

Assembly of First Nations

First Nations Trade Relations Overview

Draft | December 3, 2018





About the Assembly of First Nations

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) is the national body representing First Nations governments and approximately 1.5 million people living on reserve and in urban and rural areas. The National Chief is elected every three years and receives direction from the Chiefs in Assembly. The AFN is dedicated to advancing the priorities and aspirations of First Nations through review, response and advocacy on a broad range of issue and policy matters.

There are 634 First Nations in Canada with established governance systems, each led by a Chief who is entitled to be a member of the Assembly. The AFN National Executive is made up of the National Chief, 10 Regional Chiefs and the chairs of the Elders, Women's and Youth councils. First Nations are part of more than 50 distinct nations with unique cultures and languages.

First Nations have a unique and special relationship with the Crown and the people of Canada as set out in the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and manifested in Treaties, the Constitution Acts of 1867 and 1982, Canadian common law and international law, and as outlined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

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First Nations Trade and Trade Relations

The exercise of our right to self-determination is First Nations' pathway to prosperity and to assuming our rightful place in the broader economy. First Nations governments, Elders, women, youth, teachers, lawyers and entrepreneurs are working hard every day to contribute to First Nations economies and Canada's economy. Today there are over 43,000 indigenous operated business¹ contributing an estimated \$31 Billion to Canada's Economy.²

First Nations across Canada continue to pursue economic initiatives to improve socio-economic conditions for their people and many see international trade and foreign direct investment activity as an opportunity to expand and accelerate economic growth. First Nations are expanding business opportunities and seeking new markets, trade, investments and business opportunities at the local, regional and international levels.

Trade and trade relations are inherent rights of First Nations and are an aspect of the right to self-determination. The Jay Treaty of 1794 acknowledged this inherent right by protecting free trade rights for Indigenous peoples. The Treaty included provisions for the right to "Freely... carry on trade and commerce... No duty of entry shall ever be levied... nor shall Indians passing or re-passing with their own proper Goods and Effects of whatever nature, pay for the same any Import or Duty". These rights are also enshrined in treaties from coast to coast, including the Peace and Friendship Treaties on the East to the Numbered Treaties in Central and Western Canada.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Article 19: *States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the Indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them.*

Article 21 (1): *Indigenous peoples have the right, without discrimination, to the improvement of their economic and social conditions, including inter alia, in the area of education, employment, vocational training and retraining, housing, sanitation, health and social security.*

Article 36 (1): *Indigenous peoples, in particular those divided by international borders, have the right to maintain and develop contacts, relations and cooperation, including activities for spiritual, cultural, political, economic and social purposes, with their own members as well as other peoples across borders.*

Article 36 (2): *States, in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous peoples, shall take effective measures to facilitate the exercise and ensure the implementation of this right.*

¹ 2016 Promise and Prosperity Survey, Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business

² Estimating the Size of the Aboriginal Market in Canada, TD Economics



The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which Canada is a full supporter without qualification, emphasizes this inherent right and directs states to take appropriate measures to ensure the implementation of this right, along with measures to certify social and economic growth for Indigenous people (see if particular Articles 19,21,36).

The inherent right to self-determination, trade and trade relations continues to be a priority for First Nations. Strategic considerations regarding First Nations trade relations must be based on the inherent right to trade within and between Nations,

within Canada and internationally. Future trade agreements need to acknowledge this by explicitly acknowledging the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the standard of free, prior and informed consent.

Canada has entered into, or is in the process of negotiating, approximately 90 international trade and investment agreements. While new international trade and investment agreements are an opportunity to further support First Nations' economy, the potential impacts on Treaty and inherent rights and title must be identified and the Crown's consultation and consent obligations met. To accomplish this, there needs to be a commitment to move from engagement of First Nations, to full participation in ongoing and future negotiations.

As part of recent negotiations, Canada has negotiated exception clauses, carve outs and set-asides in modernized trade agreements that have the potential to benefit First Nations and First Nation businesses. Implementation of these provisions to ensure the benefits flow to First Nation businesses and service providers is equally, if not more, important. However, without adequate mandatory rules for government procurement, which should include private sector incentives and new domestic legislation and policies for implementation, the economic potential for these provisions for First Nations will have limited positive impact.

In recognition of the growth potential and benefits to First Nations and Canada's economy, by increasing First Nation participation in trade, there needs to be a commitment to improved investments and supports for First Nations businesses. This includes the sharing of knowledge and expertise, through an Indigenous trade commissioner and centers of excellence, as well improving current structures and establishing dedicated support for Indigenous businesses to expand into the trade market.



While addressing the gaps in trade relations is an integral step, in order to realize the benefits of First Nations participation in the trade economy, Canada must commit to investing in First Nations businesses.

The Chiefs-in-Assembly have acknowledged the importance and value of trade and trade relations to First Nations and through resolution (July 2017, December 2017 and July 2018), have called on the Assembly of First Nations and Canada to work together to continue to improve and enhance trade opportunities for First Nations. The resolution includes direction from the Chiefs-In-Assembly to promote trade missions, create legislation and policy pertaining to procurement, establish incentive programs and establish a First Nations Centre of Excellence for International Trade. While the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement has been the most inclusive agreement to date, there remains a great deal of work to continue this momentum and to operationalize the benefits.³

First Nations in Trade

In 2017, exports accounted for an estimated 30% of Canada's Gross Domestic product (GDP). This number is expected to grow as Canada continues to make progress to modernize and finalize and implement new trade agreements including:

- July 2017 - Ratification of the **Canadian Free Trade Agreement** – National agreement to establish national free trade rules and expand upon the \$385 Billion of internal trade.⁴
- September 2017 - Provisional implementation of the **Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement** – Between Canada and European Union (28 member states) eliminating 98% of the tariffs between Canada and the EU⁵, providing enhanced access to a \$20 Trillion marketplace.⁶
- March 2018 – Signing of the **Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for the Trans-Pacific Partnership** - Between Canada and 11 other countries representing a total GDP of \$13.5 trillion⁷ and is expected to boost Canada's Gross Domestic Product by \$4.2 billion⁸.
- September 2018 – Agreement in Principle of the **United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement** - Between Canada, Mexico and the United States that is expected to grow the USD \$1.1 trillion (2017) in trade between the three countries.⁹

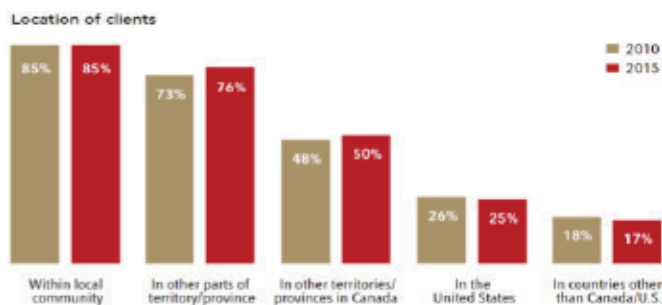


Chart 1.1 Location of Indigenous Clients

With over 43,000 operated businesses nation-wide¹⁰, predominantly in export-focused sectors including natural resources and mining industries, First Nations are poised to be major contributors to this growing area of Canada's economy. Today, First Nation businesses participate in exporting either

³ Resolutions no. 36/2017 (July 2017), 104/2017 (December 2017) & 30/2018 (July 2018), Chiefs-in-Assembly, Assembly of First Nations

⁴ <https://www.cfta-alec.ca/canadian-free-trade-agreement/>

⁵ <http://www.international.gc.ca/gac-amc/campaign-campagne/ceta-aecg/index.aspx?lang=eng>

⁶ <https://pm.gc.ca/eng/news/2016/10/30/canada-and-eu-sign-historic-trade-agreement-during-eu-canada-summit>

⁷ <http://international.gc.ca/trade-commerce/trade-agreements-accords-commerciaux/agr-acc/cptpp-ptpgrp/regions/QC.aspx?lang=eng>

⁸ <http://international.gc.ca/trade-commerce/trade-agreements-accords-commerciaux/agr-acc/cptpp-ptpgrp/impact-repercussions.aspx?lang=eng>

⁹ <https://international.gc.ca/trade-commerce/trade-agreements-accords-commerciaux/agr-acc/usmca-aeumc/index.aspx?lang=eng>

¹⁰ 2016 Promise and Prosperity Survey, Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business



by directly sending goods out of the nation, province, or country, or indirectly, by operating within a supply chain that has an outcome of exporting. First Nation businesses are increasingly active in trade at the international level, inter-provincial level and First Nation to First Nation level nationally and globally. The 2016 Promise and Prosperity Survey found that 50% of Indigenous businesses already have customers in other provinces or territories, a quarter have clients in the U.S. and nearly one-fifth have customers in countries other than Canada and the U.S. (Chart 1.1)¹¹. Overall Indigenous businesses are more likely to export (around 25% of businesses) than the rest of Canadian businesses (around 10%), indicating that First Nations are willing to go global. Additionally, evidence suggests that Aboriginal firms that export are sending their products to a broader geographic base than other small exporters with more than half exporting to countries other than the United States.¹²

Market economies are not foreign to us. We created them ourselves. We traded goods over hundreds of miles. The Mayan had a complex trade network. How could corn be used all throughout the Americas before contact, if we did not trade? How could pipestone end up in our territory before contact when it only comes from Pipestone, Minnesota, if we did not trade? Trade cannot be financed without capital...We had to create institutions to facilitate trade. From Alaska to California we agreed to a common trade language, Chinook. We recorded transactions relating to labour and goods. We achieved this because we created a system that was supportive and encouraged individual initiative.

- February 2018: Many Jules -
Chief Commissioner of the First Nations
Tax Commission

Domestic Trade continues to be a valuable and important area for growth for First Nations and Canada's economy. In addition to the CFTA, the New West Partnership Agreement (2010) between Alberta, British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, representing 11 million people and over \$710 Billion GDP, is a framework to enhance trade, investment and labour mobility in Western Canada¹³.

First Nations are poised to be leaders and strategic partners in the growing domestic trade industry. In addition to representing the fastest growing population in Canada, First Nation businesses represent a cross-sector of industries including information technology, resource extraction, retail and cultural and arts sectors with over 50% already having customers in other provinces or territories¹⁴.

¹¹ 2016 Promise and Prosperity Survey, Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business

¹² Aboriginal Business Increasingly Embracing Innovation, Special Report, TD Economics (June 2017)

¹³ <https://www.alberta.ca/alberta-trade-agreements.aspx#toc-1>

¹⁴ 2016 Promise and Prosperity Survey, Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business



First Nations business throughout Canada continue to be successful in leveraging trade opportunities in a variety of industries, domestically and internationally. Below are just a few examples:

Muskowekwan First Nation - Encanto Potash Corporation – Saskatchewan – International Trade

Encanto has made a name for themselves in the industry, having signed an agreement with the National Federation of Farmers' Procurement, Processing, and Retailing Cooperatives of India, under which they have committed to selling 5 million tons of potash a year for the next 20 years. The potash mine is the first of its kind to be built on First Nation land, and will help the Muskowekwan First Nation generate jobs and create opportunities for economic development¹⁵. The Nation has a 100% share and full control over the mine, making this a significant export agreement that is completely led by First Nations¹⁶. Encanto expects the mine to last 50 years, which in turn will help generate revenues and build a strong local economy for the years to come¹⁷.

Osoyoos Indian Band - Nk'Mip Cellars – British Columbia – Domestic and International Trade

Nk'Mip Cellars is North America's first Indigenous-owned and operated winery, and can be found in Osoyoos British Columbia. Serving the national and international wine community, Nk'Mip Cellars has seen much success over the years and continues to find ways to bring their culture into the wine world. The winery itself operates on-Reserve, which is home to over 500 individuals¹⁸. The Nk'Mip Cellars are one of many business, health, social, educational and municipal initiatives that have earned the Band financial independence and high employment. Since 2014, the brand has won more than 50 regional, national and international awards for its wines, and was Canadian Winery of the Year in the 2016-17 InterVin International Wine Awards, second placed overall¹⁹.



Industry Spotlight

¹⁵ <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/first-nation-potash-india-1.3942615>

¹⁶ <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/potash-muskowekwan-chief-1.3955961>

¹⁷ <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/first-nation-potash-india-1.3942615>

¹⁸ <http://www.nkmipcellars.com/About-Us>

¹⁹ <https://www.princegeorgecitizen.com/standout/north-america-s-first-indigenous-winery-makes-perfect-wines-in-a-perfect-setting-1.23409042>



The First Nation Energy Strategy:

The natural resources sector is a major driver of Canada's economy, accounting for 16% of nominal GDP in 2016, directly and indirectly accounting for 1.74M jobs in Canada. In 2014, the federal Finance Minister estimated that anticipated growth in this sector, with over 470 major resource projects under construction or planned over the next 10 years in Canada, is worth \$675B in investment²⁰. At present, 90% of natural resource opportunities under federal review are located on reserve, within treaty areas, or in settled or unsettled claims areas. However, the provinces, territories, and the Government of Canada continue to extract and develop resources on First Nations ancestral lands, and benefit significantly, without fully and properly respecting the rights of First Nations under Treaty, constitutional law, and international law. The Treaty relationship between First Nations and the Crown requires respect of First Nations jurisdiction and our rights to share in resource revenue and benefits.

Inclusive prosperity means that First Nations are active producers in the economy, not merely consumers. 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.



Understanding the importance of the energy sector, an independent Working Group on Natural Resources delivered a report (2015) calling for immediate action. The goal of the report focused on identifying means by which all First Nations could participate and share in the full range of benefits resulting from natural resources development projects in Canada. Recommendations included:

- the establishment of a national round table inviting First Nations, Provinces, Territories, industry and non-governmental organizations;
- the launch of a discussion on resource revenue sharing as the best means of eliminating socio-economic disparities;

²⁰ <https://www.afn.ca/uploads/files/Working-Group-on-Natural-Resource-Development-Report.pdf>



- the establishment of a central knowledge and information resources to assist First Nations; and
- an international forum to promote First Nations trade and international partnerships.

Indigenous Tourism:

According to the Aboriginal Tourism Research Project, conducted in 2015, the impact of Indigenous tourism in Canada is around a \$2.65 billion gross output, and contributes \$1.4 billion to GDP ²¹.

At Rendezvous Canada, Canada's largest tourism trade show, international tourism companies come together to buy and sell goods and services. In 2018, Rendezvous Canada generated approximately \$1.8 billion in sales for Indigenous businesses. Indigenous tourism continues to see gains from key markets including U.S., Japan, China, the U.K., France and Germany ²². While tourism is often overlooked as a tradable commodity, the generation of revenue from international transactions and steady growth in this area makes this industry a key area for First Nations and Canada's economy.



First Nations and Trade Relations - Canadian Free Trade Agreement (CFTA), Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) & Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for the Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP)

The CFTA, CETA and CPTPP have specific provisions, affirmations, exceptions and carve-outs pertaining to Indigenous trade, including:

- Under CFTA, the exceptions section of the agreement includes provisions to ensure that no part of the agreement shall prevent a Party from fulfilling its obligations under its treaties with Aboriginal peoples, including land claim agreements (Section 800).
- Under CETA, the agreement includes exceptions and carve-outs to ensure its ability to adopt measures that preserve rights and preferences for Aboriginal peoples (Article 12.2.2, Annex 19-7).
- Under the CPTPP, in addition to the carve outs and preferences in CETA, there is an additional carve out for Aboriginal peoples for state owned enterprises which allow for more favourable treatment to

²¹ The Path Forward Five Year Plan, Indigenous Association of Tourism

²² The Path Forward Five Year Plan, Indigenous Association of Tourism



aboriginal persons and organizations in the purchase of goods and services (Annex IV – Schedule of Canada). As well, there is reaffirmation of the importance of promoting Indigenous Rights (Preamble).

While each of the agreements have Indigenous specific provisions, there are three key gaps that limit the effectiveness and usefulness of these provisions.

1. Engagement with Indigenous Leaders:

Prior and during negotiations of these trade agreements, First Nations were not meaningfully engaged or included in the process. When Canada was making decisions that concerned Indigenous peoples without engagement, Canada was: deciding which programs to exempt from international trade agreements; notifying its trade partners about section 35 consultation requirements; and protecting certain measures that benefit Indigenous businesses and services from Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) without a process to meaningfully consult Indigenous peoples about the purposes of any of these reservations²³. Canada did undertake limited engagement on CETA and CPTPP after the agreements were negotiated.

2. Legislation, Policy and Investment:

While agreements such as CETA include exceptions and carve outs, without accompanying legislation, national policy and investment in Indigenous businesses the effectiveness of these provisions is compromised. Without accompanying legislation and policies mandating Canada to a set percentage

of procurement opportunities federally and provincially, there are no means to encourage the growth of First Nation business as well as ensure and protect these entities from foreign service providers. Additionally, for First Nations to be able to leverage potential opportunities under these agreements there needs to be a commitment from Canada to support First Nations business through investment in business promotion initiatives (e.g. Trade missions, Indigenous Trade Commissioner) and capacity building (e.g. Centre of Excellence in International Trade). Canada just hosted its first Trade Mission for Indigenous businesses in New Zealand in October 2018²⁴.



²³ Towards a Trade and Indigenous Peoples' Chapter in a Modernized NAFTA, Risa Schwartz – CIGI Papers No.144 (September 2017)

²⁴ <https://www.canada.ca/en/global-affairs/news/2018/10/parliamentary-secretary-alghabra-wraps-up-successful-indigenous-trade-mission-to-new-zealand.html>



3. Recognition of Inherent Rights:

Presently, Canada's trade agreements have yet to outline or recognize commitments made under United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration) and the duty of free, informed and prior consent. Additionally, ISDS clauses included in the CPTPP, have been characterized as a threat to Indigenous rights by Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, UN special rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples. She found that non-discrimination and expropriation clauses in international investment agreements have "significant potential to undermine the protection of indigenous peoples' land rights and the strongly associated cultural rights." She further noted that these clauses may erode protections for Indigenous lands and may be a significant barrier to Indigenous land claim ²⁵.

First Nations and Trade Relations - United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA)

In August 2017, Canada established an Indigenous working group to discuss elements for a Draft Trade and Indigenous Peoples Chapter for the USMCA. The working group included First Nations, Inuit and Métis participants. First Nations participants included some self-governing nations and tribal organizations, national organizations, development corporations, business and lending organizations, and those respective groups involved legal advisors, policy analysts, technical leaders, international policy experts and others.

By engaging Indigenous leaders into the process at an early stage, Canada and the Working Group were able to work together to identify key priorities and opportunities for improvement. While negotiations failed on the inclusion of an Indigenous chapter in the agreement, this new working relationship inclusive approach resulted in the most inclusive international trade agreement for Indigenous peoples to date.

Specific provisions for Indigenous peoples are found in the Exceptions and General Provisions chapter, the Environment chapter, Investment chapter (corporate social responsibility), Textiles, Small and Medium Sized Enterprises Chapter and North American Competitiveness Committee Chapter. Some of the key provisions include:

- General Exception for Indigenous Rights. This exception assures the Parties freedom to meet their legal obligations to Indigenous peoples and to act in the interests of Indigenous peoples. The exception included within NAFTA only covered certain sections of the investment chapter, and not the ones most likely to lead to a dispute. This new exception clause covers the entire agreement and applies to Indigenous peoples across North America. It will allow all three states to take action to fulfill their legal obligations to Indigenous peoples with no concerns of reprisal.
- Specific references to protection of Indigenous peoples' interests are found throughout the Agreement in Principle. The Corporate Social Responsibility language, makes a specific reference to Indigenous peoples. This is a positive step and a strong signal to foreign corporations. First Nations

²⁵ Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, Report of the Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council on the rights of indigenous peoples on the impact of international investment and free trade on the human rights of indigenous peoples, UNGAOR, 70th Sess,



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must be involved from day one for any proposed projects on their lands. It is good business sense and provides the security needed for any proposed development. However, reliance on voluntary Corporate Social Responsibility is not sufficient, and First Nations are looking to improve this language with Canada to be better in line with the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

- The USMCA recognizes the important role Indigenous peoples play in the long-term conservation of the environment. Water is the foundation of life. Although not specific to First Nations, it was good to see the confirmation between the United States and Canada that the USMCA creates no rights to the natural water resources of Canada.
- There is a new emphasis on cooperation activities to promote and enhance opportunities for Indigenous businesses in the Small and Medium Sized Enterprises Chapter. First Nations are the youngest and fastest growing demographic in Canada. Opportunities for First Nations business means opportunities for First Nations women and youth – especially if the activities span the border and spur inter-nation trade amongst Indigenous peoples.
- In the chapter on Textiles there is a provision that provides for duty free treatment of Indigenous handicraft goods. To achieve the advantages this provision provides, Indigenous peoples must work with the state to determine what does and does not qualify as an Indigenous handicraft. A positive result of this provision would be a certification program that ensured that Indigenous handicrafts are legitimate and certified authentic by Indigenous Nations themselves, perhaps opening the door to a broader certification program to Indigenous arts in Canada.
- Another important point for First Nations is that the investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) is being phased out of USMCA between US and Canada. There will still be an ISDS for a three year “legacy period.” After the legacy period ends, there will be no ISDS with the US or Mexico in USMCA,

which removes the biggest potential threat to First Nations rights, especially land rights, from this agreement. However, ISDS between Mexico and Canada is still possible via the CPTPP.

Again, First Nations are hopeful that an understanding can be reached with Mexico so that ISDS acknowledges and respects Indigenous rights.

During negotiations, Canada was able to make some advances that benefit First Nations peoples, but there is still much more to do. All three parties to the USMCA have endorsed the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples. Although there is no mention of the UN Declaration in the USMCA, trade agreements cannot, and must not, trump fundamental human rights, including the rights of Indigenous peoples.





The Path Forwards

Canada is currently negotiating other international trade (free-trade agreements) and international investment agreements (foreign investment promotion and protection agreements) with the South American trade bloc, known as Mercosur, and the Pacific Alliance, as well as entering into exploratory conversations with the Association of Southeast Asia Nations and China.

As these negotiations progress, we must call on Canada to build on the USMCA to continue to address significant deficiencies in the establishment of trade relations and support for First Nation Businesses.

1. Acknowledgement of UNDRIP and Requirements for Free, Prior and Informed Consent

There needs to be a continued push to ensure all trade agreements explicitly acknowledge the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and for the inclusion of a Trade and Indigenous Peoples Chapter. Proposed developments that involve Indigenous lands will only proceed with the full and equal participation of First Nations. Efforts must continue to improve the language in future investment agreements so that free, prior and informed consent becomes the standard for investors.

2. Moving from Engagement to Participation

Canada holds legal obligations to work with Indigenous peoples to determine more effective means of consultation for international trade negotiations. It is time for Canada to include First Nations representatives in negotiating teams. This is the most effective way to ensure proper consultation and cooperation. Due to their Aboriginal and inherent rights, jurisdiction and title, First Nations need representation in the negotiation room at future trade and investment tables. Canada needs to work in partnership with First Nations to ensure recognition, protection, implementation and enforcement of First Nations rights in this agreement and other international trade and investment agreements.

First Nations are ready to get to work to improve trade opportunities for our people. It should be clear by now that economic and legal certainty cannot be achieved without First Nations at the table as governments and decision-makers. It makes good business sense for First Nations and for Canada and its provinces and territories.

3. Improving Procurement Through Legislation

The procurement provisions establish exemption and carve outs, however under the current procurement mandates, targeted procurement opportunities taking advantage of these provisions is optional. By creating legislation and policies that requires the federal and provincial government to procure a percentage of their goods and services from First Nation businesses and service providers, these provisions could become effective tools to growing First Nations and Canada's economy.



4. Investing in First Nations Trade

Commitments to improving trade relations is a first step to better equip First Nations to leverage trade opportunities, however this must be met with a commitment to invest directly in supporting First Nations businesses. To support the growth of First Nations trade, Canada must commit to supporting the promotion of First Nations businesses nationally and internationally. This can be achieved in part by the investment in a First Nation Trade Commissioner and trade missions in key markets in Europe and Asia and through the development of private sector incentive programs to encourage First Nation partnerships. Additionally, a commitment must be made to support the ongoing capacity development of First Nations businesses through the establishment of a First Nation Centre of Excellence for International Trade that can provide direct support and guidance to businesses looking to branch into or expand their trade operations.

Greater investment in Canada should mean greater investment in First Nations. Canada can facilitate this growth through targeted measures and programs to empower Indigenous Peoples to take full advantage of the international business community. This would include the creation of a trade investment fund for First Nations.

By investing in First Nation value chain enhancement, Indigenous business will grow by creating further employment opportunities and increasing incomes for First Nation business employees. This fund would promote the economic vitality of First Nations by adding value in communities most affected by development by providing sustainable and predictable financial supports for First Nations business entities interested in reaching new, international markets.





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