

### **SOME PROGRESS ON THIS RECOMMENDATION**

#### **Regional Development Agencies (RDAs)**

Through Pilimmaksaivik (the Federal Centre of Excellence for Inuit Employment in Nunavut), CanNor supports the Ilipallianiq Education Support Fund, which in 2021-22 was providing funding to ten Inuit pursuing post-secondary studies that correlate with Government of Canada positions in Nunavut. In 2021-22, one of these individuals obtained a Bachelor of Arts, and two more obtained law degrees.

Previously, Western Economic Diversification Canada's BC regional office (now known as PacifiCan) provided significant support in the amount of \$3 million to the First Nations Technology Council (FNTC), over a period of four years. FNTC works to ensure that Indigenous Peoples have the tools, education and support they need to increase indigenous participation in the technology economy.

#### **Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)**

Through the On-Reserve Income Assistance (IA) program, case management and pre-employment supports were introduced to better support income assistance clients. These supports are designed to provide guidance towards self-sufficiency by helping them transition from the program into other opportunities.

Case management includes assessment by and counselling with a case worker and referral to health and training services. Pre-employment services can include basic and life skills training, formal education and career counselling, apprenticeship, as well as voluntary work. Wage subsidies to encourage employers to hire program participants, as well as specified training supports may also be included.

Budget 2021 provided \$78.4 million over 2 years starting in 2021-22 to continue to provide case management and pre-employment supports to individuals and families living on reserve.

With Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), ISC is working with Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT) on developing a training program for the Lubicon Lake Band development.

#### **Export Development Canada (EDC)**

In support of Indigenous students and professionals, EDC has undertaken the following:

- Profile of Indigenous entrepreneurs on EDC.ca;
- EDC mentorship of Indigenous entrepreneurs participating in the 2021 and 2022 Pow Wow Pitch Competitions;

- Creation of a new permanent National Lead position for Indigenous Exporters, which is filled by an Indigenous person with extensive international trade and development experience; and,
- Funding has been approved and is in place for a 2023 Indigenous student bursary.

### **Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC)**

Through the Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) Program, Indigenous people can be supported to complete higher levels of education, especially as education is consistently identified as a key barrier to employment. Since the launch of the ISET Program in 2019-20, over 60,000 Indigenous youth have been provided with skills training, which could include higher education, and other supports. This has led to over 13,000 Indigenous youth becoming employed and over 11,500 returning to school for further skills development or education.

Qualitative findings from the youth employment sector indicate that mentoring between youth and current employees can improve labour market outcomes, particularly for youth experiencing barriers.

The 2019 Youth Employment and Skills Strategy (YESS) Call for Proposals included activities designed to provide mentoring/coaching as an eligible program expense. ESDC is currently supporting several projects seeking to promote mentorship for youth and this is anticipated to be a key funding priority in the next YESS Call for Proposals, of which Indigenous youth remain an important target group.

### **Natural Resources Canada (NRCan)**

In 2021-22, NRCan's Science and Technology Internship Program (STIP – Green Jobs) signed a two-year agreement with Indigenous Clean Energy to deliver Generation Power, an Indigenous youth clean energy and career training program, developed by and for Indigenous youth (35 participants served in 2021-22). Generation Power is a holistic, strength-based approach positioning Indigenous leadership as essential to advancing a more sustainable and equitable energy future. Generation Power also included peer mentorship and career counselling.

In addition, Colleges and Institutes Canada (another delivery partner), received funding to support 49 Indigenous youth (aged 16-18) to participate in a 6-week training offered by the Outland Youth Employment Program (OYEP). OYEP is a land-based work, training, and education project that provides youth with various training opportunities and accredited certificates to support youth in their education and career path.

NRCan's Office of Energy Efficiency launched the Canada Greener Homes Grant initiative in 2021, which includes funding to support innovative projects that recruit, train and mentor new energy advisors across Canada to increase the diversity and representation of the existing energy advisor workforce. The funding categories include developing and offering training, materials, or programs for upskilling. This will provide opportunities for Indigenous recruits to reach higher levels of education.

## Community Well-Being

**Co-develop a broad dashboard of well-being outcomes to reflect mutually agreed-upon metrics (health, culture, environment, language)**

- CWB1 The Community Well-Being Index was identified by the Auditor General as lacking comprehensiveness in focusing primarily on economic indicators, not sufficiently utilizing First Nations data, and not meaningfully engaging with First Nations to consider Indigenous meanings of community well-being. ***Health, the environment, language, and culture are aspects that are being considered for future study and the Department has committed to working with Indigenous organizations to co-develop a broad dashboard of well-being outcomes to reflect mutually agreed upon metrics.*** Although the integration of new metrics will make historical comparisons of the CWB problematic, the more thorough assessment of community well-being for Indigenous communities will add considerable value. Consulting with all Indigenous groups will ensure diverse lived experiences are considered. We look forward to these improvements in measuring outcomes of community well-being for the 2022 Report.

### SOME PROGRESS ON THIS RECOMMENDATION

## Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)

Within the Lands and Economic Development Sector, the need to expand interpretation of economic indicators beyond market-related metrics has informed the work of the Economic and Business Opportunities unit over the past four years.

Through the application of Indigenous and Decolonizing methodologies to data and analysis work related to community economic development, the following has been undertaken:

- a user experience study to better understand barriers to reporting;
- oversampling of COVID supports to show GBA+ impacts, which includes questions to better understand future community reporting preferences; and
- the launch of a design challenge in fall 2022 that will request Indigenous market solutions to help create a future-looking tool that should support communities and ISC to co-develop solutions.

In addition to the Community Well-Being Index, ISC is working with First Nations partners to co-develop a National Outcome-Based Framework. The Framework is meant to comprehensively measure and report on the socio-economic well-being of First Nations people, and progress towards closing the socio-economic gaps between First Nations and non-Indigenous Canadians.

It will include outcomes and indicators on a variety of themes, such as health, social, education, economic prosperity, and housing and community infrastructure, as well as themes identified by First Nations as being particularly meaningful to reconciliation, such as land, language, culture, and governance.

Engagements with First Nations on the framework are ongoing and are expected to be completed in 2023, after which the framework will be finalized.

## Education

Improve on-reserve education systems

Prioritize health and cultural supports in community-based education

Develop bridging programs to help students wanting to upgrade from college to university

Invest in distance education programs

Expand and continue scholarship funding

### Education Recommendation #1

Improve on-reserve education systems

- EDU1 The Board would like to stress the importance of *improving educational opportunities for the Indigenous population, especially First Nations on reserve*. In this regard, a well-funded education system is essential and the development of strong basic skills (literacy and numeracy) in the early grades should be a top priority.

### SOME PROGRESS ON THIS RECOMMENDATION

#### Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)

ISC's Elementary and Secondary Education Program provides funding to support elementary and secondary education for First Nations students, schools, and communities. In April 2019, ISC launched a new funding approach, co-developed with First Nations partners, that aims to provide First Nations administered schools on-reserve with core funding that is predictable, sustainable, and transparent.

This core funding is comparable to that provided by provincial education systems and additional funding is provided to support full day kindergarten for children aged 4 and 5, language and culture programming at First Nations schools, as well as before and after school programming. Funding is provided directly to First Nation recipients and First Nation education organizations designated by First Nations to support students who attend First Nation-administered schools on-reserve.

Regional education agreements (REAs) were also introduced in 2018 as part of the co-developed policy framework and funding approach. REAs support First Nations self-determination through culturally appropriate education programming designed by First Nations to support improved student outcomes, and further enhancing First Nation control over First Nation education and impact on student outcomes.

An example of an REA can be found in a signing with the First Nations Education Council (FNEC) and its member communities in Quebec in July 2022. The Agreement includes a funding model developed by First Nations and designed to meet the specific needs of students to improve their educational outcomes. It reflects First Nations self-determination through increased control of their education systems. FNEC is an association of 22 First Nation communities designed to provide education services and to advocate on their behalf for full control of education from kindergarten to high school. The Council has played an important role in supporting the educational success of its students for over thirty-six years.

In addition, ISC's Education Partnerships Program supports the capacity development of First Nations organizations to deliver education, including establishing education systems and service delivery agreements responsive to First Nations students and community education needs.

### **Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC)**

To support improved educational opportunities for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children, the Government of Canada is working with provincial, territorial, and Indigenous partners to build a Canada-wide, community-based Early Learning and Child Care system.

In Budget 2021, the Government of Canada committed \$2.5 billion over five years for Indigenous early learning and childcare (ELCC). Combined with previous federal investments in early learning and childcare announced since 2015, as of 2025-2026 a minimum of \$9.2 billion will be provided every year – permanently – for ELCC and Indigenous ELCC.

Budget 2021 investments included \$515 million over five years, starting in 2021-22, and \$112 million ongoing, to support before- and after-school care for First Nations children on-reserve. Studies have shown that children who regularly participate in ELCC programs have higher graduation rates, make gains in reading and math, are more excited about learning, and develop strong social skills.

### **Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC)**

The Treaty and Aboriginal Government Sector has been working with negotiating groups to advance sectoral governance agreements in the area of education, which will serve to ensure that Indigenous governments have the resourcing and capacity to manage the jurisdiction of education and meet the unique education needs of their communities. In 2019, such an agreement was made with the participating First Nations of Nishnawbe Aski Nation in Northern Ontario.

### **Natural Resources Canada (NRCan)**

NRCan's Office of Energy Efficiency launched the Canada Greener Homes Grant initiative in 2021, which includes funding to support innovative projects that recruit, train, and mentor new energy advisors across Canada to increase the diversity and representation of the existing energy advisor workforce. The funding supports Indigenous recruits from rural, remote, and Northern communities by providing for distance education programs for their training.





## ***Education Recommendation #2***

### **Prioritize health and cultural supports in community-based education**

- EDU2      ***Supports for community-based education*** must recognize the challenges faced by Indigenous students who must leave the community to attend high school and prioritize their physical and mental health, as well as cultural supports both where they attend high school and within the community to ensure ongoing student success.

#### **GOOD PROGRESS ON THIS RECOMMENDATION**

### **Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)**

Having access to wrap-around supports is crucial to the success of post-secondary education (PSE) students coming from isolated communities and first-generation PSE students. Both the Inuit and Métis Nation PSE Strategies offer programs and services that provide wrap-around supports for student needs in these circumstances by offering mentorship, Elder guidance, cultural support, and navigation services, all of which make the transition to higher learning and/or relocation to a new community much easier.

Under the First Nations PSE Strategy, the Post-Secondary Partnerships Program supports First Nations-established post-secondary education institutions and First Nations community-based programming. Additionally, the Post-Secondary Student Support Program supports First Nations in providing eligible students with funding to access education opportunities at the post-secondary level, with eligible costs including expenditures such as travel support, living allowances, childcare as needed, as well as supplemental tutorial, guidance, and counselling services.

As of 2019-20, education interim funding formulas provide \$1,500 per student for Language and Culture, as well as full day Kindergarten 4/5. Budget 2021 provided additional investment in the areas of Before and After School, menstrual products, and student support funding to all First Nation students residing on reserve. These activities are provided as enhancements to what provincial school divisions receive in order to respond to the challenges faced by Indigenous students.

Regional Education Agreements are a tool to support First Nation's expressing their vision of Education in line with First Nation control of First Nation Education. Such agreements include, for example, enhancement to provincial curriculums to reflect Indigenous cultural inclusion and content intended for all high school student bodies.

Adequate community infrastructure devoted to education is also important. New school construction includes the opportunity for a community to include space allocation for grades that are currently being delivered outside of the community within new school construction.

The School Space Accommodation Standard was revised in 2021 to include space for Culture, Language and Knowledge Keepers and outside learning areas.

Space for mental wellbeing is considered in the School Space Accommodation Standard through the inclusion of space for Social Workers, Mental Health Workers, Speech and Language Pathologists and includes space for Sensory/Exceptional Areas.

### **Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC)**

Farm Credit Canada offers the Indigenous Student Empowerment Fund which is open to Indigenous students attending one of four Saskatchewan post-secondary institutions. The fund can provide students with up to \$1,000 for basic needs (rent, groceries, utilities, damage deposit or laptop) any time during the semester.

### **Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC)**

The Canada Student Financial Assistance (CSFA) Program provides all eligible students seeking to pursue post-secondary education (PSE) with access to non-repayable grants and needs-based loans, in addition to repayment assistance for borrowers with financial difficulty. While distinctions-based PSE supports for First Nation, Inuit, and Métis students are generally an ISC responsibility, the CSFA Program has made significant improvements to make PSE more affordable and debt more manageable, in addition to the following changes aimed at improving access to funding for Indigenous learners:

- No fixed student contribution: Students who opt to self-identify as Indigenous learners are not expected to contribute to their educational costs (as of 2017-18);
- To ensure that Indigenous students applying for the CSFA Program are not penalized for receiving additional sources of funding, support provided by the following ISC programs is not considered in the need assessment:
  - Post-Secondary Student Support Program (as of 2017-18);
  - Métis Nation PSE Strategy (as of 2019-2020); and,
  - Inuit PSE Strategy (as of 2020-21).

Announced in Budget 2021 (\$118.4 million from 2021-22 to 2022-23), ESDC's Supports for Student Learning Program (SSLP) funds critical after school programming to support learners, particularly students from Indigenous and other historically underserved communities, to complete high school, transition to, and succeed in, post-secondary education (PSE). To do this, the SSLP funds organizations that offer flexible and inclusive learning-related supports, such as tutoring sessions, mentoring programs, and mental and social wellbeing services.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, SSLP provided \$15 million in funding to help organizations operating in the after-school space transition critical wraparound supports online. Included in this funding were organizations that primarily serve Indigenous learners such as the British Columbia Aboriginal Network on Disability Society, TakingITGlobal (Connected North), and the National Association of Friendship Centres.

Through the Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) program, Indigenous service providers can also support Indigenous students to obtain high school credits, or the academic qualifications required to pursue further post-secondary instruction and employment. This includes supporting Indigenous clients with customized and culturally appropriate wrap around services that will help address barriers to training and employment.

Youth Employment and Skills Strategy (YESS) funding supports a variety of wrap around services to support Indigenous youth as they enter the labour force. These supports could include culturally appropriate Indigenous supports such as access and networks to Indigenous social services (e.g. healing centers, counselling, healthcare, shelters, resource centers, restorative justice) for Indigenous youth. YESS funding could support organizations that make these services available to Indigenous youth attending high school outside of their community.

### ***Education Recommendation #3***

#### **Develop bridging programs to help students wanting to upgrade from college to university**

- EDU3      Given the high levels of college/trades completion, ***bridging programs to support students who wish to upgrade these certifications*** towards university degrees would fast track higher levels of education and employment opportunities. Such programs currently exist in some colleges to give credit for 1-2-year programs towards university degree requirements and expansion would further assist Indigenous students towards the attainment of higher education levels.

#### **MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE TO IMPLEMENT THIS RECOMMENDATION**

### **Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)**

ISC continues to support the Post-Secondary Partnership Program (PSPP). This program supports partnerships between post-secondary institutions and First Nation communities to help the transition to post-secondary settings and meeting entry requirements for post-secondary.

The Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) guidelines include support for University and College Entrance preparation to enable access and transition to post-secondary studies.

The Income Assistance and First Nations and Inuit Youth Employment Strategy pilot, which ended in March 2022, supported on-reserve First Nations youth between the ages of 18 and 30 who were receiving Income Assistance to transition to the workforce or return to school.

### **Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC)**

Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) service providers can help Indigenous students access bridging programs that would fast track their achievement of higher education and employment opportunities.



#### ***Education Recommendation #4***

##### **Invest in distance education programs**

- EDU4      ***Universities in each of the 3 Northern territories*** would support students in reducing the high costs and long distances currently required to attend university and increase the availability of a highly educated talent pool in the North. Yukon College is transitioning to Yukon University in 2020, Aurora College in the Northwest Territories is examining the feasibility of transitioning to Northern Canada Polytechnic University, and Arctic College in Nunavut is following recommendations to continue partnering with southern universities rather than pursue a university in Nunavut. In the interim, investment in distance education programs to assist remote students with obtaining higher levels of education would remove some barriers of expense and distance.

#### **SOME PROGRESS ON THIS RECOMMENDATION**

##### **Regional Development Agencies (RDAs)**

CanNor has supported the three territorial post-secondary education institutions through its Northern Adult Basic Education Program (NABEP) which serves mostly Indigenous students. This support has included the development of culturally appropriate curricula as well as the implementation of distance education technology and mobile classrooms in order to mitigate the costs of students travelling into urban settings. CanNor has made several investments that contribute to the availability and quality of post-secondary education in the territories. Examples of those types of investments include \$99,000 to the Yukon University for a Mobile Water Treatment Plant and \$200,000 to Nunavut College to provide Heavy Equipment Operator Portable Simulators.

##### **Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)**

The Post-Secondary Partnerships Program (PSPP) supports First Nations-established post-secondary education institutions and First Nations community-based programming and has provided funding for recipients in the NWT and the Yukon. This Program provides funding to support First Nations to define their own partnerships with institutions to increase the availability of post-secondary education programs tailored to First Nations cultural and educational needs.

As an example of regional support for such initiatives, in Alberta, PSPP activities include the following Indigenous operated post-secondary schools: Blue Quills, Red Crow College, Maskwacis Cultural College, Old Sun College, and Yellowhead College. Students at First Nations across Alberta are also able to draw on PSPP funding and the University College Entrance Preparation Program.

On the shore of James Bay, Ontario, the Fort Albany First Nation is currently being supported to establish a multi-use facility that would have a college as their anchor tenant to increase access to training within the community and more locally to other remote communities in their territory. The First Nation was supported through the Community Opportunity Readiness Program to complete a for profit Multi-Use Facility Feasibility Study.

### **Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC)**

Since 2019, CIRNAC has led on 4 major initiatives supporting tertiary education in the Arctic and North – two of which relate to the establishment of Yukon University and transformation of Aurora College into a polytechnic institution, as follows:

- construction of a new Science Building for Yukon University (\$26 million committed) (due to the pandemic, funding has been re-profiled, and the overall completion date moved to 2025-26);
- transformation of Aurora College to a polytechnic university (\$8 million committed in Budget 2021);
- Independent Task Force on Northern Post-Secondary Education (\$1 million invested), which, in 2022, consistent with the Arctic and Northern Policy Framework (ANPF), provided a suite of recommendations on how best to close gaps in northern post-secondary education across the region in a report entitled “A Shared Responsibility: Northern Voices, Northern Solutions”; and
- Dechinta Centre for Research and Learning (nearly \$13 million provided over five years, Budget 2019), whose program is rooted in Indigenous practices, culture, and values and it offers accredited university courses in governance, sustainable communities, health, communications, law, arts, language, and environmental science and land management. These course credits can be applied to a certificate in Land and Community Based Research or to partner universities. A variety of supports are offered, such as integrated childcare, that have helped students overcome significant barriers to accessing education (due to this, a funding re-profile has been implemented).

CIRNAC does not currently provide funding to Nunavut Arctic College as no such request has been put forward by the Government of Nunavut or Nunavut Arctic College through the Arctic and Northern Policy Framework.

### **Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC)**

Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) Program terms and conditions offer increased flexibility and support a wide range of labour market activities, including wrap around services that will help address barriers associated with online education and training.

### **Natural Resources Canada (NRCan)**

The Geological Survey of Canada’s GEM (Geo-Mapping for Energy and Minerals) GeoNorth Program provides grants to academia and Northern and Indigenous organizations to design tools that build capacity for the use of geoscience. This program is currently providing grants to Yukon University, Aurora College and Aurora Research Institute, and several Indigenous Associations and communities.



### ***Education Recommendation #5***

#### **Expand and continue scholarship funding**

- EDU5      ***Ongoing and expanded scholarship funding*** for Indigenous students pursuing post-secondary education would reduce financial barriers and encourage higher educational attainment rates.

**MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE TO IMPLEMENT THIS RECOMMENDATION**

#### **Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)**

ISC supports distinctions-based post-secondary education strategies for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis. These strategies provide funding to students and to institutions, including community-based programs.

Budget 2019 provided an additional investment of \$320 million over 5 years to renew and expand funding for the Post-Secondary Student Support Program.

#### **Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC)**

ESDC has a funding relationship with Indspire, a national Indigenous-led charity that provides scholarships, bursaries and mentorship supports for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis students to access and succeed in PSE. Indspire plays an important role in supporting Indigenous learners who are unable to access distinctions-based funding. Ongoing federal support has helped Indspire provide more than 48,700 scholarships and bursaries, valued at over \$151 million, to First Nations, Inuit, and Métis students across Canada.





## Entrepreneurship and Business Development

Provide access to business services and skills training and raise awareness of funding supports and programs

Examine potential supports for First Nations on reserve businesses

Fund Aboriginal Financial Institutions to ensure entrepreneurs are able to access capital

### Entrepreneurship and Business Development Recommendation #1

Enhance business services and raise awareness of funding supports and programs

- EDBD1 Research by CCAB suggests that barriers for business development include a lack of knowledge of where and how to apply for financing, as well as types of funding available and eligibility. ***Enhanced, more specific and greater availability of business services along with communications to increase awareness of application programs and support would benefit entrepreneurs seeking capital financing.*** Additionally, access to skills training for new business owners would assist with the development of business management skills to support business success.

**GOOD PROGRESS ON THIS RECOMMENDATION**

## Regional Development Agencies (RDAs)

Canada's Regional Development Agencies (RDA) work closely with businesses and innovators in their regions to fuel economic growth that creates more well-paying middle-class jobs for Canadians, including Indigenous Canadians. There are seven RDAs across Canada:

- Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA);
- Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions (CED);
- Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency (CanNor);
- Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario);
- Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario (FedNor);
- Prairies Economic Development Canada (PrairiesCan); and,
- Pacific Economic Development Canada (PacifiCan).

Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) support entrepreneurship and business development through a range of national programs that are often regionally tailored, and region-specific programs that are intended to address the unique challenges and opportunities of each region.

Business Service Network (BSN): BSN encompasses most of the programs listed below. BSN helps entrepreneurs start or expand small businesses and includes services to rural areas and underrepresented groups, including Indigenous clients and communities. Funding provided to deliver business information and advisory services, loans to small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), and community economic development planning and support.

Community Futures (CF) (a BSN partner program): CF consists of annual operating funding provided to organizations across the country for community and business development outside of urban centres. Services to SMEs include strategic economic planning, technical and advisory services, and loans. Many are also Aboriginal Financial Institutions, serving a majority of Indigenous clients and businesses, which

are either Indigenous-controlled or have Indigenous board members. In British Columbia, since 2019, 13.3% of clients using this program are Indigenous, and in the Prairies, that figure is 13.5%.

Aboriginal Financial Institutions (AFIs): There are 58 autonomous, Indigenous-controlled, community-based financial organizations across the country. AFIs provide developmental lending, business financing, and support services to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit businesses in all provinces and territories. Support includes business loans, non-repayable contributions, financial and management consulting, and business start-up and aftercare services. Although AFIs take on more risk than conventional commercial lenders, annual loan losses averaged only 2.1% in 2019-20.

Indigenous Business Development Services (IBDS): Available via PrairiesCan and PacifiCan, IBDS provides targeted business services to new and existing Indigenous entrepreneurs and businesses organizations, delivers early-stage entrepreneurial and business training and pathfinding services, and enables clients to better utilize other programs and engage with Indigenous communities and other business development organizations.

Women's Enterprise Initiative (WEI): WEIs deliver specialized business services to women entrepreneurs by providing them loans, business counselling, and skills training to start, scale up, and grow their businesses. In the Prairie provinces, since 2019, 9.2% of clients using this program are Indigenous, and in British Columbia, that figure is 3.3%. While the WEI is available via PrairiesCan and PacifiCan, there is a national Women's Entrepreneurship Strategy (WES), also coordinated by the RDAs and ISED.

Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program (EDP): Available via PrairiesCan and PacifiCan, the EDP provides business information, training and development, mentoring, and one-on-one counselling services to entrepreneurs in the prairies living with a disability. In the Prairie provinces, since 2019, 4.4% of clients using this program are Indigenous, and in British Columbia, that figure is 7.7%.

Community Economic Development and Diversification (CEDD): CEDD supports initiatives that contribute to the economic growth and diversification of communities, enabling them to respond to economic development opportunities and adjust to challenging economic circumstances.

Regional Innovation Ecosystems (RIE): RIE's objective is to create and develop inclusive regional ecosystems that address business needs and foster innovation, growth, and competitiveness. RIE targets not-for-profit organizations that support businesses, innovators, and entrepreneurs for start-up, growth, productivity, technology commercialization, technology adoption, and export and investment attraction. This program also supports under-represented groups, mainly women, Indigenous Peoples, and young entrepreneurs.

Tourism Relief Fund (TRF): TRF supports tourism businesses and organizations to adapt their operations to meet public health requirements while investing in products and services to facilitate their future growth. TRF has allocated a minimum of \$50 million federally to support Indigenous initiatives, representing at least 10% of the program's overall funding.

In Atlantic Canada, ACOA provides support to:

- Ulnooweg: Offers many tools geared to the small business owner, designed to assist Indigenous businesspeople to assess their current business situation, make good business decisions, and find training and funding sources.

- Joint Economic Development Initiative (JEDI): Responsible for development of many capacities including Incubator and Accelerator programs, Internship programs, community economic development initiatives, and services to Indigenous entrepreneurs in New Brunswick.
- Nunatsiavut Business Centre: Successful in assisting numerous businesses to get established and secure contracts with Voisey's Bay and other projects.

In the north, CanNor funds multiple projects in the territories that benefit Indigenous businesses and employment. In recent years, over 60% of CanNor funding has supported Indigenous clients. CanNor funding is also enhancing the availability of business services and accessibility of skills training for new Indigenous and non-Indigenous business owners by supporting projects such as investing over \$1 million in the EntrepreNorth project. The project is designed to offer a business accelerator program, build entrepreneurial capacity, grow small businesses, and get Indigenous entrepreneurs and ventures investment ready.

CanNor's Northern Aboriginal Economic Opportunities Program (NAEOP) also promotes entrepreneurship in Indigenous communities. CanNor funds Service Delivery Partners (SDPs), third party Indigenous service providers with direct linkages to northern communities, which affords SDPs greater capacity to assist Indigenous entrepreneurs, businesses, and commercial entities. For example, the Northwest Territories (NWT) Metis Dene Development Fund provides business wrap-around services such as financing, counselling services, and financial training.

- In 2019-20, CanNor provided \$4.3 million to four SDPs.
- In 2020-21, CanNor provided \$2.4 million to three SDPs.
- In 2021-22, CanNor provided \$3 million to five SDPs.

In Quebec, to ensure Indigenous businesses are aware of CED's programs and flexible terms, CED disseminates the information through advisors in its 12 business offices located in all regions of Quebec. CED advisors meet with eligible businesses and communities, including Indigenous communities and entrepreneurs, to determine their needs and discuss potential projects.

CED funds the Commission de développement économique des Premières Nations du Québec et du Labrador (CDEPNQL), a non-profit organization, in order to offer entrepreneurship-related services to members of Quebec's First Nations. This includes support to foster more entrepreneurship within Indigenous communities, the creation and scale-up of new and existing businesses, and a prosperous ecosystem by better enabling community economic development players.

CED also works closely with Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) in the delivery of Strategic Partnership Initiatives (SPIs) that align the efforts of federal departments and increase Indigenous readiness and participation in economic development opportunities. More specifically, CED has funded projects related to capacity building for Indigenous entrepreneurs.

In Northern Ontario, FedNor provides funding to projects that promote regional approaches to entrepreneurship training through partnerships with Indigenous Community Futures Development Corporations. These partners deliver entrepreneurship training workshops. FedNor also delivers the Community Investment Initiative for Northern Ontario (CIINO). This initiative provides support to recipient communities and First Nations to hire an economic development officer to implement an economic development plan or capitalize on economic opportunities. The goal of the initiative is to support increased community capacity for rural and remote and Indigenous communities.

In Southern Ontario, FedDev Ontario is working to enhance the accessibility of the Agency's programming for Indigenous entrepreneurs and organizations, including by improving their web presence and approach to communications. Work is underway to develop a dedicated landing webpage and inbox for Indigenous applicants with streamlined and tailored guidance with two simple paths for businesses and not-for-profits.

FedDev Ontario also supports enhanced business services and access to capital through the Agency's collaborative relationship with southern Ontario's AFIs. An example of this partnership is the \$10 million capitalization of Aboriginal Impact Capital (AIC), an investment fund created by the region's AFIs to address a financing gap that Indigenous business faced accessing mid-market capital (in the \$250,000 to \$2 million range).

FedDev Ontario also provides operating funds to southern Ontario's two Indigenous Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDCs) through the Community Futures Program (CFP). These organizations provide business training, coaching, and mentoring and microfinancing for business start-up for the First Nations in their coverage areas. A number of the non-Indigenous CFDCs have also made it a priority to ensure Indigenous economic development and relationships with First Nations in their coverage area is a part of their broader economic activities. FedDev Ontario is working with other CFDCs across southern Ontario to encourage provision of support for Indigenous economic development.

FedDev Ontario's Small Business Services (SBS) help Ontario entrepreneurs navigate government business information and services (federal and provincial) and has published a number of guides online targeted to specific subjects and audiences. This includes an Indigenous Entrepreneur Guide to Starting a Business.

FedDev Ontario is supporting Indigenous women entrepreneurs through the Women Entrepreneurship Strategy (WES) Ecosystem Fund. In one successful application, the project helped provide customized training to new and existing Indigenous women entrepreneurs residing in a remote region of the Algonquin community.

Since 2018-19, PrairiesCan and PacifiCan's departmental priorities include promoting an inclusive economy and supporting the economic participation of groups facing barriers in the regional economy, such as Indigenous people, women, and youth.

In British Columbia, PacifiCan provides operating support for four Aboriginal Financial Institutions that provide business support to Indigenous entrepreneurs and businesses: Stó:lō Community Futures Corporation (SCF) (\$286,845), Community Futures Development Corporation of Central Interior First Nations ( \$307,516), Community Futures Haida Gwaii ( \$306,000), along with Nuu-chah-nulth Economic Development Corporation (NEDC) (\$297,669).

The Community Futures Haida Gwaii delivers the Indigenous Business Development Services (IBDS) in British Columbia to Indigenous entrepreneurs on behalf of the four indigenous Community Futures organizations. PacifiCan provides \$168,300 in operating funding for IBDS to deliver the following three services:

- Business Training & Capacity Building;
- Marketing assistance for entrepreneurs; and,
- Indigenous Internships.

Western Economic Diversification Canada's BC Region office (now known as PacifiCan) provided \$1.9 million in support for Capilano University's Indigenous Digital Accelerator (IDA) program. The IDA provides resources to nurture Indigenous business growth in the tech, digital-creative, and cultural sectors. The IDA scales up early-stage Indigenous companies with high growth, commercialization, and innovation potential within a framework that emphasizes community development and low environmental impact.

The British Columbia Indigenous Clean Energy Initiative (BCICEI) funds Indigenous-owned, small-scale energy production businesses in rural and remote Indigenous communities. These projects create economic development opportunities while reducing dependence on diesel-generated power. Since 2016, the BCICEI has received over \$18 million in funds flowed from Indigenous Services Canada's Strategic Partnerships Initiative. PacifiCan delivers these funds to the New Relationship Trust (NRT), an Indigenous led organization advancing economic development for First Nations. Through its work with BC First Nations, NRT supports business and partnership development.

PacifiCan recently opened eight offices outside Vancouver. PacifiCan's new locations create better access to services for many BC First Nations.

### **Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)**

Within the Lands and Economic Development Sector, ISC supported a project with the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB) on a virtual Export Training Program (ETP) to promote Indigenous business development by increasing export growth through greater access to business networks, mentorship opportunities, financing programs, and export training. The program provided comprehensive skills training to Indigenous businesses on the essential strategies, partnerships, and resources available to scale up, develop, and initiate their export activities. This included increasing awareness of existing export development programs, tools, and financial resources available to support Indigenous export growth and international Indigenous supply chain development.

Launching in late 2022, ISC's Navigator position will help Indigenous entrepreneurs find programs related to their needs. This will provide a single point of entry for all Indigenous entrepreneurs, businesses, and communities to access funding from across the federal family in all sectors of the economy.

Budget 2019 proposed to invest \$78.9 million over five years, starting in 2019-20, with \$15.8 million per year ongoing, to support First Nations and Inuit communities in building business plans, to expand Indigenous-led businesses, and to launch new Indigenous-led start-ups. Building on this commitment, Budget 2022 proposed to provide \$35 million over 5 years, starting in 2022-23, for ISC to increase economic capacity supports, including specialized training opportunities delivered by Indigenous-led organizations.

Within Quebec, ISC funding allows the Commission de développement économique des Premières Nations du Québec et du Labrador (CDEPNQL) to accompany, train and support Aboriginal communities and entrepreneurs in Quebec. This funding allows the CDEPNQL to implement its communication mandate through its Nikan Newsletter and its website ([www.cdepnql.org](http://www.cdepnql.org)). The Nikan Newsletter allows for the dissemination of information to Community Economic Development Officers (CEDOs) by providing in-depth coverage of current Aboriginal economic issues.

In addition, ISC funding allows Québec Aboriginal Tourism (TAQ) to continue its work begun in the following areas: a) development; b) communication and marketing; and c) structuring partnerships with



the tourism industry. More specifically, ISC funding allows TAQ to work with businesses from 11 Aboriginal Nations of Quebec by offering them support, training, and coaching.

### **Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC)**

AAFC has an Indigenous Pathfinder Service which provides support for Indigenous Peoples who are looking for advice or referral to initiate and/or expand operations in the sector. The service helps clients to navigate and identify available resources and opportunities offered by AAFC and other federal, provincial, and territorial partners.

Farm Credit Canada (FCC) offers flexible financing options for agriculture and food businesses across the value chain. While FCC does not have a specific product for Indigenous partners, the Crown corporation has undertaken measures to ensure its products (starter loan, young farmers, etc.) apply and are accessible to Indigenous agriculture and food proponents.

AAFC's AgriDiversity Program helps under-represented groups in Canadian agriculture, including youth, women, Indigenous Peoples, and persons with disabilities, to fully participate in the sector by helping these groups address the key issues and barriers they often face for sector participation. This includes support for projects that help build the entrepreneurial capacity and business skills of underrepresented groups through training, and projects that facilitate knowledge transfer, including workshops, seminars, conferences, mentorship, networking, and other information sharing activities.

AAFC's five year (2018-2023) Indigenous Agriculture and Food Systems Initiative aims to increase economic development opportunities for Indigenous Peoples and communities through support for capacity building activities. Projects approved under the initiative range from feasibility studies and business planning to the implementation of economic development projects for new and growing businesses through capacity building, knowledge sharing, market planning, etc.

### **Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC)**

Under the Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) Program, training to support self-employment can also be provided based on community and individual needs. This can include interventions that provide training and support to enable a client to start a business or continue in a career of self-employment.

### **Export Development Canada (EDC)**

EDC is supporting this recommendation through the following initiatives:

- participating in the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB) Tools and Financing for Aboriginal Business (TFAB) initiative page to promote EDC financial and trade knowledge programs;
- adding a new Indigenous business landing page on EDC.ca (Indigenous Business at EDC | EDC) developed in consultation with Indigenous groups;
- raising awareness of EDC programs and exporting via Indigenous business webinars and support/ participation in partners' Indigenous webinars and workshops;
- collaborating with Indigenous business groups to raise awareness of EDC and our trade partners' export programs. Includes joint webinars, EDC information and links on partner websites and publications;



- supporting (funding and participation) for Indigenous cohorts in EDC's Trade Accelerator Program (TAP);
- partnering with financial institutions (banks, credit unions) to support their Indigenous business clients through EDC loan guarantees, co-lending, and other financial solutions;
- committing \$35 million to the National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association's (NACCA) Indigenous Growth Fund;
- establishing a \$200 million Inclusive Trade Investment Program (ITIP) to improve access to equity capital for diverse and under-represented businesses (including Indigenous-owned businesses);
- hiring an Indigenous National Lead to develop and lead EDC's Indigenous export strategy;
- implementing EDC's Indigenous Business strategy, which includes adding flexibility into EDC's financial solutions to improve access and relevance for Indigenous business, including an expanded risk appetite for Indigenous lending and project financing;
- developing and incorporating Indigenous business metrics into EDC's data systems, which focus on financial and trade knowledge programs being used by Indigenous business clients;
- establishing medium-term support targets on the number of Indigenous business clients served and the dollar amount of financial support based on EDC's Indigenous business metrics which will form part of EDC's long-term strategy, incentivized at the VP and senior management level;
- as of June 2022, providing financial and trade knowledge services to 233 Indigenous companies and facilitating \$501.2 million in Indigenous business through various programs, as well as setting targets of 400 customers served and \$650 million in financial services support for the end of 2023;
- establishing a new Supplier Diversity program to increase EDC procurement from diverse suppliers, including Indigenous companies; and,
- registering with CCAB's Aboriginal Procurement Champion program and supporting Canada Aboriginal and Minority Suppliers Council (CAMSC) through sponsorship funding.

### **Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO)**

The Indigenous Commercial Fisheries Programs support business development and planning for Indigenous groups and communities in fisheries and oceans sectors, including support for the establishment of commercial fisheries enterprises. The Atlantic Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative (AICFI), Pacific Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative (PICFI), and Northern Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative (NICFI) provide support for enterprise governance enhancement, management practice enhancement including the development of business plans, and commercial fisheries diversification initiatives and plans.

When possible, Indigenous Programs leverage other sources of funds and encourage Indigenous groups and communities to access other funding supports and programs that may be available. AICFI, PICFI and NICFI also provide business development support through partnerships with Indigenous Financial Institutions that provide services to Indigenous groups and communities. This includes advisory services to Indigenous groups and communities throughout the project lifecycle of project selection, assistance with the development of business cases, applications, and project implementation, and identifying potential projects and status as they develop over time.

### **Global Affairs Canada (GAC)**

The Trade Commissioner Service (TCS) provides enhanced support to Indigenous-owned businesses that are interested in exporting to international markets. The TCS accomplishes this through:

- Increasing accessibility and promotion of its services to Indigenous exporters, including by collaborating with Indigenous business organizations and associations;
- Developing and coordinating group-specific programming, including Indigenous-cohorts for business missions, accelerator programs, and activities and events in international markets;
- Dedicating diversity champions in GAC's regional offices that provide tailored and enhanced support to Indigenous exporters in the region; and
- Funding export-related activities for Indigenous entrepreneurs, through the CanExport program, including through a "concierge service" that provides enhanced support and guidance on the program and application process to Indigenous businesses. CanExport also provides special considerations to Indigenous-owned businesses aiming to participate in GAC-led business delegations.

These enhanced offerings complement the TCS core service offering for all Canadian businesses interested in exporting, which includes:

- Providing market intelligence, insight, and practical advice;
- Finding new business opportunities abroad;
- Connecting with key contacts between target markets; and,
- Resolving business problems in foreign markets.

### **Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED)**

Under Canada's Digital Adoption Program (CDAP), the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB) is being funded by ISED to provide services as an intermediary through the Canada Digital Adoption Program – Grow Your Business Online Stream. CCAB will market the program to Indigenous businesses across Canada and provide grants of up to \$2,400 to Indigenous businesses to help with costs related to adopting digital technologies. CCAB will also support a network of e-commerce advisors who will advise and help Indigenous businesses adopt e-commerce related technologies.

The Upskilling for Industry Initiative (UII) will benefit businesses in high-growth industries adjust to changing skills requirements by providing access to a competitive workforce. Ultimately, the program is expected to help 15,500 Canadians, including individuals from underrepresented groups (including Indigenous Peoples), connect with new work opportunities.

The Clean Growth Hub is a unique whole-of-government focal point for clean technology, dedicated to helping Canadian clean technology innovators and adopters navigate federal programs and services most relevant to their needs. The Hub is co-led by Innovation Science and Economic Development Canada and Natural Resources Canada and provides tailored advisory services to help clean technology stakeholders – including Indigenous businesses and organizations – navigate federal programs, ranging from support for early technology readiness levels (TRLs) to scaling up already commercialized technologies. The Hub has implemented a Reconciliation, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (REDI) Strategy and Action Plan to improve data gathering on client diversity and enhance capacity to provide tailored advice to underrepresented groups, including Indigenous clients. The Hub has also been reaching out to Indigenous organizations to promote awareness of its services.

The Indigenous Tourism Industry Association is being funded by ISED under the National Priorities Stream to support the Indigenous tourism industry's recovery from the impact of COVID-19, and better position it to take advantage of the expected growth in domestic and international demand for tourism offerings, and for sustainable and cultural tourism offerings in particular.

Budget 2022 proposed to provide \$20 million over two years, starting in 2022-23, in support of a new Indigenous tourism fund to support Indigenous tourism micro and small operators as well as scaling-up of major regional signature Indigenous tourism experiences.

The development of a new Federal Tourism Growth Strategy was announced in Budget 2022, and the Strategy itself is expected to be launched in 2023. The Minister will work with tourism businesses, provincial and territorial counterparts, and Indigenous tourism partners to develop this Strategy which will plot a course for growth, investment, and stability.

### **Natural Resources Canada (NRCAN)**

Since April 2020, NRCan's Canadian Minerals and Metals Plan (CMMP) Secretariat has been collaborating with the Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers (Cando) on developing mining webinars. The webinars help build understanding among Indigenous communities of mineral exploration and mining activities and the potential to participate in, and benefit from, activities across the mining cycle. The intention is to present the mining sequence, mineral maps, an overview of mineral potential, economic possibilities, and business opportunities through contracting that the minerals/metals sector provides.

The CMMP also works to raise awareness about training programs available that are operated by other organizations (e.g. the Mining Industry Human Resources Council (MiHR)). CMMP actively supports the delivery of MiHR's Mining Essentials pre-employment training program by providing the Exploration and Mining Guide for Aboriginal Communities as an educational resource, validated by the Canadian exploration and mining industry, Indigenous organizations, and government.

NRCan's Indigenous Forestry Initiative (IFI) provides financial support via non-repayable contributions to support Indigenous-led economic development projects in the forest sector, including for capacity-building. The program supports forestry-related skills training and business development projects under flexible terms and conditions and covers up to 100% of eligible costs for a project. Since 2017, IFI support has led to 45 new or expanded businesses, more than 787 jobs created, 952 Indigenous individuals trained in forestry-related competencies, and over 364 economic-development enabling products (including feasibility studies, business plans, workshops, etc.), and, with partnership support, \$12.2 million of capital funded. The program is supported by regionally based Indigenous Forestry Liaison Officers (RLOs), deployed across CFS regional forestry centres. These RLOs engage to build relationships with Indigenous communities, to raise awareness of the program and opportunities in the forest sector, to facilitate the development of projects and partnerships, and to support program delivery.

NRCan, ISC, and CIRNAC (with support from ECCC & INFC), are delivering \$300 million in streamlined funding for capacity building, renewable energy, and energy efficiency projects in remote and rural communities through the Clean Energy in Indigenous and Remote Communities Hub. This includes funding support for skills development and training initiatives as well as financial support for community energy coordinators. The Hub, as a single window administrative unit, provides pathfinding to support applicants navigate federal programs, facilitate connections with other programs/resources, and provide advice.

NRCan's Polar Continental Shelf Program (PCSP) has seen a significant increase in the number of contracts awarded to Inuit firms for goods being consumed in Nunavut in 2021 versus when tracking started in 2019, showing enhanced opportunities for Indigenous businesses:

- 63% of contracts awarded in 2021 were awarded to companies on the Inuit Firm Registry, vs only 8% in 2019. This translates to 59 contracts (total of \$168,542) in 2021, versus only 9 contracts in 2019 (total of \$38,961).
- PCSP has various multi-year Requests for Proposals (RFPs) that will be posted in fiscal year 2022-23, that will include the relevant criteria related to Article 24 of the Nunavut Agreement. These contracts are related to janitorial services, mechanical services, casual and professional services at the PCSP facility in Resolute.
- In 2019, PCSP worked with the Nunavut Arctic College Trade School in Rankin Inlet to identify a student able to come up to the PCSP facility in Resolute to work with the facility management team. This initiative has since been on pause due to the COVID-19 pandemic but will be re-started in 2023.



## ***Entrepreneurship and Business Development Recommendation #2***

### **Examine potential supports for First Nations on reserve businesses**

- EDBD2      Given the legislation on reserve which disallows tax exemption and therefore discourages incorporation, and information to suggest incorporation is associated with revenue generation, ***further consideration of how First Nations on reserve businesses could be better supported should be examined.***

#### **GOOD PROGRESS ON THIS RECOMMENDATION**

### **Regional Development Agencies (RDAs)**

CanNor program terms and conditions allow funding to be disbursed to registered sole proprietors, whereas other funders have traditionally required business applicants to be incorporated. The requirement to be incorporated can be a barrier to access funding for Indigenous applicants, especially those located on reserve.

In 2018, CED introduced flexibilities in its regular programs to account for Indigenous realities, facilitate Indigenous access to financing, and increase its support to Indigenous communities. This also made individual (unincorporated) businesses on reserves eligible for funding, as opposed to non-Indigenous businesses for which CED normally requires incorporation as a condition for eligibility.

FedNor delivers programs and initiatives that provide Indigenous proponents, notably Indigenous businesses, access to financing to support their economic development needs. FedNor provides flexibilities in its regular programs to account for Indigenous realities, to facilitate Indigenous access to financing, and to increase its support to Indigenous communities.

In 2021, FedNor developed internal training materials for staff use to enhance awareness and understanding of the particular considerations around on-reserve businesses and sole proprietorships in terms of land ownership, corporate structures, and financing. This guidance ensured that FedNor could support individual (unincorporated) businesses on reserves.

FedDev Ontario has been undertaking significant design thinking research and engagement with stakeholders to identify barriers faced by Indigenous applicants to accessing FedDev Ontario programming. To date, they have identified challenges with navigating multiple programs, unclear language, lack of tailoring, and administrative barriers.

To address these challenges, FedDev Ontario is working to enhance the accessibility of programming for Indigenous entrepreneurs and organizations, including by improving the Agency's web presence and approach to communications.

The region's two Indigenous Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDCs) both have a service area exclusively made up of First Nations where SMEs eligible for their programming must operate on reserve.

As mentioned above, a number of the non-Indigenous CFDCs, such as ACCFutures (Akwesasne, Cornwall and the Counties), have also made it a priority to ensure Indigenous economic development and relationships with First Nations in their coverage area are part of their larger economic activities. FedDev



Ontario is working with all southern Ontario's CFDCs to encourage more support for Indigenous economic development and southern Ontario's First Nations.

FedDev Ontario also partners with southern Ontario's AFIs through Aboriginal Impact Capital (AIC), the investment fund created by the region's AFIs to address a financing gap that Indigenous businesses faced accessing mid-market capital (in the \$250,000 to \$2 million range).

### **Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)**

The Initiative to Modernize Federal Requirements on First Nations Decision Making received Ministerial approval in January 2021. The proposed regulatory (and potential) legislative amendments are expected to unlock designation votes that are linked to economic development on-reserve and reconciliation.

The First Nations and Inuit Youth Employment Strategy (FNIYES) supports employers to hire and retain youth aged 15-30 who are First Nations living on reserve or Inuit living outside of their land-claim areas to gain work experience.

### **Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED)**

ISED continues to explore ways of making it easier and more affordable to start and grow a business in order to support small and medium-sized businesses in Canada. Corporations Canada, the regulatory organization under ISED that allows Canadians and businesses to incorporate at the federal level, conducts a fee review every 5 years and these have led to beneficial fee reductions in the past. As part of the next fee review process in 2024, Corporations Canada will assess the impact of an incorporation fee reduction with stakeholders and partners, seeking new ways to reduce business start-up costs, particularly for entrepreneurs where the cost of incorporation represents a systemic barrier.





### ***Entrepreneurship and Business Development Recommendation #3***

#### **Fund Aboriginal Financial Institutions to ensure entrepreneurs are able to access capital**

- EBD3 Access to capital remains a barrier to economic development. ***It is essential that the Aboriginal Financial Institutions are funded*** to ensure Indigenous entrepreneurs, often less likely to acquire financing from personal home equity or other sources, are able to obtain financing.

#### **SOME PROGRESS ON THIS RECOMMENDATION**

#### **Regional Development Agencies (RDAs)**

ACOA provides operating support to Ulnooweg, the sole Aboriginal Financial Institution in Atlantic Canada. Over the last three years, ACOA has provided an average of \$500,000 annually. In 2019, the Agency also helped Ulnooweg capitalize one of their loan funds.

CED provides annual core operating funding to two Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDCs) located in Northern Quebec (recognized as Aboriginal Financial Institutions), specifically, the Eeyou Economic Group/CFDC Inc., and the Nunavik Investment Corporation.

PacifiCan supports four Community Futures organizations (CFs) across BC that are also Aboriginal Financial Institutions (AFIs). On average, each CF receives approximately \$300,000 per year.

PrairiesCan supports nine Community Futures organizations (CFs) across the Prairies that are considered Aboriginal Financial Institutions (AFIs) and are members of National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association (NACCA). On average, each CF receives approximately \$300,000 per year.

FedDev Ontario has a close and collaborative relationship with southern Ontario's AFIs. In 2020, FedDev Ontario capitalized southern Ontario's four AFIs with a \$10 million investment so they could create Aboriginal Impact Capital (AIC), extend their reach across the region, and deliver support for larger Indigenous projects. FedDev Ontario also supports the operating funds of two Community Futures organizations (CFs) in southern Ontario that are also Aboriginal Financial Institutions (AFIs).

There are four AFIs in Northern Ontario, three of which are Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDCs) that receive annual Community Futures Program core operational funding from FedNor. Each Indigenous CFDC currently has funding available in its respective investment funds to support capital requirements for Indigenous entrepreneurs.

While CanNor does not fund AFIs directly in the North for the delivery of loan programs, northern AFIs are funded through the National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Associations (NACCA), which administers the ISC loan programs. These loans are complimented by the Entrepreneurship and Business Development (EBD) program that provides contributions to Indigenous-owned businesses.

#### **Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)**

In 2017, ISC committed to a five-year comprehensive funding arrangement with the National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association (NACCA) and the network of 54 Aboriginal Financial Institutions (AFIs) and 5 Métis Capital Corporations (MCCs). Through this agreement, \$33.9 million is provided annually for

the administration of the Aboriginal Entrepreneurship Program (AEP). The AEP provides non-repayable contributions and business support services to Indigenous SMEs, offsets costs to the lenders, and supports capacity building. To expand the program and increase access to capital to Indigenous entrepreneurs, additional agreements were signed with NACCA in 2019, including \$17 million over 3 years (2019-2021) and \$42 million over 3 years (2021-2024).

In 2019, the AEP moved to a distinctions-based delivery model, with \$5 million of the aforementioned annual funding reserved for the five MCCs to administer their own Métis-specific portion of the AEP. In addition, Budget 2019 announced an injection of \$50 million over five years starting in 2019-20 to enhance the funding of the MCCs. The government is now working with Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami to address the priorities of Inuit-led AFIs.

In addition to supporting the delivery of the AEP, the government has also committed \$22 million over three years (2021-2024) to support NACCA's Indigenous Women's Entrepreneurship (IWE) initiative, which focuses on building the capacity and developing tools, resources, and supports for Indigenous women to build their businesses. The IWE initiative is also providing a micro-loan fund to enable Indigenous women to launch a micro-business in a low-risk environment.

Budget 2019 announced the creation of the Indigenous Growth Fund (IGF), a new \$153 million investment fund, under the management of NACCA, that will provide access to capital for Indigenous businesses, overcoming some of the barriers they have historically faced. The IGF is designed to attract private capital and promote the sustainability of the AFI network by increasing the network's lending by approximately \$75 million annually.

The IGF's current investors are the Government of Canada (\$50 million), Business Development Bank of Canada (\$50 million), Export Development Canada (\$35 million), Farm Credit Canada (\$15 million), and Block Inc. (\$3 million), a technology company with a focus on financial services and the first private investment in the IGF. Capital from the IGF will ensure that AFIs can continue to support Indigenous business clients in their communities and also address the growing demand for capital from new and expanding Indigenous businesses.

### **Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC)**

Farm Credit Canada (FCC) offers flexible financing options for agriculture and food businesses across the value chain. While FCC does not have a specific product for Indigenous partners, the Crown corporation has undertaken measures to ensure its products (starter loan, young farmers, etc.) apply and are accessible to Indigenous agriculture and food proponents.

### **Export Development Canada (EDC)**

EDC is supporting this recommendation through the following initiatives:

- committing \$35 million to NACCA's Indigenous Growth Fund;
- partnering with NACCA, which includes sponsorship of NACCA conferences and EDC participation in NACCA webinars to provide information on export support programs; and,
- participating in the November 2022 AFI Frontline Workers' conference alongside the Business Development Bank of Canada, Trade Commissioner Service, and Trade Accelerator Program (TAP) to present a "Tools of the Trade" export seminar.

### **Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO)**

The Indigenous Commercial Fisheries Programs partner with Indigenous Financial Institutions such as Ulnoweeg Development Group and Waubetek Business Development Corporation to provide service delivery to Indigenous groups and communities. The service providers and their Business Development Teams provide advisory services to Indigenous groups and communities throughout the project lifecycle of project selection, and assist with the development of business cases, applications, and project implementation.

### **Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED)**

Announced in Budget 2019, the Indigenous Growth Fund (IGF) provides a source of capital for Indigenous entrepreneurs, strengthens the National Aboriginal Capital Corporation Association (NACCA)-BDC partnership, and provides an opportunity for private investors to finance Indigenous entrepreneurs. The IGF has advanced \$10 million to the Nuu-chah-nulth Economic Development Corporation (NEDC), an Aboriginal Financial Institution (AFI) located on Vancouver Island, to provide loans to Indigenous small and medium sized businesses.

### **Natural Resources Canada (NRCan)**

With support from CIRNAC and other government departments, NRCan is working to develop a national benefits-sharing framework which will include tools to increase Indigenous access to capital. The Framework is currently in the engagement phase.



## Governance

### Support governance and financial management training and certification

#### Examine needs and opportunities aimed at urban Indigenous populations

### *Governance Recommendation #1*

#### Support governance and financial management training and certification

- GOV1 Strong governance and transparent financial management have led to robust economic development opportunities for Indigenous communities across Canada. The availability of tax revenues to support local development is initiated by the development of property taxation bylaws and supported by skilled and transparent community Financial Management Certification. ***Ongoing and expanded support for Indigenous communities wishing to pursue these opportunities*** will further ready communities to direct their own economic development opportunities.

### SOME PROGRESS ON THIS RECOMMENDATION

#### Regional Development Agencies (RDAs)

ACOA is building a relationship with the First Nations Financial Management Board (FNFMB) and collaborating internally on how their services could provide future opportunities for Indigenous communities to achieve their self-identified priorities. ACOA is also supporting organizations delivering financial literacy training programs to Indigenous Peoples, including the Joint Economic Development Initiative.

CanNor has updated its approach to supporting Indigenous economic development capacity in the territories. After engaging Indigenous partners, CanNor is re-introducing core funding for economic development capacity for Indigenous rights-holding organizations in Fall 2022.

FedNor continues to support First Nation communities with their Comprehensive Community Planning (CCP). Under the CCP process, communities outline priorities, which could include the development of stronger governance and financial management practices.

#### Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)

Indian Oil and Gas Canada reports that the coming into force of the Indian Oil and Gas Act and Indian Oil and Gas Regulations in August 2019 gives greater control of oil and gas activity on First Nation lands to First Nations, including allowing them to audit companies with oil and gas activity on First Nation land, and the ability for First Nations to negotiate terms and conditions with companies prior to the issuance of contracts and input and/or approval into the lifecycle of oil and gas wells on their lands.

In Atlantic Canada, twenty-three of thirty-four First Nations are clients of the First Nation Financial Management Board and have been supported with Professional and Institutional Development Program funding at various stages in the FMB certification process to develop Financial Administration Laws, Financial Management & Governance policies, and complete necessary information management/information technology equipment purchases.

In addition to targeted project-based supports for First Nations and Tribal Councils via governance capacity programs, the Atlantic Financial Officers Association is funded annually to conduct a conference open to First Nation Administrators, Governments and financial professionals which provides annual updates on leading practices and training opportunities for attendees.

The Alberta Region has a strong relationship with the Alberta chapter of the Aboriginal Financial Officer's Association (AFOA), and an ongoing partnership aimed at providing training in financial management and other essential management skills. The Certified Aboriginal Financial Manager (CAFM) Bridge Program – Bachelor of Commerce and Certificate in Indigenous Community Development and Planning is created through a partnership with post-secondary institutions to accelerate participants through a university-level credit program into a baccalaureate degree in management or a certificate in Indigenous Economic Development and Community Planning. The program is part of an Aboriginal bachelor's degree in management currently in development.

### **Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC)**

Since 2019, 78 First Nations have chosen to participate under the First Nations Fiscal Management Act, 39 communities have achieved Financial Management Systems Certification through the Financial Management Board, and 15 communities have begun collecting local revenues such as property tax under the Act. In total, since the enactment of the Act in 2006, 342 First Nations have opted to be scheduled under the Act, 55 have achieved Financial Management Systems Certification, and 132 First Nations have enacted local revenue laws, including property taxation laws, under the Act.

CIRNAC, in collaboration with ISC, the First Nations Fiscal Management Act institutions, and the First Nations Infrastructure Institute Development Board, is currently proceeding with proposed legislative amendments that would establish a new national Infrastructure Institute under the Act, modernize and expand the mandates of the existing institutions to better reflect the needs of participating First Nations, and provide access to capacity development services to First Nations that are not scheduled under the Act, to Indigenous groups, and to their organizations and aggregates.

The proposed First Nations Infrastructure Institute would be established as a center of infrastructure excellence, information, standards, best practices, and innovation that would provide capacity development services and support for the planning, development, and management of infrastructure projects to First Nations and other Indigenous groups, their aggregates, and organizations on an optional basis.

The First Nations Infrastructure Institute would benefit from interoperability with the existing institutions and is building on the successes of the First Nations Fiscal Management Act regime and on "proof of concept" demonstration projects with ISC, the Kettle and Stoney Point First Nation, Stables, Paqtnkek, the First Nations Health Authority, and the Atlantic First Nations Water Authority. These projects will be used to inform organizational design and to complement and support the infrastructure service transfers to regional Indigenous organizations.

Past and upcoming outreach, engagement and information sessions related to the amendments will contribute to further informing First Nations, national Indigenous organizations, self-governing and treaty groups, regional organizations, and aggregates about the Act, the amendments, and the enhanced suite of services available under the Act.

In July 2022, Finance Canada communicated a new policy approach for Section 87 taxation exemptions. S.87 tax exemptions will now remain for status Indian modern treaty beneficiaries on former reserves



and other First Nation reserves in Canada, until such a time as the Indigenous Government chooses to exercise tax jurisdiction. This new policy will apply in prospective and existing modern treaties and other reconciliation agreements.

### **Export Development Canada (EDC)**

EDC is supporting this recommendation through:

- the recognition of the unique structure of Indigenous Economic Development Corporations, and the support these corporations provide to their communities;
- the adoption of a flexible approach to stretch its risk appetite in providing capital to the Economic Development Corporations loan guarantee program in response to COVID; direct lending; the export guarantee program; and the trade finance insurance program;
- support for Cando through sponsorship funding, export education webinars and export knowledge articles in Cando's Connect publication; and,
- the strengthening of its collaboration with financial institutions that focus on supporting Indigenous businesses. Taking the form of "EDC guarantees," this risk-sharing approach means these banks are able to offer, and do more, for their Indigenous business clients. EDC has such agreements in place with most banks and many credit unions in Canada. This has allowed those FIs to provide greater access to credit and financing for Economic Development Corporations, their subsidiaries, and other Indigenous business clients.

Key pillars of EDC's Indigenous Business strategy include:

- flexibility in EDC's existing offerings to ensure their products and services are relevant to a larger audience of Indigenous companies;
- increased emphasis on innovation, flexibility and adaptability of EDC's credit terms and practices;
- work to increase Indigenous companies' access to capital, including leveraging FI partnerships; and,
- recognizing EDC's obligation to support economic reconciliation.





## ***Governance Recommendation #2***

### **Examine needs and opportunities aimed at urban Indigenous populations**

GOV2 Due to an increase in Indigenous populations off reserve/out of territory, the NIEDB recommends the ***examination of needs and opportunities aimed at the more than 50% of Indigenous peoples living in urban populations.***

**MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE TO IMPLEMENT THIS RECOMMENDATION**

### **Regional Development Agencies (RDAs)**

ACOA has supported the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Society since 2018. Its mission is to improve the lives of Indigenous Peoples living in an urban environment through social and cultural programming.

In 2019, FedDev Ontario provided a \$5 million contribution to support the establishment of the Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (ICIE), a one-of-a-kind Indigenous business incubator under development by the City of Toronto. ICIE intends to address identified gaps in economic development opportunities for Indigenous entrepreneurs by providing incubation space and business development programming and to help support more than 400 Indigenous businesses across southern Ontario and Canada.

Project implementation is being led by an Indigenous Leadership Advisory Council with majority representation from a broad cross-section of the Indigenous community, including members of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit communities, Indigenous entrepreneurs, business professionals and business associations, Indigenous Elders, and community leaders. The project is currently scheduled to be complete on December 31, 2023.

In the territories, Indigenous communities and businesses are eligible for CanNor funding regardless of their location. CanNor uses a place-based approach to tailor its support to the needs and opportunities faced by the diversity of territorial communities, including territorial capitals.

### **Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)**

The Individual Affairs Branch established 'Trusted Source' partnerships with more than a dozen urban Indigenous organizations across Canada to help empower Indigenous organizations to provide crucial assistance with the secure status card application process as well as registration for Indian status.

Being registered is a requirement to access many important programs, services, and benefits and provides access to federal identification via the secure status card. The collaboration with Trusted Source partners improves urban Indigenous individuals' access to services offered in a culturally appropriate environment and manner.

The Urban Program for Indigenous Peoples (UPIP) is currently undergoing a Program Evaluation to examine – along with program effectiveness – the extent to which the program recognizes and supports the rights, autonomy, worldviews, and cultural heritage of Indigenous Peoples, and to consider how or whether the Program meets community needs and goals.

UIP provides financial support under the following streams to organizations that help Indigenous Peoples, particularly those in vulnerable situations, to cope, navigate and survive within what are often harsh and complex urban realities:

- Organizational Capacity provides core operational funding.
- Programs and Services provides funding to organizations delivering programs and services to Indigenous Peoples in urban centres.
- Coalitions supports bringing together local stakeholders to identify priorities and ensure efficient delivery. In 2021-22, 36 Coalitions (\$3 million) were funded.
- Research and Innovation supports research projects, data initiatives, studies, and innovative pilot projects to better understand the needs of Indigenous Peoples in urban centres. In 2021-22, four Research and Innovation projects (\$500,000) were funded.
- Infrastructure provides funding for minor and major infrastructure projects, increasing the physical capacity and improving the safety, security, and accessibility of urban Indigenous service delivery organizations.

### **Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC)**

High-quality childcare ensures children get the best possible start in life, supports parents, and creates a solid economic foundation for families across the country well into the future.

Access to affordable, high-quality, flexible, and inclusive early learning and childcare, for all families, no matter where they live, can play a key role in economic development by providing parents, particularly mothers, the freedom to participate in the labour market and the economy, should they wish to without being concerned about finding affordable childcare.

For Indigenous children, Indigenous-led early learning and childcare supports cultural and linguistic revitalization efforts led by Indigenous communities. Indigenous-specific investments are advancing First Nations, Inuit and Métis Nation early learning and childcare priorities, guided by the co-developed Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework.



## Lands and Resources

### Increase resources to the Additions to Reserve program to expedite applications

- LR1 The Additions to Reserve process provides a mechanism to address outstanding land transfers but is currently backlogged by approximately 1,300 active applications of which eighty percent of all files represent a legal obligation for the Crown which must be addressed. ***There is a need to increase resources to the Additions to Reserve program to expedite applications***, however there wasn't any funding announced in the 2019/2020 Federal Budget that was specific to the ATR program. The NIEDB recommends that future Federal Budgets announce funding to enhance and expedite the administration of the ATR program

#### SOME PROGRESS ON THIS RECOMMENDATION

### Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)

Budget 2021 provided ISC with access to approximately \$32.2 million to accelerate work on existing additions to reserve requests.

ISC has dedicated funds for institutional capacity building and project specific support for regional land associations. Funding will directly support First Nation communities pursuing an ATR, and assist with the completion of technical components such as environmental site assessments, surveys, pre-reserve designations, etc.

ISC will also be launching the new National Additions to Reserve Tracking System (NATS) in the Fall of 2022. The development of this system was completed with the collaboration and input of Indigenous institutions and First Nation land managers and will provide all stakeholders with a project management system to streamline the complex Additions to Reserve process.

In the Quebec Region, as of 2019, an Indian Land Registry Team Leader position has been created to manage and expedite land transfers, thereby reducing the backlog of cases with the assistance of registry officers. A position has also been added to the registry, bringing the total number of registry officers to three. Similar initiatives are taking place across the country.

### Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs (CIRNAC)

Budget 2021 provided \$10.8 million to CIRNAC to redesign the Additions to Reserve Policy. CIRNAC's policy redesign includes future engagement with Indigenous organizations, rights holders, and communities to solve issues in the Additions to Reserve Policy.

Accelerating the completion of additions to reserve proposals enables First Nations to strengthen the social and economic well-being of their communities by improving access to lands and resources. First Nations across Canada are increasingly interested in adding economically viable parcels of land to take advantage of economic development opportunities to generate important own source revenues to be reinvested into the community and strengthen relationships with nearby local governments.

## Infrastructure

Lift all drinking water advisories

Continue and expand investment in housing

Bring high-speed broadband and mobile services to Indigenous communities

Update Infrastructure Index every two years

### Infrastructure Recommendation #1

Lift all drinking water advisories

- INF1 Although indications suggest that all drinking water advisories will be lifted by 2022, *it is essential that this timeline not be disrupted*, and risk management protocols are developed to ensure all DWAs are lifted as soon as possible. Further, ongoing financial commitments must be assured to maintain infrastructure, human resources, and testing protocols.

#### GOOD PROGRESS ON THIS RECOMMENDATION

### Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)

135 long-term drinking water advisories have been lifted to date. Initiatives are underway in 27 communities to resolve the remaining 31 advisories. Approximately 42% of remaining long-term drinking water advisories are expected to be lifted by the end of March 2023. Similarly, 223 short-term advisories (2-12 months) have been lifted, preventing them from becoming long-term.

ISC is actively tracking progress on resolving all drinking water advisories, as well as the ongoing projects to support the lifting of drinking water advisories.

Given uncertainties and unknowns as First Nations continue to navigate their pandemic response and recovery, a new deadline, by which all long-term advisories were to be lifted, was not set following March 2021. As such, no indications were provided that all drinking water advisories will be lifted by 2022.

ISC is working closely with First Nations by providing sustainable investments, expanding delivery systems, building capacity of and retaining local water operators, as well as supporting regular monitoring and testing on all drinking water systems to prevent short-term and re-occurring advisories. Funding increases for operations and maintenance of water and wastewater assets on reserves (now 100%, up from the previous 80% of formula funding) enables First Nations communities to effectively operate and maintain their public drinking water systems, including testing.

Budget 2019 committed \$739 million over five years, which includes: \$133.4 million over two years, starting in 2019-2020, to support urgent repairs to vulnerable water and wastewater systems; \$605.6 million over four years, starting in 2020-2021; and \$184.9 million per year ongoing, to support the operations and maintenance of water and wastewater infrastructure in First Nations communities.

As part of the 2020 Fall Economic Statement, an additional \$1.5 billion was announced to help meet the Government of Canada's commitment to clean drinking water:

- \$616.3 million over six years, and \$114.1 million per year ongoing thereafter, to increase the support provided for operations and maintenance of water and wastewater infrastructure on reserves; \$553.4 million to continue funding water and wastewater infrastructure on reserve to prevent future drinking water advisories from occurring; and
- \$309.8 million to support and accelerate on-going work to lift all long-term drinking water advisories on public systems on reserves by helping to respond to project delays, including those due to COVID-19.

Budget 2021 committed an additional \$1.043 billion over 2 years, starting in 2022-23, to support water and wastewater projects. The funding will enable ISC to continue to support the planning, procurement, construction, and commissioning of water and wastewater projects for both new builds, as well as system repairs and upgrades in First Nations communities.

Budget 2021 also announced \$125.2 million over four years, beginning in 2022-23, and \$31.3 million on-going thereafter to continue to support First Nations communities' reliable access to clean water and to help ensure the safe delivery of health and social services on reserve. This is the first time funding for this important initiative has been stabilized since the 1970s.

Most recently, Budget 2022 committed \$398 million over two years, starting in 2022-23, to support community infrastructure on reserve, of which at least \$247 million will be directed toward water and wastewater infrastructure.

Funding increases for operations and maintenance of water and wastewater assets on reserves (now 100%, up from the previous 80% of formula funding) enable First Nations communities to effectively operate and maintain their public drinking water systems, including testing.

ISC also supports the Circuit Rider Training Program, a long-term capacity building program that provides training and mentoring services to operators of First Nations drinking water and wastewater systems. Experts rotate through a circuit of First Nations communities, training the people responsible for operating, monitoring, and maintaining drinking water and wastewater systems. These experts help First Nation operators get and maintain their certification and may also give advice to chiefs and councils on how to develop and maintain safe water systems. In some regions, they also provide 24/7 emergency support to communities.

The goals of the program include:

- supporting on-reserve water and wastewater system operators in developing and maintaining the capacity to manage their systems, including on-the-job training;
- improving the maintenance, management, and effectiveness of on-reserve drinking water and wastewater systems;
- reducing the number and duration of drinking water advisories; and,
- helping First Nations communities to maximize the service life of their water and wastewater infrastructure.

Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) provides financial support for the day-to-day costs to run and maintain water and wastewater systems. This includes supporting the training and certification of water and wastewater operators. ISC does not provide training directly. Instead, ISC provides funding to First Nations to enable water and wastewater operators to undertake training, and to organizations that provide operator training and support.

ISC supports various capacity building initiatives, through investments of approximately \$20 million annually. This includes more than \$12 million per year for the Circuit Rider Training Program.





## ***Infrastructure Recommendation #2***

### **Continue and expand investment in housing**

- INF2      Housing remains an ongoing issue that affects all aspects of socio-economic life in Indigenous communities. ***Although significant investments have been made, ongoing investments are required to ensure homes are repaired and new homes are built to keep pace with growing communities.*** The newly introduced Indigenous Homes Innovation Initiative will hopefully encourage new building methods, materials, architecture, or engineering to serve Indigenous families and the environments they live in.

#### **SOME PROGRESS ON THIS RECOMMENDATION**

### **Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)**

Since April 2016, and as of March 31, 2022, the Government of Canada has committed more than \$1.6 billion through ISC to address this need. ISC works in partnership with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) by supporting housing projects including new builds, retrofits, and renovations. Since April 2016 and as of March 31, 2022, in collaboration with CMHC, a total of 26,416 homes were being built, renovated, or retrofitted. Of these, 17,971 homes are complete, while work on another 8,445 homes is underway.

Through the Indigenous Homes Innovation Initiative, the Government of Canada is also investing in new, creative approaches to Indigenous housing. The Initiative is led from start to finish by an Indigenous Steering Committee.

The Indigenous Homes Innovation Initiative's goal is to stimulate creative approaches and bring forward new ideas from Indigenous Peoples to spark changes that can lead to better housing in rural, urban, and remote First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Nation communities including more effective, sustainable and culturally inspired living spaces.

In Alberta, the regional housing program is currently working on special initiative funding totaling \$67 million, which translates into 126 housing projects for 22/23. The Region is currently working with 21 Nations on residential lot development.

In Atlantic Canada, in 2021-2022, more than \$11 million was provided in funding towards subdivision development and more than \$20 million was provided towards housing, including new construction, renovation, lot servicing, rapid housing, and other housing initiatives. For 2022-2023, there is a proposed budget of \$8.5M for subdivision development and \$31.9 million for new construction, renovation, lot servicing, rapid housing, and other initiatives.

In Quebec, a regional housing strategy is under development, with the following areas of focus: skills development, financial tools and funding, governance, and innovation. This is being carried out by representatives of the Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, and the Department of Social Development. The region has also developed a strategy to support the development of ready-to-build residential lots.

More than half of Indigenous Peoples in Canada live in urban centres. Urban Programming for Indigenous Peoples (UPIP) was created in 2017, based on feedback received during the engagement on the Urban Aboriginal Strategy that took place in 2016. UPIP is designed to assist First Nations (status and non-status), Inuit, and Métis living in or transitioning to urban centres.

Budget 2019 announced \$60 million in infrastructure funding for service providers to have safe and accessible facilities in which to deliver UPIP programs and services to urban Indigenous Peoples. Those funds have been invested to support 126 urban infrastructure projects.

Budget 2021 provided \$194.9 million over three years starting in 2022-2023 under the Indigenous Community Infrastructure Fund (ICIF) for eligible urban Indigenous service delivery organizations to support retrofits, repairs, and upgrades to existing facilities, as well as the construction of new publicly accessible community buildings that will serve the needs of urban Indigenous Peoples.

### **Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC)**

CMHC offers funding and financing options that support Indigenous and northern housing needs through the National Housing Strategy, the National Co-Investment Fund, and the Rapid Housing Initiative.

In addition to investments in programs of general application that support Indigenous communities (see the Place to Call Home website), CMHC provides funding exclusively for Indigenous and Northern Housing, including:

- \$420 million through the Indigenous Shelter and Transition Housing Initiative;
- \$138.1 million through the National Housing Co-Investment Fund;
- \$200 million through the Canada Community Housing Initiative; and,
- \$300 million through Funding for Northern Territories.

Projects serving the needs of Indigenous Peoples and families are prioritized for funding under all the Strategy's programs. For instance, over 4,230 new units will be created to support Indigenous Peoples through the Rapid Housing Initiative (this represents 41% of all units built through RHI).

The following investments have been made to support research, data, and innovation to improve Indigenous and Northern housing outcomes:

- \$4.4 million toward 18 Research and Data Initiative projects; and,
- \$13.4 million toward 8 Housing Supply Challenge projects.

Furthermore, the Government of Canada is working with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Nation partners to implement distinct housing strategies that support their vision of self-determination and lead to better social and economic outcomes for their communities.

Budget 2022 proposed \$300 million over five years, starting in 2022-23, through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation to co-develop and launch an Urban, Rural, and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy.

### **Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC)**

CIRNAC offers funding that supports Indigenous and northern housing needs using a distinctions-based approach that includes responsibility for Self-Government and Modern Treaty partners. Budget 2022

allocated an additional \$4 billion over seven years, starting in 2022-23, to ISC and CIRNAC to accelerate work in closing Indigenous housing gaps as follows:

- \$2.4 billion over five years to support First Nations housing on reserves;
- \$565 million over five years to support housing in First Nations Self-Governing and Modern Treaty Holders communities;
- \$845 million over seven years to support housing in Inuit communities;
- \$190 million over seven years for housing in Métis communities; and,
- \$300 million over 5 years to CMHC for the development and launch of an Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy.

Budget 2022 also provided \$150 million to the territorial governments and \$34 million to Métis communities in the Northwest Territories for housing purposes. These investments work in conjunction with the distinctions-based funding provided across the North to Inuit, Modern Treaty and Self-Government partners, and First Nations on-reserve to ensure that no Northern or Indigenous community is left behind as the Government of Canada works to close the housing and infrastructure gaps.



### ***Infrastructure Recommendation #3***

#### **Bring high-speed broadband and mobile services to Indigenous communities**

- INF3      This report has demonstrated that connectivity in Northern and remote communities is significantly below levels for all other communities, including remote non-Indigenous communities. Connectivity impacts virtually every aspect of our lives, and predictions for the future of work include an increasing reliance on connectivity and economic progress divided along lines of access to a global economy based on connectivity. ***Increasing speed and data capacity to all Indigenous communities*** is essential to social and economic development. Forecasting community need to be ahead of current demand and in consideration of housing realities will ensure connectivity is less likely to be outdated before it becomes a reality.

#### **MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE TO IMPLEMENT THIS RECOMMENDATION**

#### **Regional Development Agencies (RDAs)**

While the RDAs do not generally directly fund connectivity, they do provide a pathfinding role to programs such as the Universal Broadband Fund and the previous Connect to Innovate Program.

The Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario (FedNor) supports the Information Communication Technology Network (ICTN) in Northern Ontario by providing support to three not-for-profit organizations to help entrepreneurs leverage technology to improve their operations. The ICTNs promote equitable technology deployment through advocacy and partnership development.

In Atlantic Canada, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) has supported an Atlantic Indigenous Economic Development Integrated Research Program (AIEDIRP) study, focused on The Importance of Broadband Access within Indigenous Communities.

Through its relationships with national partners such as Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED), the provincial governments, and municipalities, ACOA plays a convening role to provide high-speed Internet in many Indigenous communities in Labrador, including Sheshatshiu First Nation, Natuashish, and more. ACOA has also supported projects with Nunatsiavut Government and NunatuKavut Community Council to improve connectivity in their respective regions.

The Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency (CanNor) has provided funding towards the Kivalliq Hydro-Fibre Link Project, which seeks to establish a hydro-electric and fibre-optic link between Manitoba and the Kivalliq region of Nunavut. After funding a two-year technical and feasibility study, CanNor is investing an additional \$3 million from 2021-22 to 2022-23 to support early phase data collection and analysis for the project. The project is expected to introduce reliable clean power and broadband to five Kivalliq communities and mining operations based in this area.

CanNor is also supporting a project bringing high-speed Internet to 152 rural households in Whati, a community in the North Slave Region of the NWT. CanNor is investing \$3 million to fund costs for the engineering, construction, and commissioning of the fibre optic cable.

Prairies Economic Development Canada (PrairiesCan) has worked directly with ISED's Universal Broadband Fund advocating for regional funding, and specifically for rural and remote Indigenous communities. Communities impacted by the phase out of coal-fired electricity have undertaken broadband analysis under the PrairiesCan's Canada Coal Transition Initiative (CCTI). Example projects include:

- funding a project in Manitoba for \$937,600 to Broadband Communications North Inc. to increase Indigenous economic participation in the technology sector and expand a First Nations not-for-profit internet service provider; and
- Parkland County undertaking a broadband analysis that included Paul First Nation, the only Indigenous community identified as impacted by the thermal coal phase out.

### **Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)**

The Government of Canada is committed to helping First Nations communities bridge the digital divide by working with its partners to ensure communities receive access to high-speed Internet that meets or exceeds the universal service objective. As of March 31, 2022, ISC has invested over \$79.6 million of targeted funds (excluding operating expenses) to support 41 connectivity projects, 26 of which are complete. These projects will benefit 285 communities, serving approximately 297,000 people.

ISC also provides support to remote sites to ensure enhanced connectivity, which includes but is not limited to: allowing access to reliable, effective and secure internet to complete daily tasks (relay data), undertaking on-line education, and maintaining their personal/professional networks. ISC also provides IM/IT support to circa 100 nursing stations, which are in-person health care services in 600 communities.

In Quebec, all communities have access to a high-speed Internet connection. In collaboration with Aboriginal partners (First Nations Education Council, Eeyou Communications Network, Tshakapesh), the equipment is updated on a regular cycle to ensure its performance. Since the implementation of connectivity services, a wide range of services have been introduced, such as telemedicine and E-justice. This has also facilitated the development of business opportunities as well as consultations and meetings with professionals and experts in various fields (virtual worksite meetings, for example).

In Alberta, ISC has funded 13 First Nations in preparation for connectivity planning and ISED submissions, and to date, 4 applications have been approved. ISC has also provided funding to First Nations for 9 projects to support connectivity construction.

In Atlantic Canada, the Labrador North Microwave Radio Overbuild project has been completed. ISC contributed \$650,000 in funding towards this joint project with the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, the Province of Newfoundland, the Nunatsiavut Government, the Mushuau Innu First Nation, Vale Incorporated, and Bell Aliant. Internet services were extended to an additional 1,700 households in Newfoundland and Labrador.

### **Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC)**

The CRTC's Broadband Fund will provide up to \$750 million over its first 5 years to support projects to build or upgrade access and transport infrastructure to provide fixed and mobile wireless broadband Internet access services in underserved areas of Canada, many of which are in remote, Northern communities. The Broadband Fund has committed up to \$226.5 million to improve fixed and mobile



wireless broadband Internet access service for 205 communities. This represents approximately 32,655 households and nearly 560 kilometres of major transportation roads.

On June 8, 2022, the CRTC launched Phase II of the Telecommunications in the Far North proceeding, which includes a public hearing to be held in Whitehorse, Yukon in April 2023. The purpose of the proceeding is to improve telecommunications services in communities in the Far North.

In Phase I of the proceeding, the CRTC heard that:

- All Canadians should have affordable access to telecommunications services, especially access to the Internet. Most plans available in the Far North offer low value for money, especially Internet access, compared to the south.
- Quality and reliability of service should improve so that people in the Far North can do the same activities (such as videoconferencing) as people in the south, ensuring that people in the Far North are not excluded from social or economic opportunities.
- People in the Far North want more competition with respect to their Internet services. The circumstances in the Far North make it challenging to support competition that will improve the affordability, reliability, and quality of services.
- The solutions that the CRTC examines to better meet the needs of people in the Far North should support reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.

In Phase II of the proceeding, the CRTC is seeking views on what actions it should take to make Internet and home phone services more affordable, more reliable and of higher quality, and more competitive. Also, with this proceeding, the CRTC intends to further reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples in the context of regulating telecommunications services in the Far North.

### **Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED)**

Since 2015, ISED has announced broadband projects that will connect approximately 100,000 Indigenous households across the country.

As of July 1, 2022, the Universal Broadband Fund (UBF) Rapid Response Stream (RRS) will benefit over 24,000 Indigenous households.

The UBF also allocated \$50 million for mobile projects benefitting Indigenous Peoples, including an investment to connect the “Highway of Tears” in British Columbia. This investment fulfils a critical recommendation in the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls report.

Canada’s Connectivity Strategy recognized that Indigenous communities face unique connectivity challenges and committed to consider the needs of Indigenous Peoples during planning, program design, and project selection of federal broadband programs.

To support applicants, including Indigenous applicants, the government created a pathfinder service to help identify available funding and provide advice on how to apply to the UBF.

### **Natural Resources Canada (NRCan)**

NRCan’s Office of Energy Efficiency launched the Canada Greener Homes Grant initiative in 2021 with a mandate to provide 700,000 grants of up to \$5,000 to improve home energy efficiency. There is a set-aside of 10% of grants (70,000) for Indigenous governments, organizations, or their service delivery



partners to support community-scale home energy efficiency retrofit projects. Energy efficiency home improvements provide a multitude of benefits for Indigenous communities, including energy savings, reducing energy poverty, reducing demands on electrical grids, circumventing oil spills, and making homes safer, healthier and more climate resilient.

The Office of Energy Efficiency has also launched the Toward Net-Zero Homes and Communities program. This \$14.6 million program supports the push toward Net-Zero emissions in the residential sector by helping households and communities increase residential energy efficiency and transition away from fossil fuels. One of its three program objectives is to support emissions reductions for Indigenous communities. The program has carved out a minimum of 25% of its funds (10% for First Nations, 10% for Inuit, and 5% Métis) for an ongoing intake process reserved for Indigenous applicants.



#### **Infrastructure Recommendation #4**

##### **Update Infrastructure Index every two years**

- INF4      The Infrastructure Index Report captures the current infrastructure picture for remote Indigenous communities in Canada. ***Updating the index every two years to measure progress in reducing the Indigenous infrastructure gap would be useful.***

#### **MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE TO IMPLEMENT THIS RECOMMENDATION**

#### **Regional Development Agencies (RDAs)**

As a funder, pathfinder, convener and advocate, the RDAs help Indigenous communities obtain government funding to participate in the planning, development and implementation of infrastructure projects linked to regional economic development opportunities.

In Quebec, Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions (CED) delivers the Canadian Community Revitalization Fund (CCRF), which was launched in April 2021 with a national budget of \$500 million over two years (2021-2022 to 2022-2023). Through small infrastructure-related projects, the CCRF supports NPOs, municipalities, and other local organizations (including Indigenous organizations) in urban and rural areas to expand or improve public spaces, fostering community revitalization and accessibility for a wide range of users.

For example, CED funded a CCRF project from the First Nation of Timiskaming to build a multipurpose centre to revitalize the downtown area and to support green projects in Notre-Dame-du-Nord. Ultimately, this project supports the community in its recovery from the effects of the pandemic. CED's contribution of \$750,000 (project cost of approximately \$6.3 million) covers the project's construction costs, including professional fees, materials, and transportation.

As of July 28, 2022, CED had approved \$13.2 million in funding for infrastructure projects for remote Indigenous communities under CCRF.

The Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario (FedNor) continues to support major development projects and business development initiatives (e.g., road, airpark, and multipurpose building feasibility studies) such as those related to the Ring of Fire. FedNor has supported over \$15 million in projects related to the Ring of Fire since 2010 and provided \$4.9 million for the Nishnawbe Aski Development Fund in 2018, with an additional contribution of \$1.25 million from ISC.

PrairiesCan, along with CanNor and the government of Manitoba, are investing \$147.6 million over two years through the Arctic Gateway Group to support upgrades, operation, and maintenance of the Hudson Bay Railway in Northern Manitoba. As a majority Indigenous-owned entity, approximately 70% of AGG employees are Indigenous. This project will enable continued and reliable access to essential goods like groceries, fuel, and medicine.

Pacific Economic Development Canada (PacifiCan) administers the CCRF fund. Not-for-profit organizations, municipalities and other public institutions, and Indigenous communities can apply for funding under this program. Other project funding examples to support Indigenous community infrastructure since 2019 include:

- \$244,000 to the Huu-ay-aht First Nation to make infrastructure improvements to the Pachena Bay Campground; and,
- \$750,000 to the Tseycum First Nation for the design and construction of the Tseycum Wellness Centre.

### **Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)**

The allocation of funds to First Nations for many programs can be influenced by factors such as geographic location distance from major population centres and local climatic conditions. First Nations are assigned remoteness and environmental indices. These factors can be used in calculating funding allocations. By March 2023, Statistics Canada will update the current Remoteness Index using 2021 Census data.

### **Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC)**

CIRNAC is currently proceeding with proposed legislative amendments to the First Nations Fiscal Management Act that would establish a national Infrastructure Institute. The First Nations Infrastructure Institute would be a centre of infrastructure excellence, information, standards, leading practices, and innovation that would offer infrastructure specific capacity building, knowledge transfer, support, review, and certification services to First Nations. It would also be enabled to work with Indigenous groups, aggregates, and organizations on an optional and on-demand basis, and help address enduring sustainability issues and information, data, standards, capacity, regulatory and institutional support gaps experienced by Indigenous communities.

The Infrastructure Institute is building on the successes of the First Nations Fiscal Management Act regime and on “proof of concept” demonstration projects with ISC, the Kettle and Stoney Point First Nation, Stables, Paqtnkek, the First Nations Health Authority, and the Atlantic First Nations Water Authority to inform organizational design, in order to fill gaps in infrastructure capacity supports while complementing and supporting the existing infrastructure services and upcoming transfers to regional Indigenous organizations.

Work on the “proof of concept” demonstration projects include refinement of procurement policies and bundling and/or packaging of multiple assets, development of approaches to long term water and wastewater utility planning, development of the feasibility studies, business cases and procurement options for water / wastewater and health care related assets, development of cost recovery models and financial models that incorporates funding from multiple sources, First Nations Fiscal Management Act tools and linear infrastructure projects that serve member, non-member resident and economic development projects.

Through the Collaborative Fiscal Policy development process with Canada and Self-Governing Indigenous Governments (SGIGs), a technical working group has approached infrastructure expenditure needs in two stages. Stage 1 focused on implementing a lifecycle infrastructure funding approach to ensure adequate resourcing for maintaining or replacing existing infrastructure assets for SGIGs who currently do not have a lifecycle approach. Stage 2 funding will focus on determining the expenditure needed to close infrastructure gaps in SGIGs and be in line with comparator communities.

### **Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC)**

AAFC's Local Food Infrastructure Fund (LFIF), a five year (2019-2024) \$60 million initiative under Canada's Food Policy, aims to strengthen food systems and facilitate access to safe and nutritious food for at-risk populations. The fourth and final intake of this initiative is targeted only to applicants who are Indigenous groups, and/or groups located in small (less than 30,000 in population) or rural (less than 1,000 in population) communities. LFIF supports not-for-profit organizations, municipalities, and governments that propose to set up infrastructure that leads to a decrease in food insecurity, such as: food production tools, equipment, and systems; transportation/distribution of food; and food processing tools, equipment, and appliances.

#### **Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED)**

ISED's National Broadband Internet Service Availability Map provides information to enable all Canadians to understand progress on connecting 100% of Canadians by 2030. This service also maintains up to date information on the infrastructure picture for remote Indigenous communities.

#### **Natural Resources Canada (NRCan)**

The Geological Survey of Canada's GEM (Geo-Mapping for Energy and Minerals) - GeoNorth Program contributes to climate-resilient Northern infrastructure, environmental stewardship practices, and climate change adaptation strategies with new geoscientific research, knowledge, and data. This program aligns its research priorities with provinces, territories, and Indigenous governments and organizations. This collaborative and iterative approach has received accolades for its openness and transparency.



## Gender

Develop or adjust policy and programs to improve employment/income outcomes for women

Develop policy and strategies to improve educational outcomes for men and women

### Gender Recommendation #1

Develop or adjust policy and programs to improve employment/income outcomes for women

- GEN1 Findings indicate that although men have lower educational outcomes than women, they nevertheless earn more than women in the same occupations and industries. In order to understand the sources of these gaps (e.g. family care work responsibilities), a study could be conducted on the particular barriers experienced by Indigenous women in advancing in these occupations and industries with results used to ***inform policy and programs to improve educational outcomes in men and employment/income outcomes in women.***

### GOOD PROGRESS ON THIS RECOMMENDATION

#### Regional Development Agencies (RDAs)

The Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency (CanNor) systematically uses gender-based analysis plus (GBA+) for the development of the Agency's programs and policy initiatives, with a view to reducing systemic barriers and addressing some of the disparities identified.

Like other RDAs, CanNor administers the Women's Entrepreneurship Strategy Ecosystem Fund, which supports women's economic empowerment by strengthening capacity within entrepreneurship ecosystems and closing gaps in service for women entrepreneurs. The services and training provided through the program contribute to the skillsets, professional networks, and business knowledge of Indigenous women.

CanNor has provided \$603,800 to Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada's Enhancing Inuit Women in Economic Development project. This project fosters the creation of an Inuit Women in Business Council, sustains the Inuit Women in Business Network, and prepares Inuit women to engage in procurement opportunities.

Under FedDev Ontario, several other Women Entrepreneurship Strategy (WES) Ecosystem Fund investments also supported Indigenous women entrepreneurs, such as:

- investments in the WE-CAN project with Queen's University, through which partnerships were built to support women entrepreneurs in the Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory; and,
- investments at Wilfrid Laurier University, which entailed creating an Indigenous Women Building Businesses stream, which deliver a series of workshops dedicated to Indigenous women who are starting and growing businesses aligned with Indigenous culture and values.

Finally, \$1.45 million was provided to the National Aboriginal Capital Corporation Association to develop capacity, tools, and supports for Indigenous women to undertake entrepreneurship and develop a proof of concept for an Indigenous women's microfinance fund.

### **Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC)**

The Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) Program is a distinctions-based labour market program designed to support Indigenous men and women to improve their skills and meet their long-term career goals. The Program provides wrap around supports, such as childcare, to address barriers that clients, particularly Indigenous women, may face when participating in training that could support advancement in their careers.

In 2019-20 and 2020-21, the Program provided training to over 39,630 Indigenous men and 37,170 Indigenous women. This led to the employment of over 16,290 Indigenous men and 13,350 Indigenous women, as well as the return to school of over 3,765 Indigenous men and 5,350 Indigenous women.

### **Natural Resources Canada (NRCan)**

NRCan's Canadian Minerals and Metals Plan is undertaking a research project with NVision Ltd., an Indigenous consultancy firm, to understand the state of Indigenous women in the mining sector today and what barriers stand in the way of their participation and advancement. This project will be completed by Spring 2023.

### **Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE)**

In 2021, WAGE funded a study with Statistics Canada on the achievements, experiences, and labour market outcomes of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit women in Canada.<sup>33</sup> WAGE also commissioned research from the University of Alberta's Aboriginal Policy Studies Journal, which examined the over-qualification/education-job mismatch of Indigenous women in the labour market.<sup>34</sup> In 2022, WAGE also worked with Statistics Canada to study the socioeconomic conditions of Indigenous women and girls living in rural and remote communities,<sup>35</sup> as well as the educational attainment of women living in rural remote communities.<sup>36</sup>

Further research is needed into the experiences of Indigenous women in the workplace and barriers that contribute to low pay for, and over-qualification of, Indigenous women in certain industries in Canada. In the coming fiscal years, WAGE will fund additional research on barriers for Indigenous women in science, the skilled trades sector, and in leadership positions. This research will also look at strategies to eliminate these barriers and increase the success of Indigenous women in these sectors.

<sup>33</sup> <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/75-006-x/2021001/article/00009-eng.htm>

<sup>34</sup> <https://journals.library.ualberta.ca/aps/index.php/aps/article/view/29383>

<sup>35</sup> <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/45-20-0002/452000022022001-eng.htm>

<sup>36</sup> <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/75-006-x/2022001/article/00005-eng.htm>



## ***Gender Recommendation #2***

### **Develop policy and strategies to improve educational outcomes for men and women**

- GEN2 Indigenous men and women demonstrate different educational outcomes. ***Policies and strategies directed towards increasing high school, college/trades, and university completion rates among Indigenous peoples could address the unique barriers experienced differently by men and women*** and could be targeted for program and policy development accordingly (e.g. childcare).

#### **SOME PROGRESS ON THIS RECOMMENDATION**

### **Regional Development Agencies (RDAs)**

Through its Northern Adult Basic Education Program (NABEP), CanNor has supported efforts to improve educational attainment for Northerners. Serving mostly Indigenous students, NABEP has contributed to increasing high school, college/trades, and university completion rates among Indigenous Peoples by improving their access to adult basic education, such as numeracy and literacy.

As part of the program, CanNor collected information that assessed gender-parity in course offerings and enrolment numbers. This data is featured in NABEP's 5-year evaluation (2015-16 to 2019-20) and is available to policymakers to help better identify and develop solutions to gender-specific barriers affecting educational achievement among Northern Indigenous Peoples (NABEP 2021 Evaluation Report).

### **Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)**

Funding for elementary and secondary education is provided directly to First Nation recipients and First Nations education organizations designated by First Nations to support students who attend First Nations administered schools on-reserve.

First Nations are best placed to make decisions on how to allocate funding to advance their priorities in order to meet the needs of the schools and students in their communities and as such, have the flexibility to determine how funding is spent. This can include directing funds to address gender-specific barriers to educational attainment.

ISC supports Strategies for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Nation Post-Secondary Education. These strategies support Indigenous educational attainment, and therefore efforts to close the education attainment gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians.

### **Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC)**

Through the Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) Program, Indigenous men and women can be supported to complete high school, college diplomas, trade certificates, and university degrees. Wrap around supports, such as childcare, can also be provided to address barriers to participating in training and education, which are customized to the needs of clients.

### **Natural Resources Canada (NRCan)**

Sistering Indigenous and Western Science (SINEWS) is a department wide program supporting women scientists (Indigenous and non-Indigenous). This is a paid mentorship program intended to increase the representation and participation of Indigenous and non-Indigenous women in science-related disciplines and research. Pairs of female-identifying students, one of whom must be Indigenous, will propose, develop, implement, and report on research projects over the course of a 4-to-8-month term position. The Land and Minerals Sector participates in this program.

NRCan's Office of Energy Efficiency launched the Canada Greener Homes Grant initiative in 2021, which includes funding to support innovative projects that recruit, train, and mentor new energy advisors across Canada to increase the diversity and representation of the existing energy advisor workforce. The funding supports Indigenous recruits including Indigenous women and provides the additional funding to support their unique circumstances including upskilling, equipment purchase, and childcare.



## Youth

Promote Indigenous entrepreneurship amongst youth

Create urban Indigenous healing and employment hubs and an alumni fund

Include community considerations and perspectives in youth program development

### *Youth Recommendation #1*

Promote Indigenous entrepreneurship amongst youth

- YTH1      ***Entrepreneurship should be promoted and supported as a valid career option for youth*** through the mentorship and showcasing of Indigenous business leaders and ventures. Government-funded Indigenous youth entrepreneurship/start-up financing should also include essential business services training and coaching/mentorship services.

### SOME PROGRESS ON THIS RECOMMENDATION

#### Regional Development Agencies (RDAs)

ACOA has implemented new Indigenous guidelines for the Regional Economic Growth through Innovation (REGI) program. The new guidelines will help Indigenous-owned and led SMEs and Indigenous-controlled/band-led businesses conducting commercial activities, to access resources needed to grow and succeed, with an emphasis on youth and women entrepreneurs.

CanNor has funded projects promoting entrepreneurship to Indigenous youth and creating youth mentorship and financing opportunities through various investments. For example:

- \$175,000 in funding was provided in 2020-21 to help complete the conversion of a heritage building in Cambridge Bay, NU into a Community Arts Studio. The project will include entrepreneurship development, promote cultural awareness, and provide extracurricular activities for youth, which will expose youth to other programs at the studio that develop and showcase Indigenous entrepreneurship.
- Over \$1 million has been invested in the EntrepreNorth project, designed to offer a business accelerator program, build entrepreneurial capacity, grow small businesses, and get Indigenous entrepreneurs and ventures investment ready.
- Over \$150,000 has been invested with YukonSociety for the Northlight Entrepreneur Development Program to take cohorts of businesses and entrepreneurs through a series of courses and workshops to provide training to move their business ideas from ideation through to development and commercialization.

In Quebec, Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions (CED) provides annual core operational funding to Youth Employment Services (YES) that helps young Quebec entrepreneurs, including Indigenous entrepreneurs, to start and grow small businesses and find jobs. Support and services provided by YES are offered online and onsite in eight regions.

In 2018, FedNor provided \$1.9 million over six years, in support of the Head Start in Business program, which engages youth between the ages of 5 and 29 in experiential learning activities that center on entrepreneurship. Programming is offered both in person and virtually. The flagship event, Enterprise Olympics, is a two-day business pitch competition where regional students get together and

conceptualize business ideas and products and pitch to an expert panel. Indigenous students are provided free transportation from their communities to attend.

In 2020, FedNor invested \$272,000 in Northern Ontario Development Program funding through a non-repayable contribution towards the Pikangikum Youth Sawmill Program. This project supported the ongoing work and further development of the Pikangikum Youth Sawmill Program, which provides wood products for sale, as well as essential work experience for youth, creating and maintaining 26 jobs.

FedDev Ontario provides operating funds to southern Ontario's two Indigenous Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDCs) through the Community Futures Program (CFP), which provide business training, coaching, and mentoring and microfinancing for business start-up for the First Nations in their coverage areas, including for young entrepreneurs.

FedDev Ontario provided \$4.9 million to the First Nations Technical Institute (FNTI) to expand the FNTI aviation technology program and pilot training school. This expansion enabled them to double the number of Indigenous students they train as commercial pilots, skills that will help them secure good jobs at a time of acute skills shortages in the field.

### **Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)**

In Ontario, the Indigenous Community Business Fund was used by many communities to provide workshops and small start-up loans/contributions to microbusinesses on reserve, including essential business service training and coaching/ mentorship services. The spirit of entrepreneurship is stated by some communities as the means for economic recovery from COVID-19. Budget 2019 proposed \$3 million over five years to Futurpreneur Canada to allow the organization to increase its targeted support to the next generation of Indigenous entrepreneurs.

### **Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC)**

To advance the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action 66, the Government of Canada launched a 5-year Indigenous youth-led pilot program in 2019 in partnership with Canadian Roots Exchange to advance the related goals of reconciliation, self-determination, co-development, and strengthening and rebuilding the Crown-Indigenous relationship with Indigenous youth.

The pilot program is establishing strong pathways for Indigenous youth from across the country to come together, support each other and engage with federal departments on key policy initiatives that impact Indigenous youth and their communities. Sustained support for these relationships and networks will be important to advance co-development involving Indigenous youth, capacity building, the integration of Indigenous youth voices and Indigenous recruitment strategies.

### **Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC)**

AAFC's Youth Employment and Skills Program (YESP) funds employment opportunities for youth in the agriculture and agri-food sector to help them increase their work experience and learn new skills to improve their employability in the agricultural field. The department has supported the objectives of the YESP by prioritizing projects from equity-deserving youth facing systemic barriers, including Indigenous Peoples, and by offering additional funding to remove other existing barriers in the workplace.

### **Export Development Canada (EDC)**

EDC funded sponsorships for the 2021 and 2022 Cando Economic Development Youth Summits and participated on the judging panel for Indigenous youth business case competitions. EDC also funded Pow Wow Pitch sponsorships in 2021 and 2022, mentored Indigenous entrepreneurs competing, and served as judges for Pitch competitions.

### **Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC)**

The Youth Employment and Skills Strategy (YESS) Call for Proposals includes activities designed to help support youth entrepreneurs gain self-employment as an eligible expense under the program, and activities designed to provide mentoring/coaching as eligible program expenses.

YESS supports entrepreneurial skills within an activity giving exposure to the world of self-employment. Through this experience, youth develop skills that equip them to establish an enterprise and become capable businesspeople, helping them make a successful transition to the labour market. These supports are targeted at supporting under-represented youth, including Indigenous youth.

### **Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED)**

In Budget 2019, the Government committed to providing Futurpreneur Canada, a national not-for-profit organization that provides young entrepreneurs with mentorship, learning resources and start-up financing to help them start and grow their business, with \$38 million over 5 years, including \$3 million for Futurpreneur to provide targeted support to Indigenous entrepreneurs.

### **Natural Resources Canada (NRCan)**

From 2020 on, NRCan's Canadian Minerals and Metals Plan (CMMP) Secretariat works with Cando to support their annual Economic Development Youth Summit. The Summit promotes the field of community economic development and the role of the Economic Development Officers to youth and connects them to career mentors. The CMMP also promotes greater Indigenous procurement in mining, which supports Indigenous entrepreneurship and business development.

NRCan's Office of Energy Efficiency launched the Canada Greener Homes Grant initiative in 2021, which includes funding to support innovative projects that recruit, train, and mentor new energy advisors across Canada to increase the diversity and representation of the existing energy advisor workforce and to help support job creation in the growing green economy. While the call is now closed for the general public, Indigenous governments and organizations are encouraged to apply on an ongoing basis (as funding allows). This funding will help build local capacity, improve access to energy advisors in rural, northern, and remote communities, and reduce barriers to participation in the energy efficiency workforce.



## **Youth Recommendation #2**

### **Create urban Indigenous healing and employment hubs and an alumni fund**

- YTH2 We specifically recommend that the **Government create urban Indigenous healing and employment hubs**; invest in basic education infrastructure; develop distance education training; **create an alumni fund to enable mentorship**; and invest in Indigenous scholarship funding to support post-secondary education.

#### **MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE TO IMPLEMENT THIS RECOMMENDATION**

### **Regional Development Agencies (RDAs)**

ACOA continues to support the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Society. Every One Every Day Kijipuktuk-Halifax (EOED) is an Indigenous-led long-term vision that centres reconciliation in the design of civic and social infrastructure. ACOA also supported the organization with a project to gather baseline data to understand who identifies as urban Indigenous youth, their career goals, and their workplace preparedness needs while factoring in the impacts of the COVID-19.

The Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency (CanNor) supports Indigenous employment, basic education, and distance learning. Examples of those investments include:

- The Northern Adult Basic Education Program (NABEP) is an adult education support program designed to help Northerners get basic adult education skills they can participate more fully in the labour market. The program is delivered by the three territorial post-secondary institutions: Aurora College, Yukon University and Nunavut Arctic College. Funding was provided to facilitate the delivery of enhanced, culturally appropriate curriculum that responds to the needs of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Northerners. From 2015-16 to 2019-20, NABEP served over 4500 Indigenous students. The program was renewed in 2020-21, with CanNor investing \$9.76 million over 2 years toward the program.
- In 2020-21, CanNor also supported the Qaujigiartiit Corporation with a \$225,000 investment toward the construction of the Inuusirvik Community Wellness Hub in downtown Iqaluit.

In 2019, FedNor provided \$1 million to Seven Generations Education Institute in Thunder Bay, the largest Indigenous post-secondary institute in Ontario, to purchase and install IT equipment for its Centre for Advanced Technology and Skills (CATS). The equipment supports education and skills training in the skilled trades for Indigenous learners.

Also, through the Jobs and Growth Fund (JGF) and its priority on inclusive growth, FedNor leveraged flexibilities for Indigenous applicants to prioritize projects related to Indigenous business growth and development.

### **Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC)**

Budget 2021 announced \$108.8 million over 2 years to re-establish and revitalize Indigenous cultural spaces through the Cultural Spaces in Indigenous Communities Program. This program offers opportunities for Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals to access culture and language and strengthen identities.



### **Export Development Canada (EDC)**

EDC has approved funding for Indigenous student scholarships in 2023.

### **Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC)**

Acknowledging that some Indigenous youth face unique circumstances, the Youth Employment and Skills Strategy (YESS) is designed to maximize opportunities for them, including more culturally specific supports and services. Indigenous youth received priority in project selection through the YESS in recognition of the unique circumstances they face.

The 2018 YESS Call for Proposals included culturally appropriate Indigenous supports, such as access to networks of Indigenous social services (e.g. healing centers, counselling, employment resources centers) as an eligible expense under the program.

ESDC funded several Indigenous Hubs through the 2019 Call for Proposals, including Native Friendship Centers, Indigenous Child and Family Services organizations, Indigenous employment hubs, and Indigenous traditional healing societies, among other non-profits.



### ***Youth Recommendation #3***

#### **Include community considerations and perspectives in youth program development**

- YTH3      Given this strong influence of parents and family on education outcomes - it is important to ***consider family and community when creating programs that promote education and employment skills for youth***. Community inclusion in the development of programming will be essential.

#### **SOME PROGRESS ON THIS RECOMMENDATION**

#### **Regional Development Agencies (RDAs)**

ACOA has been supporting many initiatives to either build or improve community infrastructure in Indigenous communities through the Canada Community Revitalization Fund (CCRF). ACOA provided \$3.3 million in assistance for 17 Indigenous projects approved CCRF.

CanNor held a series of engagement activities from January to March 2019, gathering the input of Northern and Indigenous partners and stakeholders, to guide the development of the Pan-Territorial Growth Strategy (PTGS).

The PTGS is guiding CanNor's investments through 2024, including investments in post-secondary education employment readiness and skills development initiatives.

In 2019, FedNor provided \$3.4 million to PARO Centre for Women's Enterprise to provide wrap-around business support services including financial literacy, mentoring, and business coaching. PARO uses a trauma-informed approach to business programming that recognizes the lived experiences of women with multiple intersecting identity factors, including Indigenous women.

FedNor also provides employment support for youth through its Youth Internship Program. The program supports regional businesses in attracting and employing recent graduates. Interns receive mentoring and networking opportunities while gaining on-the-job training and skill development. Exceptions to eligibility criteria are available for Indigenous applicants.

#### **Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)**

The First Nations and Inuit Youth Employment Strategy (FNIYES)'s Skills Link Stream offers funding for training (such as life-skills training) and can also include travel and childcare.

#### **Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC)**

ESDC's Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) Program is delivered through a long-standing Indigenous service delivery network that has delivered Indigenous labour market programs rooted in Indigenous communities for decades. First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and Urban/Non-affiliated Indigenous service delivery providers provide training that meets community needs. These service delivery providers have the autonomy and flexibility to provide training and supports based on community needs, which supports self-determination and reconciliation.

The 2019 Youth Employment and Skills Strategy (YESS) Call for Proposals provided funding to several Indigenous-led family and community groups, including Native Friendship Centers, national Indigenous organizations, tribal councils, individual First Nations, Indigenous community councils and various non-profits serving urban-Indigenous youth.



## **Listing of Economic Development Programs Available to Indigenous Peoples**

### **Indigenous Services Canada**

- Indigenous Business Development
- Aboriginal Entrepreneurship Program
- Community Opportunity Readiness
- Lands and Economic Development Services Program
- First Nations and Inuit Youth Employment Strategy

### **Regional Development Agencies**

- Aboriginal Financial Institutions
- Indigenous Business Development Services

### **Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada**

- Indigenous Agriculture and Food Systems Initiative

### **Employment and Social Development Canada**

- Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Program

### **Fisheries and Oceans Canada**

- Indigenous Commercial Fisheries Programs

### **Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada**

- Canada Digital Adoption Program
- Indigenous Growth Fund
- Indigenous Tourism Fund / Federal Tourism Growth Strategy

### **Natural Resources Canada**

- Indigenous Forestry Initiative
- Clean Energy in Indigenous and Remote Communities Hub
- Polar Continental Shelf Program

