



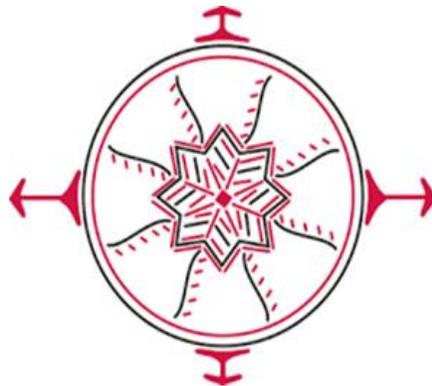
ATLANTIC POLICY CONGRESS  
OF FIRST NATIONS CHIEFS SECRETARIAT

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# Community Promotion

## Economic Development

### Final Report



**Community  
Promotion**

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## Proponent

The Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs (APC) is a policy research and advocacy secretariat for thirty-one (31) Mi'kmaq, Maliseet, Passamaquoddy and Innu communities spanning the four (4) Atlantic Provinces and the Gaspé region of Quebec. We are mandated by our Chiefs to provide expert advice, support, and services on several essential aspects affecting First Nations including natural resources, environment, fisheries, health, water, economic development and governance. Our work supports informed decisions by our political leadership which is based upon the close working relationship with have with all communities, tribal organizations, and treaty tables in the Atlantic and Gaspé region.

## Purpose

Based on the Atlantic Growth Strategy the Chiefs of all the Atlantic First Nations communities created a Strategic Plan for Sustainable Economic Development. Within this plan the Chiefs outlined *seven (7) Economic Development Strategic Priorities* that needed to be addressed in order to implement the Strategic Plan. These priorities are as following.

- 1. Employment:** creating culturally inclusive workplaces, build skilled workforce capacity, foster leadership and attract employment.
- 2. Clean Energy and Climate Change:** examining opportunities to expand and develop existing and potential renewable energy project partnership.
- 3. Infrastructure:** examining opportunities to expand and develop existing and potential infrastructure projects.
- 4. Tourism:** increasing awareness and demand for tourism.
- 5. Governance:** creating profit, non-profit and cooperative businesses to respond to community sustainable economic development needs.
- 6. Efficiency:** promote community collaborations to build economies of scale. Economies of scale reduce costs for communities by doing such things as buying goods and services in bulk, sharing information, and marketing together.
- 7. Innovation:** creating innovative economies including circular economies. According to the UN Industrial Development Organization, circular economies are “a new way of creating value, and ultimately prosperity, through extending product lifespan and relocating waste from the end of the supply chain to the beginning – in effect, using resources more efficiently by using more than once”.

APC has been mandated by the Chiefs resolution titled “*Strategic Plan for Sustainable Economic Development*” (*Strategic Plan*). Under this mandate APC must continue to support member communities toward the achievement of socio-economic development goals.

Specifically, these goals entail:

1. Building the net worth of Aboriginal communities by increasing Aboriginal control of land, resources and property throughout Atlantic Canada;
2. Strengthening Aboriginal businesses so that ownership, income and employment from businesses are comparable to non-Aboriginal rates;
3. Developing a skilled Aboriginal workforce that can fully participate in the regional economy;
4. And establishing and maintaining sound baseline information on the Atlantic Aboriginal economy, that provides evidence of progress and opportunity.

As stated within the *Strategic Plan* it is important that APC collaborate with our partners and networks in a successful way. With the assistance of Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) under their Lands and Economic Development Service Program and the Strategic Partnership Initiative, APC will continue to support APC’s member communities in achieving these goals by providing viable programs and initiatives designed to address various areas of socio-economic development such as: business development; development and retention of a skilled labour force; optimizing the cultivation and marketability of natural resources within the local, regional and global economies; and connecting communities with local and regional market and job opportunities. Moreover, ISC has collaborated with APC and other Indigenous stakeholders, as well as several federal government departments, to develop the Comprehensive Federal Approach to Major Economic Opportunities in the Maritimes (Comprehensive Approach). The Comprehensive Approach is intended to strengthen the capacity of key Indigenous organizations to support the Indigenous labor force, Indigenous entrepreneurs, and First Nations communities in accessing major economic opportunities.

Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nation Chiefs Secretariat (APC) has been mandated by the Chiefs under their *Strategic Plan for Sustainable Economic Development (Strategic Plan)* to support member communities toward the achievement of socio-economic development goals. Moreover, APC has continued to provide opportunities for communities to enhance their economic prosperity and social well-being.

The *Strategic Plan* promotes vision of success for member communities to build a sustainable economy. The *Strategic Plan* also promotes “*One Voice*”, but how can we promote *One Voice* when we still have many voices left unheard. Most Atlantic Canadians are aware of First Nation communities such as Millbrook, Membertou and Saint Mary’s but there are many First Nation communities within Atlantic Canada that most Atlantic Canadians are largely unaware of.

One way of enhancing a community's economic prosperity is through the promotion of that community's economic achievements. The promotion of communities and their economic contributions relay the importance of Indigenous people to the entire Atlantic economy.

For years, Atlantic Canada's First Nations people have been segregated and isolated from the rest of Canadian society. Most of the Atlantic Provinces' First Nations communities sit on tracks of land that are typically located in areas where economic opportunities are limited. Moreover, many do not have access to main arteries or are near densely populated areas. However, despite these adversities many of these isolated First Nations communities in Atlantic Canada have found ways to thrive and prosper.

Even though many of these communities have found ways to increase their economic prosperity, most Atlantic Canadians are unaware of these communities. Further to this fact, many of the other First Nations communities in the Atlantic Region are largely unaware of these facts as well. There is limited ISC funding available for First Nations communities and many communities have felt that they are competing for these limited dollars. Moreover, years of seclusion and isolation added with fears of competing for ISC funding has further reduced First Nations visibility causing these communities to isolate and insulate themselves from each other.

Within Goal #1, the Chief's state that past success stories help build a partnership approach. Moreover, Goal #1 states that; "shared success story embraces the partnership approach bringing two Atlantic organizations together to enable the mutually beneficial impacts as recognized by the United Nations Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development (ISID) partnership experience."

Using community promotion, APC will be able to bridge socio-economic gaps and bring visibility to the least prominent communities. Further, by promoting these communities that are least visible we can improve the holistic co-operation and collaborations between member communities. More importantly, past success stories help build a partnership approach that is mutually beneficial to all First Nations communities in the Atlantic Region.

The value in community promotion brings communities together by bridging the gaps and ending the long-time divisions that were a direct result of the Reserve system. Due to their isolated locations, many first nation communities within the Atlantic provinces are largely left unseen and unheard of. Community promotion can change this by bringing awareness and creating collaborative opportunities for these isolated communities.

Furthermore, community promotion can help monitor and evaluate the regional socio-economic progress and opportunities of communities. Community promotion project is about sharing and collaboration. It is about building pride in those communities who have been least visible. By showcasing these communities' economic achievements, it provides an opportunity

for other communities not just First Nations communities to become more aware of these least visible communities are on an economic level. Moreover, it could provide emerging opportunities for more Indigenous inclusion within all businesses and organization across Atlantic Canada who would otherwise not have been aware of these specific communities.

Community promotion can also have the positive effect of increasing tourism in Atlantic Canada, both locally and regionally. Increasing awareness and demand for Tourism has been outline in the Chiefs *Strategic Plan* under “*Strategic Priority # 6: Tourism*” of the *seven (7) Economic Development Strategic Priorities* brought forward by member communities.

Further, by promoting these communities that are least visible we can improve the holistic co-operation and collaborations between member communities (*Strategic Priority # 6: Efficiency*). Moreover, by promoting communities we will be able to measure community success stories which adheres to the Chief’s “*Partnership Approached*” outlined in Goal # 1 of the *Strategic Plan*.

## Activity

As mandated by the Atlantic Chiefs under their *Strategic Plan for Sustainable Economic Development*, the Economic Development Department at APC will be undertaking a project to showcase the major economic development accomplishments of its member communities via various media and social media venues. Specifically, this project will search for economic development initiatives that have made significant impact on member communities and the surrounding areas. The project will entail collecting and sharing information on projects and initiatives member communities wish to publicly showcase.

As part of this project, the Director of Economic Development shall identify from its thirty (30) member communities, which communities have the least amount of visibility. Visibility is defined by how much other communities are aware of that community’s economic development projects (past, present and future).

Once the Director of Economic Development has identified which communities have the least visibility, the Director shall contact each of those communities. During the initial contact the Director shall discuss with the community APC’s role and provide possible suggestions in creating more visibility. One such suggestion would be writing and publishing an article on the community’s past, present and future economic development projects. If the community is receptive to this suggestion the Director shall arrange a visit with those communities who wish to have their economic development projects made public.

During the visit the Director of Economic Development shall collect data on each of the community’s past, present and future economic development projects. These visits will allow the Director of Economic Development to build a strong effective relationship with each of the

communities visited. Moreover, it will provide an opportunity to communicate with each community the implementation of *Strategic Plan for Sustainable Economic Development*.

After the visit, the Director of Economic Development shall write an article showcasing the community's economic development projects. Once the article has been reviewed by the community described in the article, it will get published within the pages of the Mi'kmaq-Maliseet Nation News and on the APC website.

The article will provide some historical facts about the community but mostly it will focus on the community's past, present and future economic development projects. Moreover, the article will highlight any challenges and opportunities the community encountered. By doing so it is hoped that other communities could learn from such experience. This in turn could lead to sustainable and viable economic activity for those communities.

## Communities Visited

1. Esgenoopetitj First Nation
2. Tobique (Neqotkuk) First Nation
3. Potlotek First Nation
4. Listuguj First Nation
5. Eskasoni First Nation
6. Elsipogtog First Nation
7. Wolastoqiyik of Kingsclear First Nation
8. Lennox Island First Nation
9. Woodstock First Nation
10. Bear River First Nation

## Findings

All communities visited by the Director of Economic Development had major economic development projects already up and running and many more were in the early stages. It was found that in all communities visited, the commercial fishery is the main driver of economic growth and development in all First Nations communities within the Atlantic Provinces. Even communities that were many kilometers from any saltwater shores had access to the commercial fishery. The second major driver of economic growth and development in all First Nations communities within the Atlantic provinces was gaming. These two drivers have given communities the ability to enter into other types of ventures such as seen recently with the cannabis market. The majority, if not all First Nations communities within the Atlantic provinces, have made significant contributions to the over-all Atlantic Canadian economy. Further, many communities have provided employment opportunities for non-natives from neighboring communities. Moreover, there has been several business collaborations between

First Nations communities and local non-native businesses outside the communities that have yielded positive results. These collaborations have strengthened relationships between First Nations and Atlantic Canadians.

## Community Collaboration

During the visits the Director of Economic Development was able to share with the community visited information on other communities. It was found that most of the communities visited, were largely unaware of the economic development projects going on in other communities. Some communities were within a few hours drive from each other and were still unaware of each others' economic development projects.

Since sharing with each community, the economic development projects going on in neighboring communities, many have now reached out to those communities and are presently collaborating on projects. Lennox Island First Nation for example was unaware of all the communities who were involved with shellfish farming and have since started supplying these communities with shellfish seeds.

## Conclusion

There have been recent economic development projects created throughout many of the First Nations. Major themes throughout the region include; Fisheries and Plant Processing, Infrastructure, Partnerships and Renewable Energy, Gaming, Forestry, Tourism and Eco-Tourism, and Arts and Reconciliation, and Entering New Markets in Cannabis. Many of the operations on First Nations offer full-time permanent and reliable jobs to band members as well as non-natives.

### **Fisheries and Plant Processing**

Many First Nations rely on fishing as a major economic driver in the community. Eskasoni owns and operates Crane Cove Seafoods fishing and processing plant. They catch and process shrimp, snow crab, and haddock. Esgenoopetitj Band owns 20 lobster licenses which were handed out to band members to fish themselves. The Baie Chaleurs Fisheries fish processing plant in Caraquet, New Brunswick processes snow crab and herring and soon will include a lobster pound. The processing plant has been 100% owned by the band since 2009. The processing

plant employs over 100 people with 60% of them being non-natives from neighboring communities. Woodstock First Nation currently holds four lobster licenses, that are all operated under band members, as well as licenses for snow crab, sea urchin and sword fish. Tobique First Nation has 10 commercial lobster licenses and a snow crab quota. All band licenses are fished by band members and 100% of the deckhands and captains are band members. Today in Lennox Island there are over 30 commercial fishing vessels in the community, 10 of which are owned by the band itself and the rest are owned by community members. The band has also improved their aquaculture operations, their main one being a shellfish seeding operation primarily focusing on oysters but also includes muscles and scallops. The seeding operation, also known as Bideford Shellfish Hatchery, employs seven band members at the seeding facility. Lennox Island's seeding facility is the only 100% Band owned and operated oyster, scallops, and other shellfish aquaculture seed provider in Atlantic Canada. At present Listuguj owns and operates 7 commercial snow crab vessels. Two of the snow crab vessels are easily converted into shrimp fishing vessels during shrimp season while the rest remain crab fishing vessels. Over 90% of the fishermen and woman on the crab vessels are community members. The band also owns several shrimp quota's and lobster quotes. This past winter the band was able to harvest their first farmed scallops and packaged them under their own label. To increase their marketability Listuguj recently secured land along the provincial main highway. The land will be used for a band owned and operated seafood repackaging facility with a lobster and seafood store front. This economic development project is expected to employ at least 20 community members. The seafood repackaging facility will also provide Listuguj the opportunity to purchase their own fish quotas for retail and wholesale market.

## **Infrastructure**

Many First Nations have built new facilities or are in the process of securing plans to build new infrastructure in the community or along major traffic points and highways. Kingsclear First Nation has developed a new gas station which recently opened in the summer of 2017 boast eight pumps and is sitting alongside Route 102 highway. The new gas station was named Wulastukw Convenience. The community also has plans on building a new gaming facility next to the new gas station. The new gaming facility will also have a liquor license attached with it in hopes of attracting more business from prospected gamblers. The Band is exploring a fee simple parcel of land of 1.6 acre lot on Handwell Road within the city of Fredericton. Over the next few years the Band plans to develop the land on the opposite side of the highway from the present gas bar. Woodstock First Nation has completed their new project, Maliseet Fuels 2 that is located on reserve land just off Trans-Canada Highway Number 2. Maliseet Fuels 2 features six new service pumps, a large convenience and grocery store. Maliseet Fuels 2 also has a restaurant that offers a take-out service. The Woodstock First Nation Shell Cardlock is a truck stop that offers six lanes with a marked diesel pump, three diesel exhaust fluid (def) pumps,

and two regular size diesel pumps for cars/lightweight trucks. Since opening, the Woodstock First Nation Shell Cardlock has established yearly contracts with several local trucking companies in the surrounding area. These contracts are evidence of First Nations working well with non-natives to help each other build economy and community. In 2016 Tobique First Nation accepted a deal for \$39 million in compensation for the lands lost in 1892. The funds were distributed to community members and funds were put aside for community development. There may be opportunity for Tobique to partner with industry and other nations on using some of those funds to increase economic development for the community. The band has developed other building projects including new log cabins. The log cabins will be available for purchase to the general public. In addition, the band plans on opening a canoe and kayak rental business in the summer 2019. There are new plans to build a hotel that will also house the band's new casino facility. Potlotek First Nation is also looking to create new infrastructure and build an RV park and campground with canoe and kayak rentals, showers, and bathrooms, electric and water hook-ups. Esgenoopetitj has invested \$400,000 to build a 20-room bunk house for employees who work at the band-owned fish processing plant in Caraquet. The commute is 100 km each way and the new bunk-house offers a place where employees can sleep, eat, and shower everyday adding to the over health and well-being of the employees.

### **Partnerships and Renewable Energy**

Many of the First Nations have started working on creating renewable energy infrastructure in their communities. Partnerships have formed between the First Nations and power companies to deliver wind and solar power throughout the region. Woodstock First Nation and Tobique First Nation have engaged in projects that were created out of the provincial LORESS program, The Locally Owned Renewable Energy projects that are Small Scale, to procure renewable energy projects from aboriginal communities and local entities throughout the province. Woodstock First Nation has partnered with New Brunswick Power on the Wiskolamson Wind Project. The Wiskolamson Wind Energy Project presently has five turbines and is expected to provide New Brunswick with enough clean energy to service over 6,000 homes in the province. Tobique First Nation has partnered with Nova Scotia-based company, Natural Forces to invest in a \$50 million wind energy project called Wocawson Wind Project. The project is designed to have 10 turbines that provide 20 megawatts of power that will supply 5,000 homes and generate \$3 million a year in revenues for Tobique First Nation. There has also been development in the solar energy sector between First Nations and industry. Eleven Mi'kmaq organizations have been approved for the Solar Electricity for Community Buildings Program. Working in partnership with Beaubassin Mi'kmaq Wind Management, the approved projects are: Membertou First Nation, Pictou Landing First Nation, Bear River First Nation, Potlotek First Nation, Wagmatcook First Nation, Acadia First Nation, Paqtnkek First Nation, Millbrook First Nation, Eskasoni First Nation, Annapolis Valley First Nation, Glooscap First Nation.

## **Gaming**

Gaming has become a great economic opportunity for many First Nations. Eskasoni, Esgeoopetitj, Kingsclear, Woodstock, and Tobique First Nation all participate in gaming. Gaming provides revenues that can be used in the community as well as full-time permanent employment of both band members and non-native community members. Woodstock First Nation has a large gaming facility/casino, Eagle's Nest Gaming Palace, that has VLTs, table card games, bingo, snack bar, pool tables, and a dancefloor. Tobique Gaming Center has over 250 slot machines. The Band has not signed a gaming agreement with the province and all machines are band owned with 100% of the revenues going to the band. The casino has a poker room and 6 blackjack tables as well as a Roulette Wheel and table. The casino employs 110 people and over 70% of employees are band members.

## **Forestry**

Lennox Island, Woodstock, Tobique, and Esgeoopetitk First Nations are all involved in forestry as an economic driver in the community. In Woodstock First Nation, the logging operations offer employment for community members and earnings of \$300,000 in annual revenues. The government of Canada has invested \$255,000 in a multi-year project with Tobique First Nation that will establish a forest-based community business to create long-term employment and increase revenues in the community. Part of this funding has so far supported a detailed analysis of Tobique's manufacturing options, which led to the purchase of a sawmill in Perth-Andover. The next phase of this funding will create standard operating procedures, training in grading and stamping lumber and management succession planning for the mill that will lead to more local jobs. The mill currently employs a dozen band members as well as several non-natives from the town of Perth-Andover. The band forestry generates over \$300,000 in profits each year.

## **Tourism and Eco-Tourism**

Tourism and Eco-Tourism have recently been increasing economic development in First Nations. Potlotek First Nation, Bear River First Nation, Eskasoni First Nation, and Lennox Island First Nation now offer some cultural tourism and eco-tourism. Potlokek has the Potlotek Tourist Information Centre Society that manages all tourism. Bear River has developed the Heritage and Cultural Center and offers a 1.5 km medicine trail that shows special plants used in traditional Mi'kmaw medicine. Lennox island, in the last two years, has developed tourism to include 15 new experiences for visitors, including birch bark and porcupine quill work workshops, traditional storytelling, rattle and drum making workshops, beading workshops, and bannock making workshops, just to name a few. Eskasoni has developed the Eskasoni Cultural Journeys that offers visitors the opportunity to learn about beading, cooking four-cent bread over a fire, and canoeing. Eskasoni Cultural Journeys has received a \$99,021 non-repayable

investment through the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency's (ACOA) Innovative Communities Fund to improve the current tourism product offerings. The project will include infrastructure improvements on Goat Island, including a performance space, interpretation materials, signage, trail improvements, the addition of a gate, and the purchase of canoes and carts. Many of the visitors are booked through cruise ships and school trips. This is a model that other nations could use to increase traffic to their community for cultural tours. Lennox Island has the Mi'kmaw Culture Center that offers displays on culture and history as well as artefacts, photographs and cross-cultural awareness programs and educational sessions. Communities could collaborate to design and promote a Mi'kmaq travel guide with pictures and descriptions of the various activities available throughout the territory. This pamphlet could be presented to visitors at airports, ports, cruise ships, and other destinations populated by tourists. They could also work with chamber of commerce and other business organizations to spread the word and develop new ideas for tourism. Communities could also use the power of social media to promote tourism in their community. Tourism is bringing people together and contributing to reconciliation.

### **Arts and Reconciliation**

A major theme that is common throughout many of the First Nations is arts and reconciliation. People are using the arts to communicate their language, feelings, and culture. Sharing stories and making new memories together contributes to healing and reconciliation. New music, books, and plays have been created by Mi'kmaw people to share their stories with the world. Bear River First Nation has partnered with the town of Annapolis Royal to build the Oqwa'titek (When They Arrived) Amphitheatre. The amphitheater is envisioned as a physical symbol of the friendship forged between the Town of Annapolis Royal and Bear River First Nation since 1605 – and a commitment to work together for the mutual benefit of their communities. The National Arts Center in Ottawa has partnered with community members of Eskasoni First Nation to create the song and video *Rita Joe Song Project – Gentle Warrior*, that features a dedication to Rita Joe with a modern pop-rock sound that inspires a new generation of gentle warriors. The National Arts Center has also worked on another project “Apiksiktuaqn” (Forgiveness) which includes musicians from the NAC Orchestra, Symphony Nova Scotia, and Eskasoni artists Ursula Johnson and Richard Poulette. The First Nations and towns could collaborate to host an event that would showcase the new amphitheater, local art, and musicians. The play created by Bear River member Shalan Joundry, “*Elapultiek by Fire*” is performed outside around an open fire and is about reconciliation and two sides getting to understand one another better. Other communities could join in by setting up booths with crafts and information sharing. They could also invite students to come and share their artwork and interests. Students from Eskasoni could perform some of the songs they produced such as

the 2019 rendition of The Beatles' *Blackbird* in the Mi'kmaq language performed by grade 10 student, Emma Stevens.

### **Entering New Markets in Cannabis**

Now that cannabis has been legalized throughout Canada, First Nations in Atlantic Canada are looking to enter the cannabis market. This will increase revenues to the First Nations and provide permanent long-term employment to the community. Woodstock First Nation has plans on entering the cannabis industry and would like to follow a similar bylaw and policy models seen in Listuguj First Nation and Tobique First Nation. Presently Woodstock First Nation is constructing a new building which will house their first band-owned and operated medical cannabis dispensary. The dispensary is expected to open its doors to provincial medical marijuana license holders in the summer of 2019. Esgenoopetitj First Nation Band has their own cannabis cultivation operation which houses 1500 plants. It is expected to expand to twice that amount. All the employees in these business operations are band members. Listuguj's most recent economic development ventures involved a significant investment into the medical marijuana company Zenabis. Listuguj provided the company with a substantial dollar amount so it could expand its facility. In turn Zenabis has provided Listuguj with shares into the company which would include shares in all present and future profits.