STEP ONE:
Finding the Ways and Means for First Nations to Fully Share in Natural Resource Development

An unprecedented opportunity exists for all Canadians, industry and governments to partner with First Nations in ways that truly unleash economic growth while incorporating socially responsible approaches to natural resource development. We need look no further than our own backyards to find examples of how companies and First Nations are getting it right.

Each and every one of us has a role to play, beginning by engaging in a dialogue with one another. There is tremendous value in taking the next steps to secure continued and increased success.

The time is now and the opportunities are immense.

— Working Group on Natural Resource Development
Acknowledgements

The members of the Working Group on Natural Resource Development are independent, volunteer appointments made by the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC). The Government of Canada provided funding for the working group process and the AFN and AANDC provided secretariat support.

As a Working Group, we would like to express our gratitude for having the privilege to participate in this important initiative. We would also like to thank all of the people, leaders and experts who took the time to support and participate and provide their invaluable input during the information-gathering and discussion phases of our work.

We hope that the content of this report accurately reflects their insight and the spirit of our sessions and will serve to inform a national dialogue that advances practical, impactful change for all First Nations as a result of natural resource development in Canada.
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Background

First Nations and Natural Resource Development

Natural resource development is a critical component of Canada's continuing economic prosperity. The industry supports 1.8 million direct and indirect jobs.\(^1\) Between 2008 and 2012, governments have received approximately $30 billion in revenues per annum from natural resource sectors.\(^2\)

Opportunities in the industry continue to emerge. It is estimated that over the next decade, investments in Canada's natural resource industry could reach as high as $675 billion,\(^3\) which will require many skilled and unskilled workers. Economic spin-offs from the industry could also create significant economic prosperity for all Canadians.

A number of First Nations, and their citizens and businesses, are presently leveraging the benefits of resource development. In 2012, resource development was the largest private employer of Aboriginal people in Canada, employing 8.3 per cent of the working Aboriginal population.\(^4\) Impact and benefit agreements in resource development projects are also allowing some communities to extend their participation beyond employment to include ownership, procurement, training, community infrastructure, revenue sharing, and co-management activities. These and other practices can be shared, adapted and utilized by other First Nations to advance their own community plans and objectives.

As with any undertaking, there is no automatic guarantee of success when it comes to resource development projects. The risks can be high and sudden changes in the market, as recently demonstrated in global oil and gas commodity markets, can result in shrinking revenues and employment. Even for successful ventures, community benefits may take years to materialize and when they do, may not be always equally spread across a community. And, of course, not all communities are located in areas where large resource projects are feasible, leaving them out of any direct opportunity. Such factors also need to be considered by First Nations.

Finally, for many First Nations communities, the concept of prosperity extends far beyond receiving payment for work done, products procured, or royalties shared. Prosperity requires taking a broader and longer view, where decisions, efforts, and investments made today will build capacity and infrastructure that will benefit generations to come and drive even greater prosperity in the future. This sustainable approach to development also recognizes that the impacts of decisions made today need to be balanced with future community needs.
Working Group Mandate and Approach

The Working Group on Natural Resource Development was launched in December 2013 to identify the means by which all First Nations citizens and communities could participate and share in the full range of benefits resulting from natural resource development projects in Canada. As an independent, volunteer group, we had the latitude to select specific areas of study within these broad parameters.

To accomplish our work, we met on several occasions to discuss this mandate and review recent key studies on First Nations and resource development. Based on our information-gathering phase, we decided to investigate four thematic areas: governance, prosperity, environment, and finance.

In November 2014, we held working sessions in Toronto and Edmonton to discuss the thematic areas at length with business and First Nations leaders who are directly involved in resource development. The sessions were designed to encourage full collaboration and frank discussion among all participants on critical actions and ideas.

The information and research we collected for the sessions, the input provided by participants, and the discussions held since, form the basis of this report.
Working Group Members

AFN Alberta Regional Chief Cameron Alexis (Co-chair) was elected in February 2013. At that time, he was serving his second term as Chief of the Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation. Prior to his role as Chief, he served one term as the Grand Chief for Treaty Number Six and worked closely with the Grand Chiefs of Treaty Numbers Seven and Eight in Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan. Regional Chief Alexis spent 23 years as a member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan.

Mr. Douglas Turnbull, ICD.D, (Co-chair) is a former Deputy Chairman of TD Securities Inc. He has provided advice to governments, crown corporations and a number of corporations on debt management, mergers and acquisitions and infrastructure projects. Over the past 36 years, he has lived and worked in Toronto, New York and Tokyo and has publicly spoken on various issues related to investment banking, debt management, infrastructure and public finance. He is founding Chair of the Board of Toronto Financial Services Alliance, chairs the George Brown College Foundation, and is a pastboard member of Metrolinx (a transit agency of the Government of Ontario) and ORBIS Canada. Mr. Turnbull is also a board member of the Ontario Financing Authority and a member of the sustainability advisory panel to the Board of Directors of the Canadian Electricity Association, and a past member of the Advisory Panel to Ontario’s Finance Minister.

Mr. Richard Nerysoo was a long-time member of the Legislative Assembly in the Northwest Territories. In 1979, he became the youngest MLA to ever be elected. In 1983, he became the youngest and the first Aboriginal Premier of the NWT, and in 1989 he became the first Aboriginal Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. In his elected position, Mr. Nerysoo played a crucial role in ensuring that Aboriginal rights were not ignored when the federal and provincial governments repatriated the Canadian Constitution. Mr. Nerysoo has served as President of the Gwich’in Tribal Council where he oversaw the implementation of the historic Gwich’in Land Claims Agreement. He is the recipient of the 2001 Aboriginal Achievement Award for Public Service.

Mr. Patrick McGuinness has held senior positions, including Chief Financial Officer and Chief Executive Officer, for construction, food processing, plastics, transportation and distribution, and financial software firms. He helped grow Dowland into a full service construction firm, working with all levels of government, as well as with Aboriginal and private clients, across the North American Arctic. Mr. McGuinness is currently working with WeWi Telecommunications Inc., a Canadian company that provides affordable technology solutions to remote and developing communities by combining solar, Internet and computers.

Regional Chief Roger Augustine (Co-chair) represents New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, and has been active in politics, economic development, and environment stewardship for over 30 years. R.C. Augustine, a Mi’kmaq from New Brunswick, was Chief of Eel Ground First Nation from 1980 to 1996. He has served as chair of the Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources (CIER) Board of Directors. Among his many achievements is his role in co-founding the Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs, and negotiating a $90 million partnership between eight New Brunswick First Nations communities and a U.S. lumber company.
We need to prepare now to ensure that all of the opportunities and benefits of natural resource development will be fully shared by First Nations and all Canadians.

— Working Group on Natural Resource Development
Over the next decade, it is estimated that investments in Canada’s natural resource industry could reach as high as $675 billion. As opportunities in the industry continue to grow, Canada and First Nations will need to be ready with skilled and unskilled workers and related support businesses. Resource development is already the largest private employer of Aboriginal people in Canada. We need to prepare now to ensure that all of the opportunities and benefits of natural resource development will be fully shared by First Nations and all Canadians.

Despite the odds, many First Nations have already found innovative ways to participate in and take advantage of natural resource development opportunities. These communities are involved in employment, procurement, training, community infrastructure, revenue sharing, co-management, and other forms of participation and oversight. All First Nations have unique opportunities to secure even more expansive and lasting investments in natural resource development projects in the form of joint ventures and full ownership.

As members of this Working Group, we had the unique opportunity to explore with First Nations participants and industry experts many far-reaching and complex topics related to the greater involvement and engagement of First Nations in natural resource development in Canada. This report reflects our collaborative work on four key topics: governance, environment, prosperity, and finance. It includes our observations about the critical actions and activities undertaken by corporations, governments and First Nations communities and businesses to ensure successful and beneficial involvement of First Nations in resource development. It also reflects our recommendations to advance impactful and practical change in the immediate and longer terms.

Our information-gathering and working sessions were a necessary first step to launch focused discussion and action in key, achievable areas. Combined, our observations and recommendations form the foundation for future dialogue and action.

Leadership can come from multiple sources. Moving forward, this dialogue needs to be taken up at a national level with a wider group that includes First Nations, all levels of government, industry, and non-governmental organizations. As a next step to the work we have begun, we recommend additional working sessions and round tables which dedicate sufficient time to further explore our observations and recommendations. There is a sense of urgency to continue our work with the full involvement and dedication of all levels of government, stakeholders and First Nations in Canada.
In particular, we strongly urge that the next round table focus exclusively on resource revenue sharing, an urgent and pressing issue for this country and all First Nations. The federal government can facilitate this dialogue by convening, in partnership with First Nations, a national meeting among all jurisdictions, supported by technical experts.

As an immediate step, we also recommend that an independent resource centre be established to provide ready access to practical and technical information and advisory services that can enable First Nations governments, businesses and individuals to participate more fully in all aspects of natural resource development. The information collected and shared, including among First Nations, will help advance understanding, planning and decision-making. Types of information and advisory capacity shared would address governance, capacity, best practices, skills, knowledge-sharing, markets, finances, environment and geology. The federal and provincial/territorial governments can take an active role to help establish such a resource centre in cooperation with First Nations. This initiative would also benefit from the expertise and capacity of industry and the non-governmental sector.

More so than ever, international markets and business/investor relations are key to Canada’s, as well as First Nations’, economic well-being. To this end, we also recommend that an international meeting be organized in the next 12 months to examine and expand direct First Nations involvement in resource development, trade relationships, business partnerships, and access to foreign markets.

Ultimately, what we have learned is that how we conduct business in Canada needs to fundamentally change in order to ensure that the opportunity to involve and include First Nations is not lost. Supporting and achieving this paradigm shift needs to go beyond the submission of this report to the AFN National Chief and the AANDC Minister. It requires immediate and sustained attention and action by governments at all levels, as well as by industry and First Nations.
## Our Observations & Recommendations: At a Glance

### Recommendations for IMMEDIATE ACTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observation</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Dialogue must continue</td>
<td>Undertake a more comprehensive national dialogue in the form of a national round table(s), inviting First Nations, Canada, provinces, territories, industry, and non-governmental organizations</td>
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<td>• Advance discussions on the four main themes identified in this report, leading to practical recommendations for action including developing a road map to facilitate meaningful First Nations involvement in natural resource development in Canada.</td>
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<td>A new fiscal relationship must be explored</td>
<td>Convene a national discussion on resource revenue sharing as the best means of eliminating socio-economic disparities</td>
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<td>• Hold a national dialogue among leaders and appropriate orders of government, involving technical levels, to develop an approach for sharing resource revenues.</td>
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<td>Technical knowledge and information must be accessible</td>
<td>Establish a central knowledge and information resource to assist and enable First Nations</td>
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<td>• Provide easy access to practical and technical information and advisory services that can enable First Nations governments, businesses and individuals to participate more fully in all aspects of natural resource development.</td>
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<tr>
<td>International relationships must be expanded</td>
<td>Hold an international forum to promote First Nations trade and international partnerships</td>
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<td>• Organize an international forum to examine, promote, encourage and expand First Nations involvement in resource development, trade relationships, business partnerships, and access to foreign markets.</td>
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# Observations and Recommendations for FURTHER DIALOGUE

## Governance: Establishing a principled, inclusive and accountable approach

“Engaging early, engaging often” remains true as part of a long-term strategic plan that makes good business sense

- Establish and share a common model of critical engagement milestones for others to use or customize for their projects.

Proactively communicating and implementing a vision for natural resource development enables long-term positive outcomes

- First Nations should be prepared to develop, communicate and implement their communities’ vision, strategic plan or road map for resource development.
- Increase financial literacy among First Nations citizenry and professionals to facilitate greater participation in community vision for natural resource development and develop models for tracking and reporting on prosperity outcomes.

Developing governance models helps to overcome uncertainty

- First Nations should consider and implement governance models in which roles and responsibilities of their business corporations and institutions are well defined, durable, accountable, and predictable, as part of long-term community development.

Understanding and working with First Nations will improve relationships

- Develop awareness, promote information-sharing opportunities and establish engagement processes for multinationals on the key steps to achieving positive relationships with First Nations.

Increasing interchanges between industry and First Nations businesses would lead to better relationships and outcomes

- Establish more executive-level interchange and board membership options, in addition to continuing mid- and entry-level positions.

## Environment: Ensuring a balanced approach

Involving First Nations will strengthen the credibility of the land use and environmental management process

- Directly involve First Nations in the planning, design, management, ownership and reclamation phases of projects.

Incorporating traditional, ecological, and land use knowledge will improve assessment processes and outcomes

- Work with First Nations Elders and experts who have environmental and land use knowledge and incorporate into planning and decision-making processes, such as land management and reclamation.

Enabling First Nations to collect the relevant data and information will inform environmental processes and discussions on cumulative impacts and mitigation measures

- Support First Nations to develop and maintain the capacity to collect and manage environmental data and land use information for the purposes of long-term and cumulative impact reporting and management.
### Observations and Recommendations for FURTHER DIALOGUE

| Prosperity: Creating a sustainable future | Convene a national discussion on resource revenue sharing as the best means of eliminating socio-economic disparities*  
- Hold a national dialogue among leaders and appropriate orders of government, involving technical levels, to develop an approach for sharing resource revenues.  

**Leading by example, industry leaders should demonstrate how working with First Nations makes business sense**  
- Senior business leadership should promote the value, benefits and business advantages of partnering and conducting business with First Nations.  

**Implementing targeted human resource strategies and policies will increase First Nations employment and satisfy labour need**  
- Employers, unions, industry and professional associations, training and education institutions should work with First Nations, with the support of governments, to put in place structures, policies, procedures and incentives to enhance employment of First Nations citizens.  

**Maintaining directories of First Nations businesses and workforce profiles will lead to greater employment and contracting opportunities**  
- Establish and regularly update a regional and localized reference directory of First Nations businesses including contacts, capacity information, and workforce profiles.  

| Finance: Building strategic pathways | Implementing effective lending and borrowing instruments are critical to a functioning economy and they need to be understood and accessible to First Nations  
- Explore further options for addressing capital needs, including: bond markets, government loan guarantee, national and regional fund, First Nations sovereign investment fund and/or income trust, National First Nations Pension Fund, public-private partnerships, and infrastructure funds.  

**Investing first in First Nations will allow First Nations to pool resources**  
- Develop models for cooperative partnerships to enable First Nations to pool capital, share resources, work together, leverage investments, and establish and pursue joint venture opportunities.  

**Hold an international forum to promote First Nations trade and international partnerships***  
- Organize an international forum to examine, promote, encourage and expand First Nations involvement in resource development, trade relationships, business partnerships, and access to foreign markets. |

*The Working Group also recommends that immediate action be taken on these specific recommendations.
Over the next decade, it is estimated that investments in Canada’s natural resource industry could reach as high as $675 billion.7
Theme One: Governance – Establishing a Principled, Inclusive and Accountable Approach

Today’s governance approaches and tools to engage First Nations in natural resource development are too few and limited in scope. Often, they cast First Nations in the narrow role of respondent; that is, of responding to already defined projects as part of regulatory reviews or fixed processes for consultation and accommodation. Such approaches ignore the existing jurisprudence relating to Aboriginal rights and title which creates uncertainty, lack of trust, and unnecessary risks for all players.

We learned that a strategic, long-term, and collaborative dialogue could occur and would facilitate a more principled approach, in turn leading to decision-making that addresses issues early and effectively, and creates greater certainty and better outcomes for all. In addition, our dialogue acknowledged Supreme Court of Canada decisions (i.e., ‘Tsilhqot’ín decision) as a point to move forward from, thus supporting a new relationship that involves First Nations in natural resource development.

We observed several critical and implementable elements of these approaches that could serve as models for future activity.
“Engaging Early, Engaging Often”

Successful natural resource development projects often involve an upfront and clear commitment by a company to invest in learning about the community, even at the pre-permit stage. This is an opportunity to learn about the First Nation’s aspirations and positions about if and how resource development would occur in their territory. By creating long-term relationships and building cooperative structures, companies are also more likely, as projects unfold, to understand and meet the priorities and needs of First Nations.

Early engagement is an opportunity to become more effective and responsive partners. We found that companies who invested and sustained time with (and in) a community typically had higher success rates, and allowed them to emerge as “winners” ahead of companies that did not make similar investments.

While industry and First Nations agree that the principles of engagement (early, often) are essential to successful partnerships, most models for engagement have been developed in silos and customized to specific business relationship structures. We believe that this is a missed opportunity for others to learn from these successes and to facilitate future positive working relationships.

Recommendation
Establish and share a common model of critical engagement milestones for others to use or customize for their projects.

Recommendation
First Nations should be prepared to develop, communicate and implement their communities’ vision, strategic plan or road map for resource development.

Implementing and Communicating a Vision for Natural Resource Development

First Nations are diverse, including in their development objectives. Having a vision, or alternatively a strategic plan or road map, for natural resource development can help a First Nation achieve long-term positive outcomes. We were told that when the vision for a given project includes long-term or multi-generational planning, the project tends to be more successful and generates outcomes more aligned with community priorities. First Nations that are able to communicate a clear and practical vision for natural resource development, including expectations and plans for community involvement in a project, are in a pro-active position with their citizens and institutions, other First Nations, other governments, project proponents, and business partners. This leads naturally to establishing shared responsibility and accountability mechanisms for achieving that vision throughout the life cycle of a project. A number of communities are already successfully doing this, but other First Nations can benefit from adopting this practice.
Improving First Nations’ Financial Literacy

Increasing First Nations’ financial literacy is a critical element of developing and implementing community visions or plans. Building First Nations’ financial literacy capacity is also supported by many involved in public policy. Mentoring opportunities with financial institutions is considered as one of several steps that can be promoted. Learning programs and certification programs for the First Nations administration sector are in place nationally, which could be used to achieve full financial literacy in First Nations businesses.

We understood that some First Nations are interested in tracking prosperity outcomes. For example, a prosperity index based on the community’s definitions of prosperity could be created to enable First Nations to better assess the baselines for success in their community. This index could also be used to track and measure whether benefits are being realized as expected so that all relevant parties could make adjustments, as required.

Developing Governance Models

Communities should consider governance models for resource development and partnering that can help define the grey zones where some leaders find themselves involved in all aspects of a project, with varying degrees of success. Such models can help distinguish the roles that a community requires of its leadership and officials from that of business. Importantly, First Nations governance defines how First Nations governments can collaborate with Canada, provinces and territories to guide activities, plan for resource development and determine what developments can be undertaken in their traditional territories. As noted previously, it is critical for First Nations to establish processes to implement their economic vision and communicate how their vision will be achieved.

We also were informed of a number of instances where First Nations involved in resource development benefited from having distinct business systems and processes. Such a separation, supported by a political vision, can increase project outcomes for a First Nation, regardless of the sector. Natural resource development governance models, policies and frameworks can help overcome uncertainty and assist First Nations in identifying the scope and scale for political influence generally in resource development projects. First Nations strive to separate politics from business and create policy to assist First Nation business sectors and others aspiring to invest in or partner
with communities. This is true for mainstream Canada as well; however, as one example, the two-year Indian Act election cycle poses additional challenges for First Nations in maintaining these distinctive approaches.

We learned that self-governing communities typically have agreements that define how natural resource development should proceed in their territories and have established offices and personnel dedicated to this purpose. For example, some are created to enable ownership and management of, and participation in, natural resource opportunities, and many emerging development corporations oversee day to day business matters and seek more secure investment opportunities, while allowing for community oversight. Other governing examples cited included establishing agreement on the business focus, the community plan and the direction for its implementation, and balancing the various objectives dealing with a project. However, taking full advantage of this approach requires considerable change for some communities.

Financial Innovation and Institutions
Nationally, First Nations fiscal institutions were established almost 10 years ago to help address gaps in financial infrastructure and barriers to participating in the economy. The First Nations Tax Commission, the First Nations Financial Management Board, and the First Nations Finance Authority each have a distinct role in offering services, tools and building capacities to assist long-term pooled borrowing through capital markets to support First Nations social and economic development objectives. Respectively, these roles broadly include:

- Building options to help reduce the barriers to economic development on First Nation lands, increasing investor certainty, enabling First Nations to be part of regional economies; and to facilitate establishing property tax revenue systems where such interest is expressed.
- Providing financial management tools and services to First Nations governments seeking to strengthen their fiscal stewardship and accountability regime and develop necessary capacity to meet expanding fiscal and financial management requirements.
- Providing financing, investment and advisory services for First Nation governments and helping First Nations governments build their own futures on their own terms – financing services paralleling best practices of provincial and local governments.
Understanding and Working with First Nations

Relationship building with multinational corporations requires specific mention given the drive in many parts of the world to access Canada’s natural resources. Corporations are advised that policies for consulting “Indigenous Peoples” (to use the international term) cannot simply be imported to Canada with the expectation that they will work here.

Awareness-building efforts led by First Nations can help educate corporate newcomers to Canada about First Nations and instill the importance of building strong relationships. Open and direct dialogue can also help address many of the public myths about First Nations and reduce perceived risks of engaging and doing business with First Nations. Multinational corporations can also learn from other companies about how to form and sustain working relationships in Canada and internationally by building trust and bridging cultural differences. Likewise, multinational corporations should consider how to improve on existing engagement processes with First Nations so that progress made today will continue in the future as part of business practices and culture, and will survive beyond initial project interests.

Interchanges between Industry and First Nations Businesses

We believe that corporations and First Nations and/or their businesses would benefit from interchange initiatives. We strongly recommend an increase in the appointment and participation of First Nations leaders in project planning processes, corporate boards, advisory bodies, business/finance mentoring, executive interchange and other internal processes. The benefits of including First Nations would increase diversity objectives, awareness-building, potentially improve decision-making, strategic planning, and enhanced accountability to First Nations and shareholders which will lead to more successful projects. Industry is already putting in place initiatives to increase diversity in its corporate employment structure as a standard condition and natural milestone to partnering. Similarly, interchanges of corporate human resources could be considered within First Nations and/or their businesses.

Recommendation

Develop awareness, promote information-sharing opportunities and establish engagement processes for multinationals on the key steps to achieving positive relationships with First Nations.

Recommendation

Establish more executive-level interchange and board membership options, in addition to continuing mid- and entry-level positions.
Teck’s Red Dog Operations

Teck’s Red Dog Operations, located in northwest Alaska, near the community of Kotzebue, is one of the world’s largest zinc mines. Red Dog was developed in 1982 under an innovative operating agreement with NANA Regional Corporation, Inc. (NANA), a Regional Alaska Native corporation owned by the Inupiat people of Northwest Alaska. The agreement granted Teck exclusive rights to build and operate the Red Dog and to market its metal production in exchange for royalties from production for NANA. A total of $471 million in royalties has been paid to NANA since the agreement was signed.

The agreement also requires training and hiring of NANA’s people, preservation of their culture, and protection of the subsistence resources. Conditions of the agreement specifically include the establishment of an Employment Advisory Committee and a Subsistence Advisory Committee.

Red Dog has over 550 employees, over half of whom are Inupiat. The Employment Advisory Committee, with members drawn equally from senior management and human resources personnel from both Teck and NANA, identify opportunities to work towards the goal of hiring 100% of Red Dog employees from the NANA community.

The Subsistence Advisory Committee of local Indigenous hunters and Elders was formed in the early 1980s to provide Red Dog with direction on environmental and subsistence matters. For example, the Committee provides permission for the start of the shipping season in order to avoid conflict with the traditional hunting of marine mammals. They also provide guidance and direction for operation of Red Dog’s 52-mile (84-km) concentrate haul road to mitigate caribou migration impacts.

On July 14, 2014, NANA and Teck hosted a celebration to honour 25 years of Red Dog Operations. The event was attended by employees and a number of special guests, many of whom had worked to make the mine a reality and the economic engine it is today for Alaska and the NANA region.
Respect for the environment and the pursuit of traditional activities are cornerstones of the culture, community values and decision-making of First Nations. Communities are stewards of their territories and ancestral lands, and issues of environmental sustainability cannot be considered in isolation from discussions or reviews of natural resource development projects.

First Nations’ responsibility to preserve the balance between development and environment is done with respect for future generations – and this responsibility is taken seriously. Communities have experienced the downside of natural resource development with polluted waters and air, devastated hunting and fishing pursuits, and negative health effects. This has left a lasting negative impression and has resulted in a lack of confidence in existing regulatory processes and safeguards.

Each of the four themes introduced in this report are immense and complex and deserving of more exhaustive dialogue and study. This is especially true of the environment theme, which requires the consideration of a wider group of experts and interested parties.
Participation in Pre-regulatory and Regulatory Processes

The credibility of a natural resource development project depends on inclusive environmental decision-making, monitoring, reporting, and reclamation efforts that take into account, and involve, First Nations. Having credibility in the eyes of community members requires addressing environmental issues in a transparent and fact-based manner, and staying accountable.

Given this environmental context, First Nations repeatedly expressed their interest in natural resource development projects provided that they are permitted to participate in the pre-planning, design, management and monitoring of the project, as well as the reclamation efforts.

Some First Nations have established principles and defined parameters to assist in the stewardship of their lands. These principles and parameters also facilitate the community’s ability to determine how development proceeds.

In an effort to overcome existing regulatory barriers, many First Nations are dealing directly with companies, often successfully. Some in industry are also willing to engage First Nations in planning efforts before regulatory processes get underway and after the project description is filed. It is evident to these companies that First Nations be involved in the design, monitoring, and reclamation of their lands and waters. Together, companies and local communities can develop and draft applications that have the necessary support of all implicated parties, including governments, industry, and First Nations.

We heard a number of examples where First Nations ownership in projects improves and enhances the environmental assessment process and subsequent outcomes. Becoming (co)owners of a project enables First Nations and their mandated development corporations to be involved in the process from the onset, permitting better engagement by government — sometimes even before these processes commence.

Some lessons may be drawn from Ontario’s forest management plans. In this case, certain provincial regulatory processes have striven to respect wider traditional territories of First Nations and to better incorporate traditional ecological knowledge into project planning, along with other ecosystem management principles.
Impacts and Effects
First Nations have expressed frustration with attempts to make environmental assessment processes more responsive to the cumulative effects of multiple projects in their territories. There is a need to better incorporate cumulative effects assessments across projects and jurisdictions, as varying regulatory systems and policies exist in federal, provincial, territorial, Treaty and First Nations structures. First Nations also continue to advocate for the advice of First Nations expertise, such as knowledgeable Elders, to be considered alongside project proponents’ scientific experts and research studies. In addition, we also recognized the priority communities place on overcoming challenges related to the associated costs and timelines of environmental assessments. We understood that these issues would likely continue, unless governments make changes to address ways to better include First Nations environmental knowledge.

There are examples of provincial agreements, and processes recommended internationally, which include enhanced participation of First Nations in the environmental assessment and monitoring processes. Cumulative effects assessments and traditional ecological knowledge can also both be put to use now to minimize ongoing project impacts. Taking an interlinked approach to environmental assessments and impact and benefit agreements was another suggested solution.

Recommendation
Work with First Nations Elders and experts who have environmental and land use knowledge and incorporate into planning and decision-making processes, such as land management and reclamation.

Akwesasne Task Force on the Environment
In 1987, the Haudenosaunee community of Akwesasne established the Akwesasne Task Force on the Environment, a community-based, grassroots organization to address the environmental problems they faced. Today, more than 50 people work with the organization to ensure that culturally based processes are respected in the environmental review process. The Task Force has carved out a niche in the archaeology field and established a school to train community-based archaeologists.

The mission of the Akwesasne Task Force on the Environment is to conserve, preserve, protect and restore the environment, and natural and cultural resources within the Mohawk territory.

Using the two-row wampum approach (http://www.akwesasne.ca/node/118), the Task Force supports agreements and projects related to deer culling, drinking water, conservation bylaws and officers, three-year species at risk grants, and youth and Elders camp designed to impart life skills on the land. The bald eagle and other species have since returned to the community's section of the river demonstrating that the Task Force’s efforts are working.
Information Capacities

Establishing environmental baselines before a project or series of projects may begin can effectively remove the debate over cumulative impacts since it provides all parties with the means to isolate, measure, assess, and monitor impacts of new or proposed projects. Undertaking traditional use studies can also position First Nations to better detail existing and/or potential impacts of proposed projects on traditional use activities. These environmental baselines and traditional use studies can, in turn, help to ensure that the Crown discharges its legal duty to consult and accommodate First Nations based on a thorough and mutually accepted understanding of impacts.

There are concerns about processes which result in fragmented, project-by-project approaches to environmental assessments. Costs and capacity to conduct analysis are each separately and to varying degrees barriers to First Nations completing environmental assessments. Given the cost and available capacity, many communities still rely on studies conducted by non-governmental organizations.

To address the environmental science and data needs of First Nations in natural resource development, we observed that:

• First Nations are generally better supported when they have access to data management tools and processes to store, retrieve and use data assets more effectively in the community;
• First Nations have the ability to determine and control their own datasets to be shared as they deem appropriate;
• Opportunities exist to learn from other positive practices, in Canada and internationally, such as enabling centre(s) of expertise;
• First Nations may need support to establish capacity to engage in their own due diligence studies; and
• First Nations involvement in environmental matters through training and education should be an objective to improve a project and its development.

As recommended elsewhere in this report, First Nations governments, businesses, and individuals could also benefit from having easy access to technical information and advisory services through a central resource centre. If they so choose, First Nations might also use this centre to exchange information and best practices. Other independent First Nations-mandated organizations could also study, monitor, report and take stock of environmental impacts and, over time, build a warehouse of data and studies.

Recommendation

Support First Nations to develop and maintain the capacity to collect and manage environmental data and land use information for the purposes of long-term and cumulative impact reporting and management.
Suncor Energy Partnerships

Canada’s largest integrated energy company, Suncor Energy, has a long history of working with Aboriginal communities to support economic development. In 2013, Suncor spent more than $431 million with Aboriginal businesses almost doubling its efforts since 2011 alone, and bringing its total to almost $2.5 billion since 1999. Wood Buffalo, home to Suncor’s oil sands operations, currently accounts for the vast majority of its total spending with Aboriginal businesses. Increasingly, Suncor is also working on opportunities to partner with Aboriginal businesses across Canada.

First Nations across Canada have partnered with Suncor, through its Petro-Canada brand, to benefit from energy development by becoming Petro-Canada retail associates. Currently, there are 19 Petro-Canada stations owned and operated by First Nation retail associates. Most of these are on reserve land, and some are on urban reserve land converted through the Treaty Land Entitlement process. In northern Saskatchewan, Suncor has been working with a particular First Nation since 2005. The band now manages three Petro-Canada retail stations in two cities, and Suncor believes these stations have brought tremendous value to the Petro-Canada retail model. The First Nation continues to be a high performer, with some of the top volume sites of all Petro-Canada stations in the province.

In addition to generating positive economic returns for the First Nation, this partnership has contributed to job creation and capacity development in the community. It is for exactly these reasons Suncor continues to proactively pursue similar opportunities with other First Nations across Canada. In October 2014, Suncor partnered with a First Nation to put on the first ever conference and tradeshow aimed at First Nation gas stations and convenience stores. Also highlighted were emerging opportunities within the wholesale fuel and lubricants business channels. The event drew over 150 participants from 50 First Nations across Canada and was described as a unique conference because instead of focusing on challenges and issues in economic development, it focused on specific positive action for Aboriginal participation in the energy sector.
Theme Three: Prosperity – Creating a Sustainable Future

There is very clear understanding among First Nations that prosperity goes beyond financial wealth: it is rooted in local values and traditions. Prosperity reflects a balance between protecting traditions, land, water, biodiversity, and health while still engaging in natural resource development and reducing poverty to achieve outcomes important to the community.

At the micro level, prosperity is the ability of people to provide for themselves and their family with good-paying, secure careers. At the macro level, prosperity is sustainable natural resource development with benefits shared by all and beyond the life of any given project.

First Nations also link prosperity to the goal of increased participation in resource development projects as owners; taking a rights-based approach within the parameters of the duty to consult and accommodate to shift the focus from “minimizing impact and infringement of Aboriginal rights” towards another goal of “prosperity and participation of First Nations people.”

Often communities are torn in trying to balance goals, which reinforces our recommendation elsewhere in this report for a First Nation to define and prepare to communicate their community’s vision for natural resource development.
New Fiscal Relationship: Revenue Sharing

Many participants identified the sharing of resource development wealth as an immediate priority and industry noted that discussions are already taking place. Examining revenue sharing options is also seen as a solution to help First Nations eliminate socio-economic disparities.

First Nations articulated the need for a new natural resource development fiscal relationship with the Crown (Federal–Provincial–Territorial governments) and that this is an immediate need. Establishing a new fiscal relationship would go a long way to promote greater acceptance, involvement and ownership by First Nations in natural resource development projects, and it would alleviate overall poverty.

In 2012, Canada’s natural resource wealth was valued at $784.6 billion in energy, $230 billion in minerals, and $113 billion in timber. This represented 10 per cent of Canada’s non-financial wealth assets. Between 2008 and 2012, governments received an average $30 billion in revenues per annum from natural resource sectors. Experts are projecting as much as $675 billion in natural resource development project investment in Canada over the next 10 years.

According to the First Nations Tax Commission, “First Nations have expressed that they expect to share the tax revenues these resource development projects generate. Currently, most do not collect these revenues and they know this is why their services and infrastructure are languishing. Some First Nations are sharing provincial resource tax revenues. Some are getting funding and revenues directly from companies. Some are receiving both. There is no clear or consistent approach on how these payments are made and how much revenue is available.”

A national approach to resource revenue sharing would help ensure that the benefits flowing to individual First Nations are more consistent in nature across the country. By comparison, the benefits resulting from individually negotiated impact and benefit agreements for similar projects can vary greatly.

Some observers noted that negotiating revenue arrangements with companies is bad for investment because it is time consuming, uncertain and expensive. It delays projects, adds to costs, and makes projects less viable. Resource revenue sharing at the company level is not the answer if it means projects are stifled or delayed. As such, one option proposed to us was the possibility of a First Nations tax model that

Recommendation

Hold a national dialogue among leaders and appropriate orders of government, involving technical levels, to develop an approach for sharing resource revenues.
could be applied by First Nations to resource development in their territories to form an important, needed and currently lacking revenue base. Industry participants agreed that a systematic national revenue strategy for First Nations would bring greater certainty to natural resource development in Canada.

Resource revenue sharing options and issues need to be explored nationally with the involvement of First Nations, appropriate levels of government, and technical experts. Some believe that First Nations and companies alike should not have to produce First Nations’ “fair share” of resource revenue sharing in Canada through limited and investment-hampering resource revenue sharing agreements. But this discussion needs to happen now, especially with the recent Tsilhqot’in Nation decision which recognized Aboriginal title to Tsilhqot’in lands that were regularly used, as well as Aboriginal rights beyond regular use areas in their now-established wider territory.¹³

Striking a new fiscal relationship could achieve an added benefit by creating a forum for ongoing consultation, discussion and dialogue about related financial issues and provide a recognized and accepted model for resource development.

**Industry Leadership**

Industry CEOs and other business leaders, who have experience working alongside First Nations governments, enterprises and peoples, are uniquely placed to champion for increased First Nations participation in natural resource development and related business opportunities. We understand that even First Nations businesses that are commercially successful often face barriers of perceived risk and a general lack of understanding, which can make forming joint ventures or securing financing impossible. However, senior business leaders can help bridge this gap, especially by broadening the understanding, among their peers, governments, and all Canadians, of the benefits and business advantages of partnering and doing business with First Nations and Aboriginal enterprises.

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**Recommendation**

Senior business leadership should promote the value, benefits and business advantages of partnering and conducting business with First Nations.
Employment Strategies

The participation of First Nations citizens in the labour force has been limited by a number of factors. For some, it may be a lack of basic education or an inability to access technical or advanced education, while others cannot find apprenticeships, confront discriminatory hiring practices, or struggle with employment policies that do not support long-term employment and advancement. The barriers are many. At the same time, we are told that there are growing labour shortages in the skilled trades that could be addressed through national and regional First Nation employment strategies. First Nations are home to the youngest and fastest growing population in Canada and are often located in relatively close proximity to natural resource projects, but face a number of challenges such as educational outcomes and other social difficulties. There is a need to increase career opportunities for First Nations as part of natural resource development projects. This includes both meaningful long-term careers in the trades and management positions.

Employers, whether large resource companies or construction site contractors or subcontractors, can better access this unique and underutilized human resource through the development of targeted and responsive policies, practices and incentives for hiring, career advancement, mentoring, and retention, including use of exit interviews to gain information on Aboriginal-specific retention issues that need to be addressed. In addition, professional associations and unions can play a greater role in facilitating career opportunities for First Nations, including the supply of members and access to related training and certification requirements. Corporate social responsibility principles could also feature capacity-building approaches in impact and benefit agreements and joint ventures and more broadly to the transfer of business knowledge. This was viewed as particularly beneficial for shorter-term projects, such as pipeline construction.

Specifically, industry, associations and unions can contribute to the goal of greater First Nations participation in the human resource needs of major resource projects by:

- developing long-term employment opportunities that provide for meaningful careers, rather than short-term (‘surplus’) labour;
- adapting certification and qualifications requirements that can present barriers to First Nations recruitment, advancement and retention;
- providing more mentorship and role-model programs that value and promote greater First Nations participation; working with adults in First Nations communities who are open to changing careers or who have delayed their career development;
- recognizing the fast-growing, off-reserve First Nations labour pool and considering strategies for urban employment where companies have offices;

Recommendation

Employers, unions, industry and professional associations, training and education institutions should work with First Nations, with the support of governments, to put in place structures, policies, procedures and incentives to enhance employment of First Nations citizens.
• incorporating more flexible work benefits and programs to accommodate the unique demographics of First Nations families (e.g., younger, larger and often headed by single mothers);
• exploring options that could help reduce time away from home and the geographical divides between work locations and communities; and
• understanding and implementing employment and training policies that respond to the seasonal nature of hunting, trapping, farming and fishing as well as the local traditional economy.

Industry, associations, unions and governments also have an important role to play in working with First Nations to help them overcome barriers that still result from persistent stereotyping of First Nations people, communities and business. In addition, federal and provincial governments need to ensure that their labour programs are responsive to the unique needs of First Nations. This also requires that governments are able to accurately track and report on First Nations labour force participation, especially on reserve.

Neskantaga Training Centre

On August 2014, the first Aecon remote training centre was launched and named the Neskantaga Training Centre (Training Centre). For Aecon, the Training Centre symbolizes an innovative example of engagement with First Nations – and the difference that can be made when industry develops true, meaningful relationships with a community and takes the time to understand the unique challenges, needs and dreams of that community. The outcome is a sustainable, win-win partnership that provides real benefits to everyone involved.

The centre is owned and operated by the Matawa First Nations and all of its programs will be designed and structured for maximum success rates. Kiikenomaga Kiwenjigewen Employment and Training Services (KKETS) will develop training and education strategies aligned with the potential employment opportunities arising from the mining industry and in particular, the Ring of Fire and the Arc of Fire. Making the Training Centre a reality meant bringing together more partners – in this case best-in-class companies and organizations that share in the combined objective of creating a sustainable solution for training in remote communities.

The Training Centre concept was developed largely due to the experiences of northern and remote First Nations as they pursue their education and trades – and the challenges that are often present when students are removed from their communities. The centre provides an innovative and practical response to address the unique social and cultural needs of First Nations in this region, and works to support a necessary and valuable share of the Canadian labour force. Aecon sees this community-based strategy as a way to help build confidence through achievement and skills development, and as a way for youth to successfully transition to institutes of higher learning. Overall, the Training Centre is one more step toward opportunities for a better future, community development and long-term sustainability in remote communities.
Procurement and Business Partnerships

First Nations are also looking to seize broader economic opportunities linked to the provision of goods and services for major projects. While infrastructure development is a key example, other opportunities include, but are not limited to, the provision of long-term storage, gas modules, heavy machinery and equipment, hotels and work camps, fuel supply, construction services, transportation, catering, and aviation. Such opportunities and businesses not only serve to sustain families and communities, but they also provide opportunities for employees to obtain essential and transferable work and business skills. More targeted corporate practices and procurement approaches can lead to increased First Nations contracting, while effectively satisfying procurement needs.

Other First Nations also want to move up the production and value chain to become owners of value-added businesses, such as oil refineries or plants, but this requires significant upfront investments and possibly complex joint ventures or private–public partnerships.

For First Nations, partnering in resource development can bring many benefits. These include greater access to and growth in capital, royalties, training and employment, development of business expertise and capacity, development of spin-off businesses, and access to new and/or distant markets. In addition, over time First Nations can acquire the necessary management experience to take control of natural resource development businesses and operate independently.

First Nations who aspire to be owners of natural resource development projects can also benefit from joint venture partnerships, which encourage both parties to work together to ensure economic benefits for all parties and explore further opportunities for business improvement and growth.

Similarly, industry stands to benefit from entering into business partnerships with First Nations. They gain expanded business opportunities and access to new supplier arrangements and sources of labour. Such benefits may also motivate businesses to build further relationships and create a greater culture of corporate social responsibility.

Recommendation

Establish and regularly update a regional and localized reference directory of First Nations businesses including contacts, capacity information, and workforce profiles.
For First Nations, other benefits resulting from joint ventures can include:

- increasing the economic capacity of their members;
- creating broader community economic development;
- providing the opportunity to become more self-sufficient;
- filling the gap created by a decline in traditional economic activities;
- advancing nation-building or governance; and
- creating opportunities for collaborative management, sharing responsibility, and decision-making on natural resources.

We observed that there is a need for an information network or central repository that clearly outlines the skills available among the First Nations workforce and its business community. This database would serve a dual purpose of helping those who are looking for opportunities and those in need of workers and services.

**Five Nations Energy Incorporated**

Five Nations Energy Inc. emerged as a result of debt-to-equity financing from De Beers’s diamond mine. De Beers was in need of a transmission line to supply its mine and five First Nations saw an opportunity to be that power supplier. This decision had the added benefit of building lasting energy infrastructure for the remote communities to provide a reliable power supply and much needed jobs to their members.

Five Nations Energy Inc. also realized an opportunity to lease telecommunications capacity on the existing power transmission corridor to the Western James Bay Telecommunications Network, which is a company formed by the Mushkegowuk Council. This has enabled some of the First Nations to provide high-speed Internet services to their communities, a service which is often lacking in remote areas of Canada.
First Nations not only want to share in the financial benefits resulting from resource development, but they also want to be equity participants and project co-owners, as well as the business owners who supply these projects with goods and services.

While some First Nations are able to leverage and seize investment and ownership opportunities, many First Nations suffer from a lack of access to capital, as well as a shortage of critical knowledge and business acumen. This is especially true for complex and capital-intensive resource development projects and related opportunities (e.g., major construction and service opportunities).

First Nations financing requirements vastly exceed the capacity of traditional Aboriginal funding programs and institutions. Financial markets and related instruments for natural resource development are mature and complex, requiring considerable capacity and know-how on the part of First Nations to take advantage of resource development opportunities. First Nations seeking partnerships in resource sector projects have to seek capital without many structures and supports or full advice on the risks and rewards of ownership and investment.

Improved access to lending instruments will also assist in fostering the next generation of entrepreneurs among First Nations. As such, we expect that other matters will naturally be raised as part of a continued dialogue on financial literacy and a growing entrepreneurial class, which are touched on elsewhere in this report.
Examining Alternative Financial Structures and Options

Immediate and coordinated action is required by First Nations and all levels of government to find solutions to address the access to capital needs of First Nations that are seeking funding for major projects and related economic activities. The following ideas and observations should be further considered to determine practical solutions on an urgent basis:

**Recommendation**

Explore further options for addressing capital needs, including: bond markets, government loan guarantee, national and regional fund, First Nations sovereign investment fund and/or income trust, national First Nations pension fund, public-private partnerships, and infrastructure funds.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bond Markets</th>
<th>First Nations Federal Loan Guarantee Program</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bond markets can facilitate long-term borrowing.</td>
<td>Regarded as a method for First Nations to engage in the largest natural resource development projects and, which could potentially lead to more partnering, investment and ownership opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global markets can provide significant amounts of capital for projects that qualify.</td>
<td>Loan guarantees could reduce collateral and provide favourable lending terms to enable more lending and access to longer lending terms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explore options to work with existing structures to enhance lending for major projects.</td>
<td>Further explore past and current activity related to a proposed loan guarantee program.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Further examine bond-lending requirements vis-à-vis First Nations governance structures, financial positions, financial capacity and credibility.</td>
<td><strong>National First Nations Pension Fund</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn more about what constitutes lender/investor confidence.</td>
<td>Bring a group of First Nations pension fund administrators together to discuss working collaboratively toward a fund, such as a retirement income pooled fund.</td>
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<tr>
<th>National and Regional Funds</th>
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<tr>
<td>Various pension funds have significant investment decision-making leverage and associated impacts in Canada.</td>
<td>Discuss options to invest funds in resource development projects.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Insurance companies can also provide capital for projects that qualify.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Examine criteria and interest in resource development projects.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Further explore lending practices and options.</td>
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Examining Alternative Financial Structures and Options

First Nations Sovereign Investment Fund and/or Income Trust
Create a capital pool for large project financing.

Work with investment fund expert(s) on market criteria, requirements to demonstrate viability, risks, and capital options.

Examine how First Nations’ stranded capital could become active/working capital.

Explore options for leveraging other funds, such as options to work with the First Nations Market Housing Fund.

Further explore requirements and options.

Public–Private Partnerships
Further examine how public–private partnerships could be used to help offset or finance the costs of infrastructure for some parts of resource projects.

Infrastructure Funds
Consider options for developing an infrastructure fund, which would use moneys from toll roads, ports and/or other energy infrastructure to invest in development.

Discuss options with financial experts on accessing infrastructure funds, as applicants, or creating a fund.
Advancing Positive, Impactful Change

Investing in Shared Prosperity
Considerable resources and capacity are required if a First Nation intends to directly participate in resource development projects. Partnering between First Nations at nation, tribal council, treaty, project, or regional levels may help to address some of these challenges and facilitate greater benefits, as a result of economies of scale. For example, a desire was expressed to examine models in which collectively-owned larger pools of capital may provide partnering First Nations with the option to become owners, partners, or investors in resource development projects.

We observed that there is general agreement on the need for First Nations to invest in shared prosperity. For example, if a coordinated business option was presented, First Nations well-positioned for investment could consider opportunities with other First Nations’ resource development projects to achieve shared prosperity. This could be done through concerted efforts by First Nations leaders to invest first in other First Nations, which could become a principle for structuring First Nations resource revenue sharing across Canada.

Developing International Markets and Relationships
All levels of government recognize the importance of developing international markets and attracting foreign investment. So do First Nations. Trade and international business relations were among the key issues raised by those we met with and they expressed concerns that opportunities for involving First Nations in the development of foreign markets for Canadian goods and services were being overlooked by federal, provincial/territorial, and municipal levels of government. Moreover, international investors remain largely unaware of the unique investment and business opportunities in Canada that could involve First Nations – not only as First Nations governments and rights holders, but also as business owners, suppliers and equity partners. There is a need for a more coordinated approach in how the international business community intersects, builds relationships, and works with First Nations.

Through experience, First Nations have also developed knowledge and practices on building relationships with the resource development industry that can be shared with others in the international community – including other Indigenous communities, industry, states or associations. Moreover, there are opportunities to further develop unique business relationships with Indigenous communities and businesses in other countries.

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Recommendation
Develop models for cooperative partnership to enable First Nations to pool capital, share resources, work together, leverage investments, and establish and pursue joint venture opportunities.

Recommendation
Organize an international forum to examine, promote, encourage and expand First Nations involvement in resource development, trade relationships, business partnerships, and access to foreign markets.
For many First Nations communities, the concept of prosperity extends far beyond receiving payment for work done, products procured, or royalties shared.

— Working Group on Natural Resource Development
Conclusion: Going Forward – Advancing Impactful and Practical Change

Canada is at a pivotal moment in terms of the evolving role of First Nations in the future of this country, and the significance of natural resource development to Canada’s economy. We need to prepare now to ensure that all of the benefits of natural resource development will be fully shared by First Nations and all Canadians.

Our report reflects the collective observations and recommendations of First Nation and industry experts regarding key governance, environment, prosperity, and finance successes and issues related to resource development. We need to learn from the critical actions and activities undertaken by these players to ensure the successful and beneficial involvement of First Nations in resource development. We also need to reflect on the recommendations put forward to advance impactful and practical change in the immediate and longer terms.

This report, which we have submitted to the AFN National Chief and the AANDC Minister, represents a necessary first step in initiating focused discussion and action in key, achievable activities. Combined, they form the foundation for future dialogue and decision-making, but in no way should they be considered the final word.

We recommend that additional working sessions and national round tables be established in the coming months, with the federal government playing a central convener role, in partnership with First Nations, and that these sessions focus on further exploring the observations and recommendations presented in this report. The full involvement and dedication of all levels of government and First Nations in Canada would be essential. Other players, including business leaders, technical experts, and non-governmental organizations can also play a role in advancing understanding and proposing solutions that can help address the myriad of complex issues facing First Nations communities.
As an immediate step, we strongly urge the federal government, along with the provinces and territories, to come together with First Nations to explore options for resource revenue sharing. This discussion is long overdue and requires immediate action in order to bring greater predictability to resource development in Canada and establish a long-term pathway to greater First Nations self-reliance.

We also recommend an independent central information resource centre that can be accessed by First Nations considering or already involved in natural resource development be established, with the support and involvement of the federal and provincial/territorial governments, working with First Nations, industry and the non-governmental sector. Information collected and shared through this resource centre, as well as related advisory services, will help advance understanding, planning and decision-making for the entire project life-cycle, including issues related to governance, capacity development, community and industry best practices, skills and training, industry and market intelligence, venture development and finance, environment and geology. The federal and provincial/territorial governments, in particular, can take a lead role in championing and supporting this initiative.

Opportunity also exists to increase the involvement of First Nations in international trade and relations. To this end, we also recommend that an international meeting should be organized in the next 12 months to examine and expand First Nations involvement in resource development, trade relationships, business partnerships, and access to foreign markets.

We consistently received the message that it is in the national interest to do better. Industry and First Nations leaders also agreed that action is urgently needed. Our report will hopefully serve as a catalyst that can prompt further and greater reflection, discussion and action among all parties on the issues addressed in this report. Moreover, we hope that what emerges next is a more consistent national framework or roadmap for involving First Nations in natural resource development. It is up to decision-makers and practitioners across this nation and at all levels of government, to make this happen.

The time is now and the opportunities are immense.
End Notes


2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 The Honourable Joe Oliver, Minister of Natural Resources opening remarks at the Canadian Aboriginal Mineral Association Conference in Toronto, Canada, November 19, 2012.


7 Ibid.


11 Ibid.


Front and Back Cover Images:
Glenn Nolan: Sleeping giant trees, man filleting fish, sunset on lake, moose running, forest
Shutterstock: Snow covered trees in Nagano, Canadian prairie field, energy development equipment, bull elk in Banff, Asotin Lake sunset
Cattroll Photo Associates: youth, woman profile, dancers, dancer’s bustle
Assembly of First Nations Photo Inventory: Eagle Staff, mask
Assembly of First Nations Annual General Assembly Host Committee (2011) photographer: Teepee

Interior:
Shutterstock: pg. 7/Asotin Lake sunset, pg. 13/winter landscape and river, pg. 19/Kananaskis forest, pg. 21/Transmission towers; pg. 25/wind turbines in Alberta; pg. 27/energy development equipment; pg. 28/
Dump truck at Canadian Rocky Mountain open pit; pg. 32/bull elk in Banff, pg. 35/snow covered trees in Nagano
Assembly of First Nations Photo Inventory: pg. 1/mask, pg. 14/Eagle Staff
Cattroll Photo Associates: pg. 2/dancer’s bustle
Glenn Nolan: pg. 20/Sunset on lake, pg. 24/cold perch drilling, pg. 34/moose, pg. 39/sleeping giant trees
Assembly of First Nations Annual General Assembly Host Committee (2011) photographer: pg. 36/Teepee
STEP ONE:
Finding the Ways and Means for First Nations to Fully Share in Natural Resource Development